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About the Authors

As a team of veteran travel writers, **Darwin Porter** and **Danforth Prince** have produced dozens of previous titles for Frommer's, including many of their guides to Europe, the Caribbean, Bermuda, The Bahamas, and parts of America's Deep South. A film critic, columnist, and radio broadcaster, Porter is also a noted biographer of Hollywood celebrities, garnering critical acclaim for overviews of the life and times of, among others, Marlon Brando, Katharine Hepburn, Howard Hughes, and Michael Jackson. Prince was formerly employed by the Paris bureau of the *New York Times,* and is today the president of www.BloodMoonProductions.com. In 2008, Porter and Prince collaborated on the release of their newest book about Hollywood, sexuality, and sin as filtered through 85 years of celebrity excess, *Hollywood Babylon—It's Back!*

George McDonald has lived and worked in both Amsterdam and Brussels as deputy editor of the KLM in-flight magazine and as editor-in-chief of the Sabena in-flight magazine. Now a freelance journalist and travel writer, he has written extensively on both the Netherlands and Belgium for magazines and guidebooks. He's the author of *Frommer's Amsterdam, Frommer's Belgium, Holland & Luxembourg,* and a co-author of *Frommer's Europe by Rail.*

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Christi Daugherty is an expat American living in London. A former journalist, she's the author of several travel books including *Frommer's Ireland 2007* and *Frommer's Paris Day by Day*. She also co-wrote *Frommer's MTV Ireland* and *Frommer's MTV Europe*. She learned everything she knows about Ireland accidentally, while getting lost repeatedly over the course of many years. She likes to think that she gets lost so you don't have to. On a recent trip, she stumbled across the ruins of the castle her family left behind when they fled Ireland in the 17th century, with the English hot on their trail. There wasn't much left of it. In her spare time she writes unpublished mystery novels.

An Invitation to the Reader

In researching this book, we discovered many wonderful places—hotels, restaurants, shops, and more. We're sure you'll find others. Please tell us about them, so we can share the information with your fellow travelers in upcoming editions. If you were disappointed with a recommendation, we'd love to know that, too. Please write to:

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An Additional Note

Please be advised that travel information is subject to change at any time—and this is especially true of prices. We therefore suggest that you write or call ahead for confirmation when making your travel plans. The authors, editors, and publisher cannot be held responsible for the experiences of readers while traveling. Your safety is important to us, however, so we encourage you to stay alert and be aware of your surroundings. Keep a close eye on cameras, purses, and wallets, all favorite targets of thieves and pickpockets.

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Europe For Dummies

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Frommer's Star Ratings, Icons & Abbreviations

Every hotel, restaurant, and attraction listing in this guide has been ranked for quality, value, service, amenities, and special features using a **star-rating system.** In country, state, and regional guides, we also rate towns and regions to help you narrow down your choices and budget your time accordingly. Hotels and restaurants are rated on a scale of zero (recommended) to three stars (exceptional). Attractions, shopping, nightlife, towns, and regions are rated according to the following scale: zero stars (recommended), one star (highly recommended), two stars (very highly recommended), and three stars (must-see).

In addition to the star-rating system, we also use **seven feature icons** that point you to the great deals, in-the-know advice, and unique experiences that separate travelers from tourists. Throughout the book, look for:

Finds	Special finds—those places only insiders know about
Fun Fact	Fun facts—details that make travelers more informed and their trips more fun
Kids	Best bets for kids and advice for the whole family
Moments	Special moments—those experiences that memories are made of
Overrated	Places or experiences not worth your time or money
Tips	Insider tips—great ways to save time and money
Value	Great values—where to get the best deals

The following **abbreviations** are used for credit cards:

AE	American Express	DISC	Discover	V	Visa
DC	Diners Club	MC	MasterCard		

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Now that you have this guidebook to help you plan a great trip, visit our website at **www.frommers.com** for additional travel information on more than 4,000 destinations. We update features regularly to give you instant access to the most current trip-planning information available. At Frommers.com, you'll find scoops on the best airfares, lodging rates, and car rental bargains. You can even book your travel online through our reliable travel booking partners. Other popular features include:

- Online updates of our most popular guidebooks
- Vacation sweepstakes and contest giveaways
- Newsletters highlighting the hottest travel trends
- Podcasts, interactive maps, and up-to-the-minute events listings
- Opinionated blog entries by Arthur Frommer himself
- Online travel message boards with featured travel discussions

What's New in Europe

AUSTRIA In Vienna, the **Falkensteiner Hotel Am Schottenfeld,** Schottenfeldgasse 74 (✆ **01/526-5181**), has opened a modern, innovative, and young-at-heart designer hotel. The bedrooms are furnished in a sleek, rather chic style, with marble bathrooms. See p. 55.

BELGIUM TransEuropa Ferries ✆ **01843/595522** in the U.K.; www.transeuropaferries.com) has introduced car-ferry service between the English Channel port of Ramsgate and Oostende (Ostend), Belgium. This is the only such service from southern England to Belgium, though ferries sail from both Hull in northeast England and Rosyth (Edinburgh) in Scotland to Zeebrugge. Unlike these two routes, the Ramsgate–Ostend service transports only cars and their drivers and passengers. No foot passengers are accepted.

Ghent's **Museum voor Schone Kunsten (Fine Arts Museum),** Citadelpark (✆ **09/222-17-03**), has reopened after several years of refurbishment.

DENMARK The Terrence Conrad group from England has invaded Copenhagen, opening a restaurant complex, **Custom House,** Havnegade 44 (✆ **33-31-01-30**), serving a Danish/Japanese/Italian cuisine, and doing so exceedingly well. Our favorite dishes are specialties from the Italian kitchen, especially anything in Barolo wine sauce with truffles. The Bar & Grill section also offers tantalizing Danish dishes. See p. 202.

GERMANY In Berlin, the legendary Tempelhof Airport has closed. It was made famous during the Berlin Airlift and with its passing goes one of the few remaining examples of Nazi-era architecture. Its closing will make way for the expansion of the Berlin-Schönefeld International Airport, a former military base. Also in Berlin, **Arte Luise Künsthotel**, Luisenstrasse 19 (✆ **030/284-480**), has become a "home for artists." A select boutique hotel, it offers rooms that were individually designed by a different German artist. All this takes place under the roof of a restored palace from 1825 that mostly survived WWII bombings. See p. 380.

GREECE New museums keep opening in Athens. The **Benaki Museum of Islamic Art,** Agio Asomaton and Dipylou, Psirri (✆ **210/367-1000;** www.benaki.gr), is Greece's first museum of Islamic Art. Just a block away, **The Museum of Traditional Pottery,** 4-6 Melidoni, Kerameikos (✆ **210/331-8491**) has a permanent collection and special exhibitions showcasing traditional and contemporary Greek ceramics. In Plaka, the **Frissiras Museum,** 3–7 Moni Asteriou (✆ **210/323-4678**) is Athens's first museum to concentrate on 20th and 21st century European art. And, at some point in 2008, the spectacular new **Acropolis Museum,** on Dionisiou Areopagitou, at the foot of the Acropolis, will open its doors.

The **Athens Sightseeing Bus,** line 400, is a great way to get around town. Running from June to September, this hop-on/hop-off bus begins and ends its 90-minute ride in front of the National

Archaeological Museum. Tickets are 5€ ($6.50) and are valid for 24 hours.

When it's time to leave Athens, keep in mind that the Metro now runs once an hour from 5am to 1am from the airport via central Athens to the port of Piraeus. Tickets cost 6€ ($7.80). In **Delphi,** check out the new free miniature tram that takes visitors for a 30 minute excursion around Dephi on summer evenings. And on Mykonos, the completely redone **Mykonos Grace Hotel** (www.mykonosgrace.com) won Odyssey magazine's award as the "Best New Entry" of 2007 and the London Sunday Times's award as one of the hippest new hotels of 2007.

NETHERLANDS The years-long refurbishing efforts at two of Amsterdam's most stellar museums—the **Rijksmuseum** and the **Stedelijk Museum**—have both had their reopening dates pushed back by a year or two. In the meantime, masterpieces from the Rijksmuseum's collection can be viewed in the only wing of the museum that remains open, as the **Rijksmuseum De Meesterwerken,** Jan Luijkenstraat 1 (✆ **020/647-7047**). The modern-art Stedelijk continues in the guise of the **Stedelijk Museum CS,** Oosterdokskade 5 (✆ **020/573-2911**), on two floors of a repurposed office tower east of Centraal Station. Two other popular city attractions, the **Scheepvaartmuseum (Maritime Museum)** and **Heineken Experience,** have joined them in refurbishment limbo.

Beginning soon after this edition of *Frommer's Europe* is published, the **OV-chipkaart,** a national transit smart card that's been introduced in phases over the last few years, finally becomes the only way to pay for getting around on public transportation in the Netherlands. The letters "OV" are the initials for *Openbaar Vervoer,* which is Dutch for "public transportation," and *chipkaart*—as you can likely guess—means "chip card." Multiple OV-chipkaart variants are available; for the most useful of these for visitors, see "Getting Around," under "Amsterdam," on page 723.

NORWAY More and more visitors are exploring Oslo by bike, and the city has made it easy for them. **City Bikes** (Oslo Bysykkel) are available from a large number of stations around the city. You can purchase an electronic card for US$13 at tourist information offices, which grants you the privilege to use these bikes. See p. 763.

SCOTLAND In Edinburgh the hot new boutique hotel address is **Tigerlily,** 125 George St. (✆ **0131/225-5005**), a hip place to stay. Locals crowd its bars and stylish lounges at night, and the Georgian style bedrooms have been restored with the latest amenities added. See p. 839.

SPAIN In Madrid the latest word in city chic is **Hotel Urban,** Carrera de San Jerónimo (✆ **91-787-77-70**), opposite the lower house of the Spanish Parliament. The bedrooms are luxurious, and just below the lobby is a Museum of Egyptian art. See p. 897. In Barcelona, **Fashion House B&B,** Bruc 13 Principal (✆ **63-790-40-44**), is a trend-setting boutique hotel in the heart of the Eixample. A 19th-century building has been beautifully restored and elegantly decorated. See p. 931.

SWEDEN Tourists on the shortest of visits to Stockholm have long availed themselves of a 24-hour **Stockholm Card,** granting discounts and unlimited travel on public transportation. However, for those who want to see the Swedish capital in more depth, there is now both a 48-hour card and a 72-hour card with discounts for children. See p. 973. Also in Stockholm, **City Sightseeing** (✆ **08/587-140-20**), operates a 24-hour, Hop-on, Hop-off sightseeing tour of the city. The bus takes you to all the highlights of Stockholm, and you can board and get off at your leisure. See p. 990.

1

Planning Your Trip to Europe

by Darwin Porter & Danforth Prince

The goal of a United States of Europe is still a visionary's dream, in spite of the euro, which binds many nations in a common currency. But even the euro can't link all of the countries of the European Union—"holdouts" remain, such as Denmark, which clings to its kroner, and the British Isles, which are still locked into the traditional pound sterling.

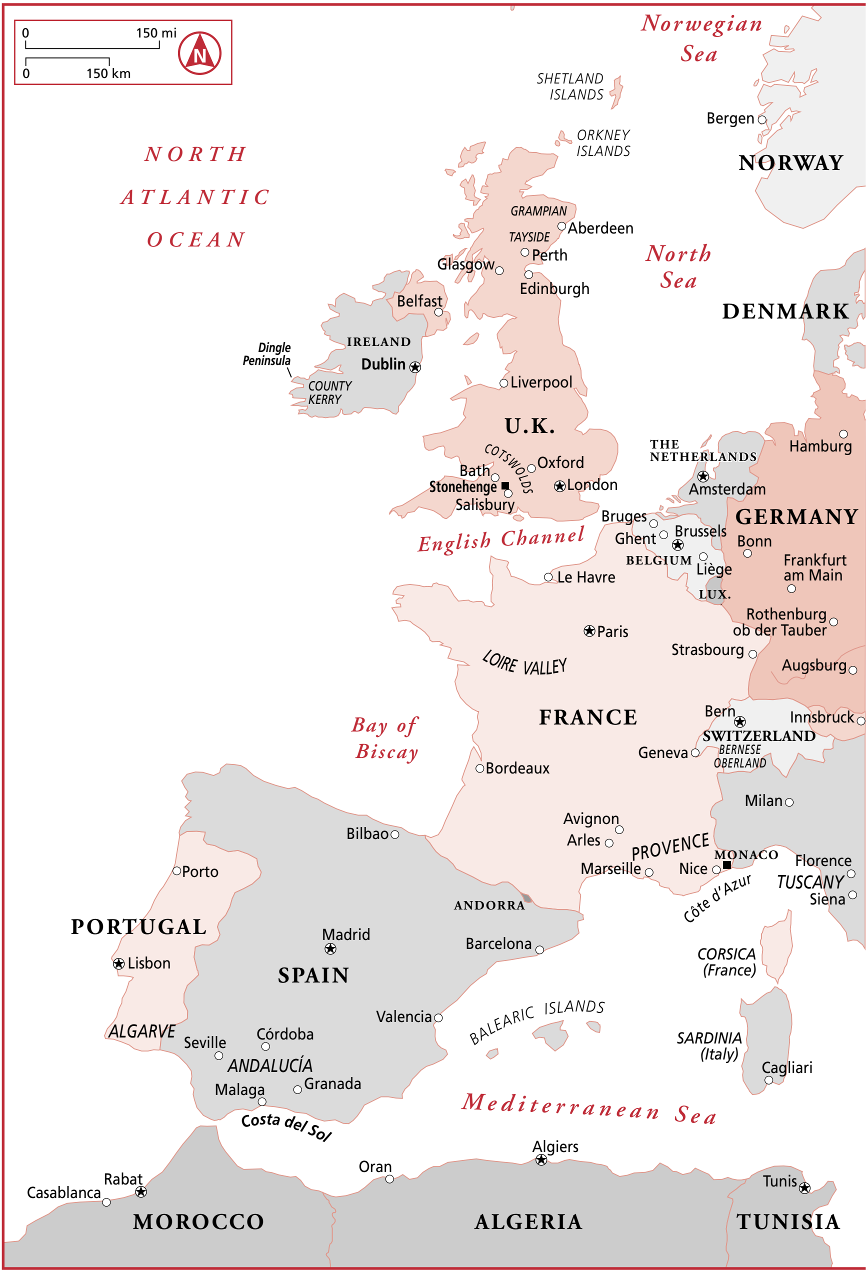
Nonetheless, in a continent where neighbors battled neighbors in two world wars, a great renaissance in art, culture, and economic growth is underway. Most of the nations of western Europe are cooperating as never before, in spite of the inevitable minor squabble (Italy and Germany, for example, often tussle over cultural issues). Emerging capitals like Stockholm and Prague now lure visitors who once only patronized the classic "grand tour" European haunts, like Paris or Rome. As European cities move deeper into the millennium, exciting attractions such as Bilbao in Spain and the Tate Modern in London challenge such traditional sights as the Tower of London and the Louvre as top tourist destinations.

Of course, you don't visit Europe to fret over their economies and politics. The rich culture and history in each of its myriad countries and regions have always been the lure, and they remain so today. From the splendor of a walled hill town rising above the verdant Tuscan landscape to the majestic snowcapped peaks of the Alps, from the sound of flamenco in a Madrid *tablaos* (flamenco nightclub) to the blasting of a brass band in Munich's Hofbraühaus—one Europe it may be on the map (and now in the bank books), but on the ground, it's still a Europe of countless facets and proud, distinct, diverse heritages. There's no other place where you can experience such enormous cultural changes by driving from one mountain valley to the next, where in just a few miles or kilometers you're likely to encounter not only a completely different language but also different food, architecture, and culture.

Europe has seen some of the greatest intellectual and artistic developments the world has ever known, and the landscape is dense with museums, cathedrals, palaces, and monuments serving as repositories for much of this past glory. But the good news is that the Continent is still in a dynamic creative mode; artistic and cultural ferment are very much part of the present, and Europe helps set the trends in fashion, industrial design, cinema, technology, music, literature, and science. The dynamic environment is all about life, innovation, entertainment, and food, which exist side by side with the artistic and cultural grandeur of the past.

Europe is also about people. Europeans have seen the best and the worst of times, and a better-educated, more sophisticated younger generation is waiting to welcome you. They're as diverse and fascinating as the lands they come from, and throughout this

Europe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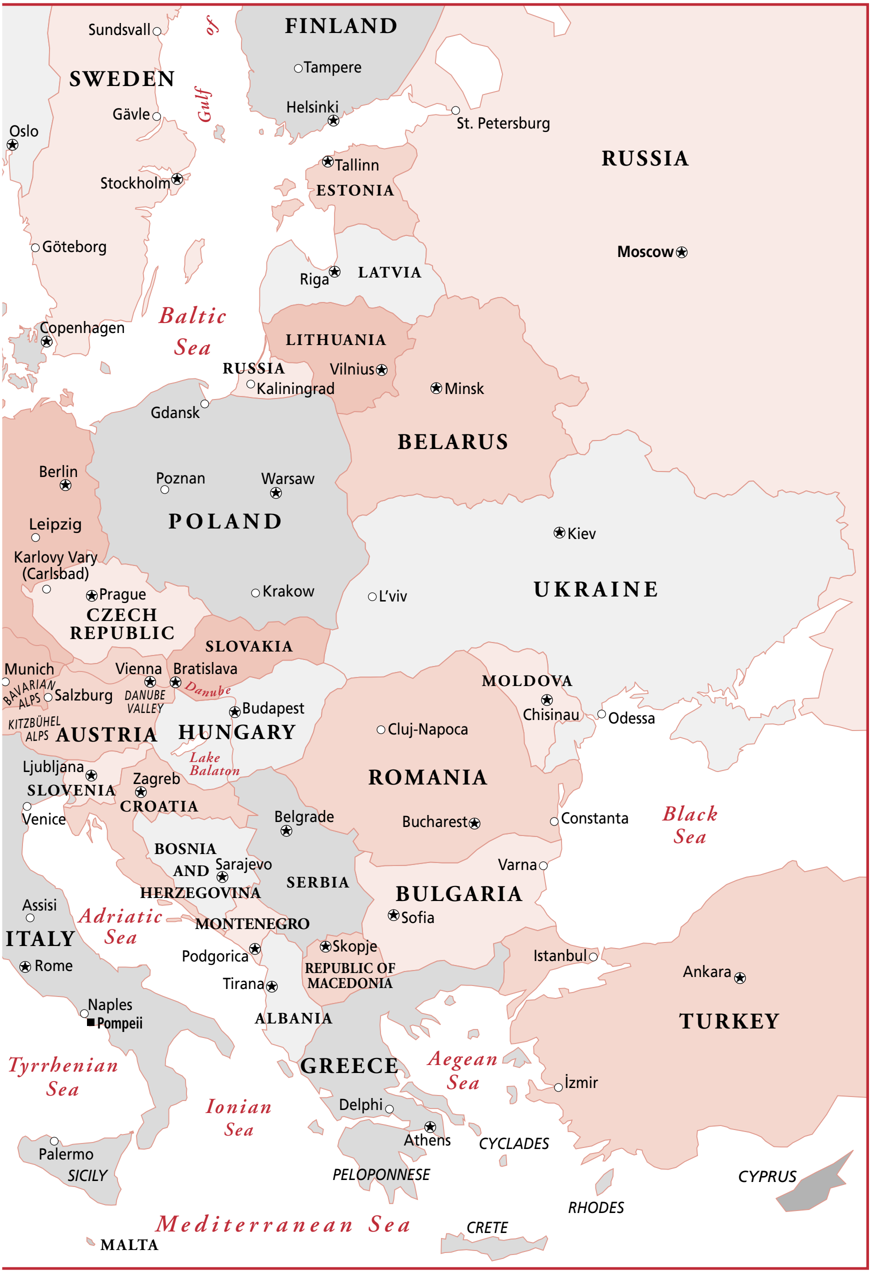
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MOLDOVA
BAVARIAN ALPS
Salzburg
DANUBE VALLEY
Danube
Chisinau
Budapest
Odessa
KITZBÜHEL ALPS
AUSTRIA
HUNGARY
Cluj-Napoca
Lake Balaton
Ljubljana
Zagreb
ROMANIA
SLOVENIA
CROATIA
Venice
Belgrade
Bucharest
Constanta
Black Sea
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA
Sarajevo
SERBIA
Varna
BULGARIA
Assisi
Adriatic Sea
MONTENEGRO
Sofia
ITALY
Skopje
Podgorica
REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA
Istanbul
Rome
Ankara
Tirana
Naples
Pompeii
ALBANIA
TURKEY
Tyrrhenian Sea
GREECE
Aegean Sea
İzmir
Ionian Sea
Delphi
Athens
CYCLADES
Palermo
SICILY
PELOPONNESE
CYPRUS
RHODES
Mediterranean Sea
CRETE
MALTA

book we've noted places not only where you'll meet other visitors, but where you'll have a chance to meet and chat with the locals, enriching your experience immeasurably.

Irresistible and intriguing, the ever-changing Europe of the 21st century offers you more excitement, experiences, and memories than ever. In compiling this book, we've tried to open the door to Europe's famous cities (their art and architecture, restaurants and theater, hotels and history) and guide you to all the experiences no one would want to miss on even a cursory visit. So though this guide has to point out the highlights, we've also tossed in offbeat destinations and adventurous suggestions leading to surprises and delights around every corner.

This introductory chapter is designed to equip you with what you need to know before you go—the advance-planning tools for an enjoyable and successful trip.

1 Visitor Information

TOURIST OFFICES

Start with the **European tourist offices** in your own country; for a complete list, see below. If you aren't sure which countries you want to visit, send for an information-packed free booklet called ***Planning Your Trip to Europe,*** revised annually by the 31-nation **European Travel Commission** (www.visiteurope.com). Or check out ***Europe For Dummies,*** available at most bookstores.

AUSTRIAN TOURIST OFFICE, INC.

www.Austria-tourism.com or www.austria.info

IN THE U.S. 500 5th Ave., New York, NY 10110 (✆ **212/944-6880;** fax 212/730-4568).

IN CANADA ✆ **416/967-3381.**

IN THE U.K. 9-11 Richmond Buildings, London W1D 3HF (✆ **0845/101-1818;** fax 0845/101-1819).

BELGIAN TOURIST OFFICE

www.visitbelgium.com or www.belgiumtheplaceto.be

IN THE U.S. 220 E. 42nd St., Suite 3402, New York, NY 10017 (✆ **212/758-8130;** fax 212/355-7675).

IN CANADA P.O. Box 760 NDG, Montreal, H4A 342 (✆ **514/457-2888;** fax 212/355-7675).

IN THE U.K. 217 Marsh Wall, London E14 9FJ (✆ **020/7531-0391;** fax 020/7537-1132).

VISIT BRITAIN

www.visitbritain.com

IN THE U.S. 551 Fifth Ave., Suite 701, New York, NY 10176-0799 (✆ **800/462-2748**).

IN CANADA ✆ **888/VISIT-UK.**

IN AUSTRALIA Level 2, 15 Blue St., North Sydney, NSW 2060 (✆ **1300/85-85-89**).

IN NEW ZEALAND Fay Richwhite Blvd., 17th Floor, 151 Queen St., Auckland 1 (✆ **0800/700-741**).

CZECH TOURIST AUTHORITY

www.czechtourism.com

IN THE U.S. 1109 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10028 (✆ **212/288-0830;** fax 212/288-0971).

IN CANADA 2 Bloor St. West, Suite 1300, Toronto, ON M4W 3E2 (✆ **416/363-9928;** fax 416/972-6991).

FRENCH GOVERNMENT TOURIST OFFICE

www.franceguide.com

IN THE U.S. 825 Third Ave., 29th Floor, New York, NY 10022 (✆ **212/838-7800;** fax 212/838-7855); 205 N. Michigan Ave., Suite 3770, Chicago, IL 60601 (✆ **312/327-0290;** fax 312/337-6339); 9454 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 210, Beverly Hills, CA 90212 (✆ **310/271-6665**).

IN CANADA Maison de la France/French Government Tourist Office, 1800 av. McGill College, Suite 1010, Montreal, PQ H3A 3J6 (✆ **514/288-2026;** fax 514/845-4868).

IN THE U.K. Maison de la France/French Government Tourist Office, 300 High Holborn, London WC1V 7JH (✆ **09068/244-123,** costs 60p per minute**;** fax 020/7493-6594).

IN AUSTRALIA French Tourist Bureau, 25 Bligh St., Sydney, NSW 2000 (✆ **02/9231-5244;** fax 02/9221-8682).

GERMAN NATIONAL TOURIST OFFICE

www.cometogermany.com

IN THE U.S. 122 E. 42nd St., 52nd Floor, New York, NY 10168-0072 (✆ **800/651-7010** or 212/661-7200; fax 212/661-7174).

IN CANADA 480 University Ave., Suite 1500, Toronto, ON M53 1V2 (✆ **877/315-6237** or 416/968-1685; fax 416/968-0562; www.germanchamber.ca).

IN THE U.K. P.O. Box 2695, London W1A 3TN (✆ **020/7317-0908** or 020/7317-0917; www.germany-tourism.co.uk).

IN AUSTRALIA P.O. Box A980, Sydney, NSW 1235 (✆ **02/8296-0488;** fax 02/8296-0487).

GREEK NATIONAL TOURIST ORGANIZATION

www.gnto.gr or www.greektourism.com

IN THE U.S. 645 Fifth Ave., Suite 903, New York, NY 10022 (✆ **212/421-5777;** fax 212/826-6940).

IN CANADA 1300 Bay St., Toronto, ON M5R 3K8 (✆ **416/968-2220;** fax 416/968-6533).

IN THE U.K. 4 Conduit St., London W1S 2DJ (✆ **020/7495-9300;** fax 020/7495-4057; www.gnto.co.uk).

IN AUSTRALIA 51–57 Pitt St., Sydney, NWS 2000 (✆ **02/9241-1663;** fax 02/9252-1441).

HUNGARIAN NATIONAL TOURIST OFFICE

www.gotohungary.com

IN THE U.S. & CANADA 350 Fifth Ave., Suite 7107, New York, NY 10118 (✆ **212/695-1221**).

IN THE U.K. 46 Eaton Place, London, SW1X 8AL (✆ **020/7823-1032;** fax 020/7823-1459).

IRISH TOURIST BOARD

www.ireland.ie or www.tourismireland.com

IN THE U.S. 345 Park Ave., New York, NY 10154 (✆ **800/223-6470** or 212/418-0800; fax 212/371-9052).

IN THE U.K. Nations House, 103 Wigmore St., London W1U 1QS (✆ **020/7518-0800;** fax 020/7493-9065).

IN AUSTRALIA 36 Carrington St., 5th Floor, Sydney, NSW 2000 (✆ **02/9299-6177;** fax 02/9299-6323).

ITALIAN GOVERNMENT TOURIST BOARD

www.enit.it or www.italiantourism.com

IN THE U.S. 630 Fifth Ave., Suite 1565, New York, NY 10111 (✆ **212/245-5618;** fax 212/586-9249); 500 N. Michigan Ave., Suite 2240, Chicago, IL 60611 (✆ **312/644-0996;** fax 312/644-3019); 12400 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 550, Los Angeles, CA 90025 (✆ **310/820-1898;** fax 310/820-6357).

IN CANADA 175 Bloor St. E., South Tower, Suite 907, Toronto, ON M4W 3R8 (✆ **416/925-4882;** fax 416/925-4799).

IN THE U.K. 1 Princes St., London W1B 2AY (✆ **020/7399-3562**; fax 020/7399-3567).

MONACO GOVERNMENT TOURIST OFFICE

www.monaco-tourism.com

IN THE U.S. & CANADA 565 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10017 (✆ **800/753-9696** or 212/286-3330; fax 212/286-9890).

IN THE U.K. 7 Upper Grosvenor St., London, W1K 2LX (✆ **020/7491-4264;** fax 020/7408-2487).

NETHERLANDS BOARD OF TOURISM

www.goholland.com

IN THE U.S. & CANADA 355 Lexington Ave., 19th Floor, New York, NY 10017 (✆ **888/464-6552** or 212/370-7360; fax 212/370-9507).

IN THE U.K. Imperial House, 7th Floor, 15–19 Kingsway, London, WC2B 6DH (✆ **020/7539-7950;** fax 020/7539-7953).

PORTUGUESE TRADE & TOURISM OFFICE

www.portugal.org

IN THE U.S. 590 Fifth Ave., 3rd Floor, New York, NY 10036 (✆ **212/354-4403;** fax 212/764-6137).

IN CANADA 60 Bloor St. W., Suite 1005, Toronto, ON M4W 3B8 (✆ **416/921-7376;** fax 416/921-1353).

IN THE U.K. 22 Sackville St., 2nd Floor, London W1X 2LY (✆ **020/7494-1441;** fax 020/7494-1868).

SCANDINAVIAN TOURIST BOARDS (DENMARK, NORWAY & SWEDEN)

www.goscandinavia.com, www.visitdenmark.com, www.visitnorway.com, or www.visitsweden.com

IN THE U.S. & CANADA 655 Third Ave., New York, NY 10163-4649 (✆ **212/885-9700;** fax 212/885-9710).

IN THE U.K. Danish Tourist Board, 55 Sloane St., London SW1X 9SY (✆ **020/7259-5958;** fax 020/7259-5955); Norwegian Tourist Board, 5 Lower Regent St., London, SW1Y 4LR (✆ **020/7389-8800;** fax 020/7839-6014); Swedish Travel & Tourism Council, 11 Upper Montagu Place, London W1H 2AL (✆ **020/7870-5600;** fax 020/7724-5872).

SWITZERLAND TOURISM

www.switzerlandtourism.com

IN THE U.S. 608 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10020 (✆ **877/794-8037** or 212/757-5944; fax 212/262-6116).

IN THE U.K. Swiss Centre, New Coventry St., W1V 8EE (✆ **020/7292-1550**).

TOURIST OFFICE OF SPAIN

www.okspain.org or www.spain.info

IN THE U.S. 666 Fifth Ave., 35th Floor, New York, NY 10103 (✆ **212/265-8822;** fax 212/265-8864); 845 N. Michigan Ave., Suite 915E, Chicago, IL 60611 (✆ **312/642-1992;** fax 312/642-9817); 8383 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 960, Los Angeles, CA 90211 (✆ **323/658-7195;** fax 323/658-1061); 1395 Brickell Ave., Suite 1130, Miami, FL 33131 (✆ **305/358-1992;** fax 305/358-8223).

IN CANADA 2 Bloor St. W., Suite 3402, Toronto, ON M4W 3E2 (✆ **416/961-3131;** fax 416/961-1992).

IN THE U.K. 79 New Cavendish St., London W1W 6XB (✆ **020/7486-8077;** fax 020/7486-8034).

TRAVEL AGENTS

Travel agents can save you plenty of time and money by hunting down the best airfare for your route and arranging for rail passes and rental cars. For now, most travel agents still charge you nothing for their services—they're paid through commissions from the airlines and other agencies they book for you. However, a number of airlines have begun cutting commissions, and increasingly, agents are finding they have to charge you a fee to hold the bottom line (or else unscrupulous agents will offer you only the travel options that bag them the juiciest commissions). Shop around and ask hard questions.

If you decide to use a travel agent, make sure the agent is a member of the

American Society of Travel Agents (ASTA), 1101 King St., Alexandria, VA 22314 (www.astanet.com). If you send them a self-addressed stamped envelope, ASTA will mail you the booklet *Avoiding Travel Problems* for free.

2 Entry Requirements & Customs

PASSPORTS

If you don't already have one, you can download a passport application from the websites listed below. Countries covered in this guide do *not* require visas for U.S. or Canadian citizens for stays less than 90 days. Though a valid U.S. state driver's license usually suffices, it's wise to carry an **International Driving Permit** (US$15), which you can obtain from any AAA branch if you bring two passport-size photos.

UNITED STATES Whether you're applying in person or by mail, you can download passport applications from the U.S. State Department website at **http://travel.state.gov**. For general information, call the **National Passport Information Center** (✆ **877/487-2778**). To find your regional passport office, check the U.S. State Department website at http://travel.state.gov.

CANADA Passport applications are available at travel agencies throughout Canada or from the central **Passport Office,** Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Ottawa, ON K1A 0G3 (✆ **800/567-6868;** www.ppt.gc.ca).

UNITED KINGDOM To pick up an application for a standard 10-year passport (5-year passport for children 15 and under), visit your nearest passport office, major post office, or travel agency or contact the **United Kingdom Passport Service** at ✆ **0870/521-0410** or go to www.ukpa.gov.uk.

IRELAND You can apply for a 10-year passport at the **Passport Office,** Setanta Centre, Molesworth Street, Dublin 2 (✆ **01/671-1633;** www.irlgov.ie/iveagh). Those under age 18 and over 65 must apply for a €12 3-year passport. You can also apply at 1A South Mall, Cork (✆ **021/484-4700**), or at most main post offices.

AUSTRALIA You can pick up an application from your local post office or Australian Passport Information Service, but you must schedule an interview at the passport office to present your application materials. Call the **Australian Passport Information Service** at ✆ **131-232,** or visit the government website at www.passports.gov.au.

NEW ZEALAND You can pick up a passport application at any New Zealand Passports Office or download it from their website. Contact the **Passports Office** at ✆ **0800/225-050** in New Zealand or 04/474-8100, or log on to www.passports.govt.nz.

CUSTOMS

U.S. CITIZENS Returning **U.S. citizens** who have been away for at least 48 hours are allowed to bring back, once every 30 days, US$800 worth of merchandise duty-free. You'll be charged a flat rate of 10% duty on the next US$1,000 worth of purchases. Be sure to have your receipts handy. On mailed gifts, the duty-free limit is US$200. You cannot bring fresh foodstuffs into the United States; some tinned foods, however, are allowed. For specifics on what you can bring back and the corresponding fees, download the invaluable free pamphlet *Know Before You Go* online at **www.cbp.gov**. (Click on "Travel," and then click on "Know Before You Go! Online Brochure.") Or contact the **U.S. Customs & Border Protection (CBP),**

Tips Savvy Travel Safeguards

Safeguard your passport in an inconspicuous, inaccessible place like a money belt. If you lose it, visit the nearest consulate of your native country as soon as possible for a replacement. Before leaving home, make two photocopy collages of your important documents: the first page of your passport (the page with the photo and identifying info), drivers license, and other ID. Leave one copy at home with a family member or friend and carry the other with you (separate from the originals!).

1300 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20229 (☎ **202/354-1000**), and request the pamphlet.

U.K. CITIZENS If you are **returning from a European Union (E.U.) country,** you will go through a separate Customs exit (called the "Blue Exit") especially for E.U. travelers. In essence, there is no limit on what you can bring back from an E.U. country, provided the items are for personal use (this includes gifts), and you have already paid the necessary duty and tax. Customs law, however, sets out guidance levels. If you bring in more than these levels, you may be asked to prove that the goods are for your own use. Guidance levels on goods bought in the E.U. for personal use are 3,200 cigarettes, 200 cigars, 400 cigarillos, 3 kilograms of smoking tobacco, 10 liters of spirits, 90 liters of wine, 20 liters of fortified wine (such as port or sherry), and 110 liters of beer.

U.K. citizens returning from a non-E.U. country have a Customs allowance of 200 cigarettes; 50 cigars; 250 grams of smoking tobacco; 2 liters of still table wine; 1 liter of spirits or strong liqueurs (over 22% volume); 2 liters of fortified wine, sparkling wine, or other liqueurs; 60cc (mL) of perfume; 250cc (mL) of toilet water; and £145 worth of all other goods, including gifts and souvenirs. People under 17 cannot have the tobacco or alcohol allowance. For information, contact **HM Revenue & Customs & Excise** at ☎ **0845/010-9000,** or 02920/501-261 from outside the U.K., or consult their website at **www.hmrc.gov.uk**.

AUSTRALIAN CITIZENS The duty-free allowance in **Australia** is A$900 or, for those under 18, A$450. Citizens can bring in 250 cigarettes or 250 grams of loose tobacco, and 2.25 liters of alcohol. If you're returning with valuables you already own, such as foreign-made cameras, you should file form B263. A helpful brochure available from Australian consulates or Customs offices is *Know Before You Go.* For more information, call the **Australian Customs Service** at ☎ **1300/363-263,** or log on to **www.customs.gov.au**.

NEW ZEALAND CITIZENS The duty-free allowance for **New Zealand** is NZ$700. Citizens over 17 can bring in 200 cigarettes, 50 cigars, or 250 grams of tobacco (or a mixture of all three if their combined weight doesn't exceed 250g); plus 4.5 liters of wine and beer, or 1.125 liters of liquor. New Zealand currency does not carry import or export restrictions. Fill out a certificate of export, listing the valuables you are taking out of the country; that way, you can bring them back without paying duty. Most questions are answered in a free pamphlet available at New Zealand consulates and Customs offices: *New Zealand Customs Guide for Travellers, Notice no. 4.* For more information, contact **New Zealand Customs,** The Customhouse, 17–21 Whitmore St., Box 2218, Wellington

(✆ **04/473-6099** or 0800/428-786; **www.customs.govt.nz**).

CANADIAN CITIZENS For a clear summary of **Canadian** rules, write for the booklet *I Declare,* issued by the **Canada Border Services Agency** (✆ **800/461-9999,** or 204/983-3500 in Canada; **www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca**). Canada allows its citizens a C$750 exemption, and you're allowed to bring back duty-free one carton of cigarettes, one can of tobacco, 40 imperial ounces of liquor, and 50 cigars. In addition, you're allowed to mail gifts to Canada valued at less than C$60 a day, provided they're unsolicited and don't contain alcohol or tobacco (write on the package "Unsolicited gift, under US$60 value"). All valuables should be declared on the Y-38 form before departure from Canada, including serial numbers of valuables you already own, such as expensive foreign cameras. ***Note:*** The C$750 exemption can only be used once a year and only after an absence of 7 days.

3 Money

CURRENCY

On March 1, 2002, the euro officially replaced the legacy currencies as legal tender in the "euro zone," including the countries of Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, and Spain. Britain, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Sweden, and Hungary do not fall under the euro umbrella, even though they are members of the E.U. Norway and Switzerland are not part of the E.U. See the "Fast Facts" section in each destination chapter for the currency used in that country and the exchange rate at the time this book went to press.

Euros come in note denominations of 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200, and 500, and coin denominations of 1 and 2 euros and 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, and 50 cents. Coins have a common face on one side. The opposite face has a design chosen by the issuing country. As this book went to press, 1€ was worth approximately US$1.45 and gaining in strength, so your dollars might not go as far as you'd expect. For up-to-the-minute exchange rates between the euro and the dollar, check the currency-converter website **www.xe.com**.

ATMs

The easiest and best way to get cash away from home is from an ATM, sometimes referred to as a "cash machine" or "cashpoint." The **Cirrus** (✆ **800/424-7787;** www.mastercard.com) and **PLUS** (✆ **800/843-7587;** www.visa.com) networks span the globe; look at the back of your bank card to see which network you're on, and then call or check online for ATM locations at your destination. Be sure you know your personal identification number (PIN) and daily withdrawal limit before you depart. ***Note:*** Remember that many banks impose a fee every time you use a card at another bank's ATM, and that fee can be higher for international transactions (up to US$5 or more) than for domestic ones (where they're rarely more than US$2). In addition, the bank from which you withdraw cash may charge its own fee. For international withdrawal fees, ask your bank.

CREDIT CARDS

Credit cards are another safe way to carry money. They also provide a convenient record of all your expenses, and they generally offer relatively good exchange rates. You can withdraw cash advances from your credit cards at banks or ATMs, provided you know your PIN. Remember that you'll pay interest from the moment of your withdrawal, even if you pay your monthly bills on time. Also, note that many banks now assess a 1% to 3%

Tips

Easy Money

You'll avoid lines at airport ATMs by exchanging at least some money—just enough to cover airport incidentals and transportation to your hotel—before you leave home.

When you change money, ask for some small bills or loose change. Petty cash will come in handy for tipping and public transportation. Consider keeping the change separate from your larger bills, so that it's readily accessible and you'll be less of a target for theft.

"transaction fee" on **all** charges you incur abroad (whether you're using the local currency or your native currency).

Most middle-bracket and virtually all first-class and deluxe hotels, restaurants, and shops in Europe accept major credit cards—American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard, and Visa (not Discover). Some budget establishments accept plastic; others don't. The most widely accepted cards these days are Visa and MasterCard, but it pays to carry American Express, too. Note that you can now often choose to charge credit card purchases at the price in euros or in the local currency; since most European currencies are now locked together, the dollar amount always comes out the same, but it could help you comparison shop. If you do choose to stick with plastic, keep in mind that most banks assess a 2% fee for currency conversion on credit charges.

TRAVELER'S CHECKS

Traveler's checks are something of an anachronism from the days before the ATM made cash accessible at any time. Given the fees you'll pay for ATM use at banks other than your own, however, you might be better off with traveler's checks if you're withdrawing money often.

The most popular traveler's checks are offered by **American Express** (✆ **800/221-7282** for cardholders—this number accepts collect calls, offers service in several foreign languages, and exempts Amex gold and platinum cardholders from the 1% fee); **Visa** (✆ **800/732-1322**)—AAA members can obtain Visa checks for a US$9.95 fee (for checks up to US$1,500) at most AAA offices or by calling ✆ **866/339-3378;** and **MasterCard** (✆ **800/223-9920**).

American Express, Thomas Cook, Visa, and **MasterCard** offer **foreign currency traveler's checks,** which are useful if you're traveling to one country, or to the euro zone; they're accepted at locations where dollar checks may not be.

If you do carry traveler's checks, keep a record of their serial numbers separate from your checks in the event that they are stolen or lost. You'll get a refund faster if you know the numbers.

VALUE-ADDED TAX (VAT)

All European countries charge a **value-added tax (VAT)** of 15% to 25% on goods and services—it's like a sales tax that's already included in the price. Rates vary from country to country (as does the name—it's called the IVA in Italy and Spain, the TVA in France, and so on), though the goal in E.U. countries is to arrive at a uniform rate of about 15%. Citizens of non-E.U. countries can, as they leave the country, get back most of the tax on purchases (not services) if they spend above a designated amount (usually US$80–US$200) in a single store.

Regulations vary from country to country, so inquire at the tourist office when you arrive to find out the procedure; ask what percentage of the tax is refunded, and whether the refund is given to you at the airport or mailed to you later. Look for a **TAX FREE SHOPPING FOR TOURISTS** sign posted in participating stores. Ask the storekeeper for the necessary forms, and, if possible, keep the purchases in their original packages. Save all your receipts and VAT forms from each E.U. country to process all of them at the **"Tax Refund"** desk in the airport of the last country you visit before flying home (allow an extra 30 min. or so at the airport to process forms).

To avoid VAT refund hassles, ask for a Global Refund form ("Shopping Chequeˮ) at a store where you make a purchase. When leaving an E.U. country, have it stamped by Customs, after which you take it to the Global Refund counter at more than 700 airports and border crossings in Europe. Your money is refunded on the spot. For information, contact **Global Refund** (✆ **800/566-9828;** www.globalrefund.com).

4 When to Go

Europe is a continent for all seasons, offering everything from a bikini beach party on the Riviera in summer to the finest skiing in the world in the Alps in winter.

Europe has a Continental climate with distinct seasons, but there are great variations in temperature from one part to another. Northern Norway is plunged into Arctic darkness in winter, but in sunny Sicily the climate is usually temperate—though snow can fall even on the Greek Islands in winter, and winter nights are cold anywhere. Europe is north of most of the United States, but along the Mediterranean they see weather patterns more along the lines of the U.S. southern states. In general, however, seasonal changes are less extreme than in most of the United States.

The **high season** lasts from mid-May to mid-September, with the most tourists hitting the Continent from mid-June to August. In general, this is the most expensive time to travel, except in Austria and Switzerland, where prices are actually higher in winter during the ski season. And since Scandinavian hotels depend on business clients instead of tourists, lower prices can often be found in the fleeting summer, when business clients vacation and a smaller number of tourists take over.

You'll find smaller crowds, relatively fair weather, and often lower prices at hotels in the **shoulder seasons,** from Easter to mid-May and mid-September to mid-October. **Off season** (except at ski resorts) is from November to Easter, with the exception of December 25 to January 6. Much of Europe, Italy especially, takes August off, and from August 15 to August 30 is vacation time for many locals; expect the cities to be devoid of natives but the beaches packed.

WEATHER

BRITAIN & IRELAND Everyone knows it rains a lot in Britain and Ireland. Winters are rainier than summers; from August to mid-October are the sunniest months. Summer daytime temperatures average from the low 60s Fahrenheit (midteens Celsius) to the mid-60s (upper teens Celsius), dropping to the 40s (single digits Celsius) on winter nights. Ireland, whose shores are bathed by the Gulf Stream, has a milder climate and the most changeable weather—a dark rainy morning can quickly turn into a sunny afternoon, and vice versa. The Scottish Lowlands have a climate similar to England's, but the Highlands are much colder, with storms and snow in winter.

CENTRAL EUROPE In Vienna and along the Danube Valley the climate is

What Time Is It, Anyway?

Britain, Ireland, and Portugal are 5 hours ahead of New York City (U.S. Eastern Standard Time); Greece is 7 hours ahead of New York. The rest of the countries in this book are 6 hours ahead of New York. For instance, when it's noon in New York, it's 5pm in London and Lisbon; 6pm in Paris, Copenhagen, and Amsterdam; and 7pm in Athens. The European countries now observe daylight saving time. The time change doesn't usually occur on the same day or during the same month as in the U.S.

If you plan to travel to Ireland or continental Europe from Britain, keep in mind that the time will be the same in Ireland and Portugal, 2 hours later in Greece, and 1 hour later in the other countries in this guide.

moderate. Summer daytime temperatures average in the low 70s Fahrenheit (low 20s Celsius), falling at night to the low 50s (10–12 degrees Celsius). Winter temperatures are in the 30s Fahrenheit (between –1 and +4 degrees Celsius) and 40s (4–9 degrees Celsius) during the day. In Budapest, temperatures can reach 80°F (27°C) in August and dip to 30°F (–1°C) in January. Winter is damp and chilly, spring is mild, and May and June are usually wet. The best weather is in the late summer through October. In Prague and Bohemia, summer months have an average temperature of 65°F (18°C) but are the rainiest, while January and February are usually sunny and clear, with temperatures around freezing.

FRANCE & GERMANY The weather in Paris is approximately the same as in the U.S. mid-Atlantic states, but like most of Europe, there's less extreme variation. In summer, the temperature rarely goes above the mid-70s Fahrenheit (mid-20s Celsius). Summers are fair and can be hot along the Riviera. Winters tend to be mild, in the 40s Fahrenheit (4–9 degrees Celsius), though it's warmer along the Riviera. Germany's climate ranges from the moderate summers and chilly, damp winters in the north to the mild summers and very cold, sunny winters of the alpine south.

NORTHERN EUROPE In the Netherlands, the weather is never extreme at any time of year. Summer temperatures average around 67°F (19°C) and the winter average is about 40°F (4°C). The climate is rainy, with the driest months from February to May. From mid-April to mid-May, the tulip fields burst into color. The climate of northern Germany is very similar. Belgium's climate is moderate, varying from 73°F (23°C) in July and August to 40°F (4°C) in December and January. It does rain a lot, but the weather is at its finest in July and August.

SCANDINAVIA Summer temperatures above the Arctic Circle average around the mid-50s Fahrenheit (low teens Celsius), dropping to around 14°F (–10°C) during the dark winters. In the south, summer temperatures average around 70°F (21°C), dropping to the 20s Fahrenheit (below 0 Celsius) in winter. Fjords and even the ocean are often warm enough for summer swimming, but rain is frequent. The sun shines 24 hours in midsummer above the Arctic Circle, where winter brings semipermanent twilight. Denmark's climate is relatively mild by comparison. It has moderate summer temperatures and winters that can be damp and foggy, with temperatures just above the mid-30s Fahrenheit (single digits Celsius).

SOUTHERN EUROPE Summers are hot in Italy, Spain, and Greece, with temperatures around the high 80s Fahrenheit (low 30s Celsius) or even higher in some parts of Spain. Along the Italian Riviera, summer and winter temperatures are mild, and except in the alpine regions, Italian winter temperatures rarely drop below freezing. The area around Madrid is dry and arid, and summers in Spain are coolest along the Atlantic coast, with mild temperatures year-round on the Costa del Sol. Seaside Portugal is very rainy but has temperatures of 50°F to 75°F (10°C–24°C) year-round. In Greece there's sunshine all year, and winters are usually mild, with temperatures around 50°F to 54°F (10°C–12°C). Hot summer temperatures are often helped by cool breezes. The best seasons to visit Greece are from mid-April to June and mid-September to late October, when the wildflowers bloom and the tourists go home.

SWITZERLAND & THE ALPS The alpine climate is shared by Bavaria in southern Germany and the Austrian Tyrols and Italian Dolomites—winters are cold and bright, and spring comes late, with snow flurries well into April. Summers are mild and sunny, though the alpine regions can experience dramatic changes in weather any time of year.

EUROPE CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January

Epiphany celebrations, Italy, nationwide. All cities, towns, and villages in Italy stage Roman Catholic Epiphany observances. One of the most festive celebrations is the Epiphany Fair at Rome's Piazza Navona. January 6.

February

Carnevale, Venice, Italy. At this riotous time, theatrical presentations and masked balls take place throughout Venice and on the islands in the lagoon. The balls are by invitation only (except the Doge's Ball), but the street events and fireworks are open to everyone. Contact the **Venice Tourist Office,** Apt Venezia, Castello 5050, 30122 Venezia (✆ **041/5298711;** www.turismovenezia.it). The week before Ash Wednesday, the start of Lent.

February Basler Fasnacht, Basel, Switzerland. Called "the wildest of carnivals," with a parade of "cliques" (clubs and associations). Call ✆ **061/268-68-68** or visit www.fasnacht.ch for more information. First Monday after Ash Wednesday.

March

Holmenkollen Ski Festival, Oslo, Norway. This is one of Europe's largest ski festivals, with World Cup Nordic skiing and biathlons and international ski-jumping competitions, all held at Holmenkollen Ski Jump on the outskirts of Oslo. To participate or request more information, contact **Skiforeningen,** Kongeveien 5, Holmenkollen, N-0390 Oslo 3 (✆ **22-92-32-00;** www.skiforeningen.no). Early March.

St. Patrick's Dublin Festival, Dublin, Ireland. This massive 4-day fest is open, free, and accessible to all. Street theater, carnival acts, music, fireworks, and more culminate in Ireland's grandest parade. Call ✆ **01/676-3205** or go to www.stpatricksday.ie. March 16 to March 19.

Budapest Spring Festival, Budapest, Hungary. For 2 weeks, performances of everything from opera to ballet, from classical music to drama, are held in all the major halls and theaters of Budapest. Simultaneously, temporary exhibitions open in many of Budapest's museums. Tickets are available at 1053 Budapest, Egyetem tér 5 (✆ **36/1-486-3311;** www.festivalcity.hu), and at the individual venues. Mid- to late March.

Semana Santa (Holy Week), Seville, Spain. Although many of the country's smaller towns stage similar celebrations, the festivities in Seville are by far the most elaborate. From Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday, processions with hooded penitents move to the piercing wail of the *saeta,* a love song to the Virgin or Christ. Call the **Seville Office of Tourism** for details (✆ **95-423-4465;** www.sevilla.org). Usually the last week of March.

April

Holy Week observances, Italy, nationwide. Processions and age-old ceremonies—some from pagan days, some from the Middle Ages—are staged. The most notable procession is led by the pope, passing the Colosseum and the Roman Forum up to Palatine Hill; a torch-lit parade caps the observance. Four days before Easter Sunday.

Pasqua (Easter Sunday), Rome, Italy. In an event broadcast around the world, the pope gives his blessing from the balcony of St. Peter's. Easter Sunday.

Feria de Sevilla (Seville Fair), Seville, Spain. This is the most celebrated week of revelry in all of Spain, with all-night flamenco dancing, entertainment booths, bullfights, flower-decked coaches, and dancing in the streets. Reserve your hotel early. Contact the **Seville Office of Tourism** (✆ **95-423-4465**). Second week after Easter.

May

Brighton Festival, Brighton, England. The country's largest arts festival features some 400 cultural events. Call ✆ **01273/709-709** or go to www.brighton-festival.org.uk. Most of May.

Prague Spring Music Festival, Prague, Czech Republic. This world-famous 3-week series of classical music and dance performances brings some of the world's best talent to Prague. For details, call ✆ **420/25731-2547** or go to www.festival.cz. Mid-May to early June.

Festival International du Film (Cannes Film Festival), Cannes, France. Movie madness transforms this city into a media circus. Reserve early and make a deposit. Admission to the competition itself is by invitation only; however, many screenings are made available to the public and play round-the-clock. Contact the **Festival de Cannes Association Francaise du Festival International du Film,** 3 rue Amélie, 75007 Paris (✆ **01-53-59-61-00;** www.festival-cannes.org). Mid-May.

International Music Festival, Vienna, Austria. This traditional highlight of Vienna's concert calendar features top-class international orchestras, conductors, and classical greats. The venue and booking address is **Wiener Musikverein,** Lothringer-Strasse 20, A-1030 Vienna (✆ **01/5058190;** www.musikverein.at). Early May through first 3 weeks of June.

Fiesta de San Isidro, Madrid, Spain. Madrileños run wild with a 10-day celebration honoring their city's patron saint. Food fairs, street parades, parties, dances, bullfights, and other events mark the occasion. Expect crowds and traffic. For details, contact the **Instituto de Turismo de España-Turespaña,** 6 Jose Lázaro Galdiano 2807, Madrid (✆ **91-343-3500;** www.tourspain.es). Mid-May.

Maggio Musicale Fiorentino (Musical May Florentine), Florence, Italy. Italy's oldest and most prestigious music festival emphasizes music from the 14th century to the 20th century but also presents ballet and opera. For schedules and tickets, contact the **Maggio Musicale Fiorentino/Teatro**

Comunale, Corso Italia 16, 50123 Firenze (✆ **055-213-535;** www.maggiofiorentino.com). Late April to early June.

Bergen Festspill (Bergen International Festival), Bergen, Norway. This world-class music event features artists from Norway and around the world. Many styles of music are presented, but classical music—especially the work of Grieg—is emphasized. This is one of the largest annual musical events in Scandinavia. Contact the **Bergen International Festival,** Vågsallmenningen 1, 5804, Bergen (✆ **55-21-06-30;** www.fib.no). Mid-May to early June.

Bath International Music Festival, Bath, England. One of Europe's most prestigious international festivals of music and the arts features as many as 1,000 performers at various venues. Contact the **Bath Festivals Trust,** 5 Broad St., Bath, Somerset BA1 5LJ (✆ **01225/463362;** www.bathmusicfest.org.uk). Late May to early June.

June

Hellenic Festival (Athens, Lycobettus & Epidaurus festivals), Greece. The three festivals are now organized under the umbrella term of Hellenic Festival. The Athens Festival features superb productions of ancient drama, opera, modern dance, ballet, and more in the Odeum of Herodes Atticus, on the southwest side of the Acropolis. The Lycabettus Festival presents performances at the amphitheater on Mount Lycovitos. The Epidaurus Festival presents classic Greek drama in its famous amphitheater. Call ✆ **210/928-2900** or go to www.hellenicfestival.gr. June to early October.

Festival di Spoleto, Spoleto, Italy. Dating from 1958, this festival was the artistic creation of maestro and world-class composer Gian Carlo Menotti, who still presides over the event. International performers convene for 3 weeks of dance, drama, opera, concerts, and art exhibits in this Umbrian hill town. The main focus is music composed from 1300 to 1799. For tickets and details, contact the **Spoleto Festival,** Piazza del Duomo 8, 06049 Spoleto (✆ **0743/45028;** www.spoletofestival.it). Late June to mid-July.

Roskilde Festival, Roskilde, Denmark. Europe's biggest rock festival has been going strong for more than 30 years, now bringing about 90,000 revelers each year to the central Zealand town. Besides major rock concerts, scheduled activities include theater and film presentations. Call ✆ **46-36-66-13** or check www.roskilde-festival.dk. Late June to early July.

Il Palio, Siena, Italy. Palio fever grips this Tuscan hill town for a wild and exciting horse race from the Middle Ages. Pageantry, costumes, and the celebrations of the victorious *contrada* (sort of a neighborhood social club) mark the spectacle. For details, contact the **Azienda di Promozione Turistica,** Piazza del Campo 56, 53100 Siena (✆ **0461-839000;** www.ilpalio.org). Late June to mid-August.

July

Tour de France, France. Europe's most hotly contested bicycle race pits crews of wind-tunnel-tested athletes along an itinerary that detours deep into the Massif Central and ranges across the Alps. The race is decided at a finish line drawn across the Champs-Elysées. Call ✆ **01-41-33-15-00** or check www.letour.fr. Month of July.

Karlovy Vary International Film Festival, Karlovy Vary, Czech Republic. This annual 10-day event predates Communism and has regained its "A" rating from the international body governing film festivals, which puts it in the same league as Cannes and Venice but without the star-drawing power of the more glittery stops. For more information, call ✆ **420/221-411-011** or check www.iffkv.cz. Early to mid-July.

Montreux International Jazz Festival, Montreux, Switzerland. More than jazz, this festival features everything from reggae bands to African tribal chanters. Monster dance fests also break out nightly. The 2½-week festival concludes with a 12-hour marathon of world music. Write to the **Montreux Jazz Festival,** Case Postale Box 97, CH-1820 Montreux, call ✆ **021/966-44-44,** or check www.montreuxjazz.com. Early July.

Bastille Day, France, nationwide. Celebrating the birth of modern-day France, the nation's festivities reach their peak in Paris with street fairs, pageants, fireworks, and feasts. In Paris, the day begins with a parade down the Champs-Elysées and ends with fireworks at Montmartre. July 14.

Around Gotland Race, Sandhamn, Sweden, The Gotland Runt. The biggest and most exciting open-water Scandinavian sailing race starts and finishes at Sandhamn in the Stockholm archipelago. About 450 boats, mainly from Nordic countries, take part. Call the **Stockholm Tourist Center** (✆ **08/508-285-00;** www.stockholmtown.com) for information. Two days in mid-July.

The Proms, London, England. A night at "The Proms"—the annual Henry Wood promenade concerts at Royal Albert Hall—attracts music aficionados from around the world. Staged almost daily (except for a few Sun), these traditional concerts were launched in 1895 and are the principal summer engagements for the BBC Symphony Orchestra. Cheering and clapping, Union Jacks on parade, banners, and balloons—it's great summer fun. Call ✆ **020/7589-8212,** or go to www.bbc.co.uk/proms. Mid-July to mid-September.

Salzburg Festival, Salzburg, Austria. Since the 1920s, this has been one of the premier cultural events of Europe, sparkling with opera, chamber music, plays, concerts, appearances by world-class artists, and many other cultural presentations. Always count on stagings of Mozart operas. For tickets, write several months in advance to the **Salzburg Festival,** Postfach 140, A-5010 Salzburg (✆ **0662/8045-500;** www.salzburgfestival.at). Late July to late August.

Richard Wagner Festival, Bayreuth Festspielhaus, Germany. One of Europe's two or three major opera events, this festival takes place in the composer's Festspielhaus in Bayreuth, the capital of upper Franconia. ***Note:*** Opera tickets often must be booked years in advance. Contact **Festival Administration,** Bayreuther Festspiele, Am Festspiele, Kartenbüro Postfach 100262, D-95445 Bayreuth (✆ **0921/78-780;** www.festspiele.de). Late July to late August.

Festival d'Avignon, Avignon, France. This world-class festival has a reputation for exposing new talent to critical acclaim. The focus is usually on avant-garde works in theater, dance, and music. Much of the music is presented within the 14th-century courtyard of the Palais de l'Ancien Archeveché (the Old Archbishop's Palace). Make hotel reservations early. For information, call ✆ **04-90-27-66-50;** www.festival-avignon.com. Last 3 weeks of July.

August

Edinburgh International Festival, Edinburgh, Scotland. Scotland's best-known festival is held for 3 weeks. Called an "arts bonanza," it draws major talent from around the world, with more than a thousand shows presented and a million tickets sold. Book, jazz, and film festivals are also staged at this time. Contact the **Edinburgh International Festival,** The Hub, Castle Hill, Edinburgh EH1 2NE (✆ **0131/473-2099;** www.eif.co.uk). Three weeks in August.

Illuminations' Regatta at Silkeborg, Silkeborg, Denmark. Denmark's oldest and biggest festival features nightly cruises on the lakes, with thousands of candles illuminating the shores. The fireworks display on the last night is the largest and most spectacular in northern Europe. Popular Danish artists provide entertainment at a large fun fair. Contact the festival, Turbådene Åhavevej 2a, DK-8600 Silkeborg (✆ **8724-4900;** www.ildregatta.dk). Mid- August.

Festas da Senhora da Agonia, Viana do Castelo, north of Porto, Portugal. The most spectacular festival in the north honors "Our Lady of Suffering." A replica of the Virgin is carried through the streets over carpets of flowers. Float-filled parades mark the 3-day-and-a-night event as a time of revelry. A blaze of fireworks ends the festival. Call the **tourist office** (✆ **223/393-470**) for exact dates, which vary from year to year. Mid-August.

St. Stephen's Day, Hungary. This is Hungary's national day. The country's patron saint is celebrated with cultural events and a dramatic display of fireworks over the Danube at 9pm. Hungarians also ceremoniously welcome the first new bread from the crop of July wheat. August 20.

September

Highland Games & Gathering, Braemar, Scotland. The queen and many members of the royal family often show up for this annual event, with its massed bands, piping and dancing competitions, and performances of great strength by a tribe of gigantic men. Contact the **tourist office** in Braemar, The Mews, Mar Road, Braemar, Aberdeenshire, AB35 5YL (✆ **01339/741-098;** www.braemargathering.org). First Saturday in September.

Oktoberfest, Munich, Germany. Germany's most famous festival happens mainly in September, not October. Millions show up, and hotels are packed. Most activities are at Theresienwiese, where local breweries sponsor gigantic tents that can hold up to 6,000 beer drinkers. Always reserve hotel rooms well in advance. Contact the **Munich Tourist Office** (✆ **089/233-965-00;** www.muenchen-tourist.de). Mid-September to the first Sunday in October.

October

Autumn Winegrowers' Festival, Lugano, Switzerland. A parade and other festivities mark harvest time. Little girls throw flowers from blossom-covered floats, and oxen pull festooned wagons in a colorful procession. For information call the Lugano Tourist Office (✆ **091/913-32-32**. Three days in early October.

November

All Saints' Day, Spain, nationwide. This public holiday is reverently celebrated, as relatives and friends lay flowers on the graves of the dead. November 1.

December

La Scala Opera Season, Teatro alla Scala, Milan. At the most famous opera house of them all, the season opens on

December 7, the feast day of Milan's patron St. Ambrogio, and runs into July. Even though opening-night tickets are close to impossible to get, it's worth a try; call ✆ **02/7200-3744** for information, or 02/88-791 for reservations, or go to www.teatroallascala.org. Early December to mid-July.

Nobel Peace Prize Ceremony, Oslo, Norway. This major event on the Oslo calendar attracts world attention. It's held at Oslo City Hall and attendance is by invitation only. For details, contact the **Nobel Institute,** Drammensveien 19, N-0255 Oslo 2 (✆ **08-663-09-20;** www.nobel.se). December 10.

5 Travel Insurance

The cost of travel insurance varies widely, depending on the destination, the cost and length of your trip, your age and health, and the type of trip you're taking, but expect to pay between 5% and 8% of the vacation itself. You can get estimates from various providers through **InsureMyTrip.com.** Enter your trip cost and dates, your age, and other information, for prices from more than a dozen companies.

U.K. citizens and their families who make more than one trip abroad per year may find an annual travel insurance policy works out cheaper. Check **www.moneysupermarket.com**, which compares prices across a wide range of providers for single- and multi-trip policies.

Most big travel agents offer their own insurance and will probably try to sell you their package when you book a holiday. Think before you sign. **Britain's Consumers' Association** recommends that you insist on seeing the policy and reading the fine print before buying travel insurance. **The Association of British Insurers** (✆ **020/7600-3333;** www.abi.org.uk) gives advice by phone and publishes *Holiday Insurance,* a free guide to policy provisions and prices. You might also shop around for better deals: Try **Columbus Direct** (✆ **0870/033-9988;** www.columbusdirect.net).

TRIP-CANCELLATION INSURANCE

Trip-cancellation insurance will help retrieve your money if you have to back out of a trip or depart early, or if your travel supplier goes bankrupt. Trip cancellation traditionally covers such events as sickness, natural disasters, and State Department advisories. The latest news in trip-cancellation insurance is the availability of **expanded hurricane coverage** and the **"any-reason"**-cancellation coverage—which costs more but covers cancellations made for any reason. You won't get back 100% of your prepaid trip cost, but you'll be refunded a substantial portion. **TravelSafe** (✆ **888/885-7233;** www.travelsafe.com) offers both types of coverage. Expedia also offers any-reason cancellation coverage for its air-hotel packages.

For details, contact one of the following recommended insurers: **Access America** (✆ 800/729-6021; www.accessamerica.com); **Travel Guard International** (✆ 800/826-4919; www.travelguard.com); **Travel Insured International** (✆ 800/243-3174; www.travelinsured.com); and **Travelex Insurance Services** (✆ 800/228-9792; www.traveled-insurance.com).

MEDICAL INSURANCE

For travel overseas, most U.S. health plans (including Medicare and Medicaid) do not provide coverage, and the ones that do often require you to pay for services upfront and reimburse you only after you return home.

As a safety net, you may want to buy travel medical insurance, particularly if you're traveling to a remote or high-risk area where emergency evacuation might be necessary. If you require additional medical insurance, try **MEDEX Assistance** (✆ 800/732-5309; www.medexassist.com) or **Travel Assistance International** (✆ **800/821-2828;** www.travelassistance.com; for general information on services, call the company's **Worldwide Assistance Services, Inc.,** at ✆ **800/777-8710**).

Canadians should check with their provincial health plan offices or call **Health Canada** (✆ **866/225-0709;** www.hc-sc.gc.ca) to find out the extent of their coverage and what documentation and receipts they must take home in case they are treated overseas.

LOST-LUGGAGE INSURANCE

On international flights (including U.S. portions of international trips), baggage coverage is limited to approximately US$9.07 per pound, up to approximately US$635 per checked bag. If you plan to check items more valuable than what's covered by the standard liability, see if your homeowner's policy covers your valuables, get baggage insurance as part of your comprehensive travel-insurance package.

If your luggage is lost, immediately file a lost-luggage claim at the airport, detailing the luggage contents. Most airlines require that you report delayed, damaged, or lost baggage within 4 hours of arrival. The airlines are required to deliver luggage, once found, directly to your house or destination free of charge.

6 Health

STAYING HEALTHY

In most of Europe the tap water is generally safe to drink (except on trains and wherever it's marked as nondrinking water), the milk is pasteurized, and health services are good. You will, however, be eating foods and spices your body isn't used to, so you might want to bring along Pepto-Bismol or Imodium tablets in case indigestion or diarrhea strikes.

GENERAL AVAILABILITY OF HEALTHCARE

Contact the **International Association for Medical Assistance to Travelers** (**IAMAT;** ✆ **716/754-4883,** or 416/652-0137 in Canada; www.iamat.org) for tips on travel and health concerns in the countries you're visiting, and for lists of local, English-speaking doctors. The United States **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** (✆ **800/311-3435;**

Avoiding "Economy-Class Syndrome"

Deep-vein thrombosis, or as it's known in the world of flying, "economy-class syndrome," is a blood clot that develops in a deep vein. It's a potentially deadly condition that can be caused by sitting in cramped conditions—such as an airplane cabin—for too long. During a flight (especially a long-haul flight), get up, walk around, and stretch your legs every 60 to 90 minutes to keep your blood flowing. Other preventive measures include frequent flexing of the legs while sitting, drinking lots of water, and avoiding alcohol and sleeping pills. If you have a history of deep-vein thrombosis, heart disease, or another condition that puts you at high risk, some experts recommend wearing compression stockings or taking anticoagulants when you fly; always ask your physician about the best course for you. Symptoms of deep-vein thrombosis include leg pain or swelling, or even shortness of breath.

Healthy Travels to You

The following government websites offer up-to-date health-related travel advice:

- Australia: www.dfat.gov.au
- Canada: www.hc-sc.gc.ca
- U.K.: www.dh.gov.uk
- U.S.: www.cdc.gov

www.cdc.gov) provides up-to-date information on health hazards by region or country and offers tips on food safety. The website **Travel Health Online** (**www.tripprep.com**), sponsored by a consortium of travel medicine practitioners, may also offer helpful advice on traveling abroad. You can find listings of reliable clinics overseas at the **International Society of Travel Medicine** (www.istm.org).

If anything, pharmacies in European cities are better stocked than some American drugstores, in that certain drugs might be available in Europe and not yet in the United States. There is no need to stock up on over-the-counter medications. Generic equivalents of your common prescription drugs are likely to be available at your destination.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU GET SICK AWAY FROM HOME

Any foreign consulate can provide a list of area doctors who speak English. If you get sick, consider asking your hotel concierge to recommend a local doctor—even his or her own. You can also try the emergency room at a local hospital. Many hospitals also have walk-in clinics for emergency cases that are not life-threatening; you may not get immediate attention, but you won't pay the high price of an emergency room visit.

We list **hospitals** and **emergency numbers** under "Fast Facts," in each destination chapter.

If you suffer from a chronic illness, consult your doctor before your departure. Pack **prescription medications** in your carry-on luggage, and carry them in their original containers, with pharmacy labels—otherwise they won't make it through airport security. Carry the generic name of prescription medicines, in case a local pharmacist is unfamiliar with the brand name.

You may have to pay all medical costs upfront and be reimbursed later. See "Medical Insurance," under "Travel Insurance," above.

7 Specialized Travel Resources

TRAVELERS WITH DISABILITIES

Europe won't win any medals for accessibility for travelers with disabilities, but in the past few years its big cities have made an effort to accommodate them.

Many travel agencies offer customized tours and itineraries for travelers with disabilities. Among them are **Flying Wheels Travel** (✆ **507/451-5005;** www.flyingwheelstravel.com); **Access-Able Travel Source** (✆ **303/232-2979;** www.access-able.com); and **Accessible Journeys** (✆ **800/846-4537** or 610/521-0339; www.disabilitytravel.com).

Organizations that offer assistance to travelers with disabilities include **Moss-Rehab** (✆ **800/CALL-MOSS;** www.mossresourcenet.org); the **American Foundation for the Blind** (**AFB;** ✆ **800/232-5463;** www.afb.org); and **SATH**

(Society for Accessible Travel & Hospitality; ✆ **212/447-7284;** www.sath.org). **AirAmbulanceCard.com** (✆ **877/424-7633**) is now partnered with SATH and allows you to preselect top-notch hospitals in case of an emergency.

For U.K. Citizens The **Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation (RADAR),** Unit 12, 250 City Rd., London EC1V 8AF (✆ **020/7250-3222;** www.radar.org.uk), provides general info, including planning and booking a holiday, insurance, finances, and useful organizations, holiday providers, transportation and rental equipment options, and specialized accommodations. Another good service is the **Holiday Care Service,** Sunley House, 7th Floor, 4 Bedford Park, Croydon, Surrey CR0 2AP (✆ **0845/124-9971;** www.holidaycare.org), a national charity that advises on accessible accommodations for seniors and persons with disabilities.

GAY & LESBIAN TRAVELERS

Much of Europe has grown to accept same-sex couples over the past few decades, and in most countries homosexual sex acts are legal. To be on the safe side, do a bit of research and test the waters for acceptability in any one city or area. As you might expect, smaller towns tend to be less accepting than cities. Gay centers include London, Paris, Amsterdam, Berlin, Milan, Ibiza, Sitges, and the Greek Islands (Mykonos).

The International Gay and Lesbian Travel Association (IGLTA; ✆ **800/448-8550** or 954/776-2626; www.iglta.org) is the trade association for the gay and lesbian travel industry, and offers an online directory of gay- and lesbian-friendly travel businesses; go to their website and click on "Members."

Many agencies offer tours and travel itineraries specifically for gay and lesbian travelers. Among them are **Above and Beyond Tours** (✆ **800/397-2681;** www.abovebeyondtours.com); **Now, Voyager** (✆ **800/255-6951;** www.nowvoyager.com); and **Olivia Cruises & Resorts** (✆ **800/631-6277;** www.olivia.com).

Gay.com Travel (✆ **415/834-6500**; www.gay.com or www.outandabout.com) is an excellent online successor to the popular ***Out & About*** print magazine. It provides regularly updated information about gay-owned, gay-oriented, and gay-friendly lodging, dining, sightseeing, nightlife, and shopping establishments in every important destination worldwide.

The following travel guides are available at many bookstores, or you can order them from any online bookseller: ***Spartacus International Gay Guide*** (Bruno Gmünder Verlag; www.spartacusworld.com/gayguide) and ***Odysseus: The International Gay Travel Planner*** (www.odyusa.com); and the ***Damron*** guides (www.damron.com), with separate, annual books for gay men and lesbians.

SENIOR TRAVEL

Don't be shy about asking for discounts, but always carry some kind of ID, such as a driver's license, showing your date of birth. Also mention that you're a senior when you first make your travel reservations. Many hotels offer seniors discounts, and in most cities, people over age 60 qualify for reduced admission to theaters, museums, and other attractions as well as discounted fares on public transportation.

Members of **AARP,** 601 E St. NW, Washington, DC 20049 (✆ **888/687-2277;** www.aarp.org), get discounts on hotels, airfares, and car rentals. AARP offers members a wide range of benefits, including *AARP: The Magazine* and a monthly newsletter. Anyone over 50 can join.

Many reliable agencies and organizations target the 50-plus market. **Elderhostel** (✆ **800/454-5768;** www.elderhostel.org) arranges study programs for those age 55 and over.

Recommended publications offering travel resources and discounts for seniors include the quarterly magazine ***Travel 50 & Beyond*** (www.travel50andbeyond.com); ***Travel Unlimited: Uncommon Adventures for the Mature Traveler*** (Avalon); and ***Unbelievably Good Deals and Great Adventures That You Absolutely Can't Get Unless You're Over 50*** (McGraw-Hill), by Joann Rattner Heilman.

FAMILY TRAVEL

Europeans expect to see families traveling together. It's a multigenerational continent, and you'll sometimes see the whole clan traveling around. And Europeans tend to love kids. You'll often find that a child guarantees you an even warmer reception at hotels and restaurants.

At **restaurants,** ask waiters for a half portion to fit junior's appetite. If you're traveling with small children, three- and four-star hotels may be your best bet—**babysitters** are on call so you can take the occasional romantic dinner, and such hotels have a better general ability to help you access the city and its services. But even cheaper hotels can usually find you a sitter. Traveling with a pint-size person usually means pint-size rates. An **extra cot** in the room won't cost more than 30% extra (if anything), and most museums and sights offer **reduced or free admission** for children under a certain age (which can range from 6–18). And kids almost always get discounts on plane and train tickets.

To locate accommodations, restaurants, and attractions that are particularly kid-friendly, refer to the "Kids" icon throughout this guide.

Recommended family travel websites include **Family Travel Forum** (www.familytravelforum.com); **Family Travel Network** (www.familytravelnetwork.com); **Traveling Internationally with Your Kids** (www.travelwithyourkids.com); and **Family Travel Files** (www.thefamilytravelfiles.com).

AFRICAN-AMERICAN TRAVELERS

Black Travel Online (www.blacktravelonline.com) posts news on upcoming events and includes links to articles and travel-booking sites. **Soul of America** (www.soulofamerica.com) is a comprehensive website, with travel tips, event and family-reunion postings, and sections on historically black beach resorts and active vacations.

Agencies and organizations that provide resources for black travelers include **Rodgers Travel** (**✆ 800/825-1775;** www.rodgerstravel.com); the **African American Association of Innkeepers International** (**✆ 877/422-5777;** www.africanamericaninns.com). For more information, check out the following collections and guides: ***Go Girl: The Black Woman's Guide to Travel & Adventure*** (Eighth Mountain Press), a compilation of travel essays by writers including Jill Nelson and Audre Lorde; and ***Pathfinders Magazine*** (**✆ 215/438-2140;** www.pathfinderstravel.com), which includes articles on everything from Rio de Janeiro to Ghana as well as information on upcoming ski, diving, golf, and tennis trips.

STUDENT TRAVEL

The **International Student Travel Confederation (ISTC)** (www.istc.org) was formed in 1949 to make travel around the world more affordable for students. Check out its website for comprehensive travel services information and details on how to get an **International Student Identity Card (ISIC),** which qualifies students for substantial savings on rail passes, plane tickets, entrance fees, and more. It also provides students with basic health and life insurance and a 24-hour help line. The card is valid for a maximum of 18 months. You can apply for the card online or in person at **STA**

Travel (✆ **800/781-4040** in North America; www.statravel.com), the biggest student travel agency in the world; check out the website to locate STA Travel offices worldwide. If you're no longer a student but are still under 26, you can get an **International Youth Travel Card (IYTC)** from the same people, which entitles you to some discounts. **Travel CUTS** (✆ **800/592-2887;** www.travelcuts.com) offers similar services for both Canadians and U.S. residents. Irish students may prefer to turn to **USIT** (✆ **01/602-1906;** www.usit.ie), an Ireland-based specialist in student, youth, and independent travel.

8 Planning Your Trip Online

SURFING FOR AIRFARE

The most popular online travel agencies are **Travelocity** (**www.travelocity.com**, or www.travelocity.co.uk); **Expedia** (**www.expedia.com**, www.expedia.co.uk, or www.expedia.ca); and **Orbitz** (**www.orbitz.com**).

In addition, most airlines now offer online-only fares that even their phone agents know nothing about. For the websites of airlines that fly to and from your destination, go to "Getting There," p. 29.

Other helpful websites for booking airline tickets online include:

- www.biddingfortravel.com
- www.cheapflights.com
- www.hotwire.com
- www.kayak.com
- www.lastminutetravel.com
- www.opodo.co.uk
- www.priceline.com
- www.sidestep.com
- www.lastminute.com
- www.smartertravel.com

SURFING FOR HOTELS

In addition to **Travelocity, Expedia, Orbitz, Priceline,** and **Hotwire** (see above), the following websites will help you with booking hotel rooms online:

- www.hotels.com
- www.quickbook.com
- www.travelaxe.net
- www.travelweb.com
- www.tripadvisor.com

It's a good idea to **get a confirmation number** and **make a printout** of any online booking transaction.

SURFING FOR RENTAL CARS

For booking rental cars online, the best deals are usually found at rental-car company websites, although all the major online travel agencies also offer rental-car reservations services. Priceline and Hotwire work well for rental cars, too; the only "mystery" is which major rental company you get, and for most travelers the difference between Hertz, Avis, and Budget is negligible.

TRAVEL BLOGS & TRAVELOGUES

You can search for blogs about Europe at **Travelblog.com** or post your own travelogue at **Travelblog.org.** Other blogs include:

- www.gridskipper.com
- www.salon.com/wanderlust
- www.worldhum.com
- www.writtenroad.com

9 Staying Connected

CELLPHONES

The three letters that define much of the world's wireless capabilities are **GSM** (Global System for Mobile Communications), a big, seamless network that makes for easy cross-border cell phone use throughout Europe and dozens of other countries worldwide. In the U.S., T-Mobile, AT&T

Number, Please: Calling Europe

To make a phone call **from the United States to Europe,** dial the international access code, **011,** then the **country code** for the country you're calling, then the **city code** for the city you're calling, and then the regular phone number. For an operator-assisted call, dial **01,** then the country code, then the city code, and then the regular phone number; an operator then comes on the line.

The following are the codes for the countries and major cities in this guide. These are the codes you use to call from overseas or from another European country. If you're calling from within the country or within the city, see "Telephone" in the "Fast Facts" section for each city.

European phone systems are undergoing a prolonged change. **Italy, France, Spain, Monaco, Copenhagen, and Portugal no longer use separate city codes.** The code is now built into all phone numbers, and you must always dial the initial 0 or 9 (which was previously—and still is in most other countries—added before a city code only when dialing from another city within the country). Also, be aware of these two recent changes: The city codes for London (171 and 181) have been replaced by a new single code, 20, which is then followed by an eight-digit number beginning with either 7 or 8; and the city code for Lisbon has changed from 1 to 21.

Austria	43
Innsbruck	12
Salzburg	62
Vienna	1
Belgium	32
Bruges	50
Brussels	2
Ghent	9
Czech Republic	42
Prague	2
Denmark	45
Copenhagen	31–39
England	44
Bath	1225
London	207
Oxford	1865
Stratford-upon-Avon	1789
France	33
Germany	49
Berlin	30
Frankfurt	69
Munich	89

Wireless, and Cingular use this quasi-universal system; in Canada, Microcell and some Rogers customers are GSM, and all Europeans and most Australians use GSM. GSM phones function with a removable plastic SIM card, encoded with your phone number and account information. If your cellphone is on a GSM system, and you have a world-capable multiband phone such as many Sony, Ericsson, Motorola, or Samsung models, you can make and receive calls across civilized areas around much of the globe. Just call your wireless operator and ask for "international roaming" to be activated on your account. Unfortunately, per-minute charges can be high—usually US$1 to US$1.50 in western Europe.

For many, **renting** a phone is a good idea. While you can rent a phone from any

Greece	30
Athens	1
Delphi	265
Hungary	36
Budapest	1
Ireland	353
Dublin	1
Italy	39
Milan	2
Rome	6
Venice	41
Monaco	377
Netherlands	31
Amsterdam	20
Norway	47
Oslo	22
Portugal	351
Scotland	44
Edinburgh	131
Spain	34
Barcelona	3
Madrid	1
Seville	5
Sweden	46
Stockholm	8
Switzerland	41
Bern	31
Geneva	22
Zurich	1

The easiest and cheapest way to call home from abroad is with a calling card. On the road, you just dial a local access code (almost always free) and then punch in the number you're calling as well as the calling-card number. If you're in a non–touch-tone country, just wait for an English-speaking operator to put your call through. The "Telephone" entry in the "Fast Facts" for each city gives the AT&T, MCI, and Sprint access codes for that country (your calling card will probably come with a wallet-size list of local access numbers). You can also call any one of those companies' numbers to make a collect call as well; just dial it and wait for the operator.

When it comes to dialing direct, calling from the United States to Europe is much cheaper than the other way around, so whenever possible, have friends and family call you at your hotel rather than calling them yourself. To dial direct back to the **United States** and **Canada** from Europe, the international access code is often, but not always, **00;** the country code is **1,** and then you punch in the area code and number. For **Australia** and **New Zealand,** the access code is also **00;** the country codes are **61** and **64,** respectively.

number of overseas sites, including kiosks at airports and at car-rental agencies, we suggest renting the phone before you leave home. North Americans can rent one before leaving home from **InTouch USA** (✆ **800/872-7626**; www.intouchglobal.com) or **RoadPost** (✆ **888/290-1616** or 905/272-5665; www.roadpost.com). InTouch will also, for free, advise you on whether your existing phone will work overseas.

Buying a phone can be economically attractive, as many nations have cheap prepaid phone systems. Once you arrive at your destination, stop by a local cellphone shop and get the cheapest package; you'll probably pay less than US$100 for a phone and a starter calling card. Local calls may be as low as 10¢ per minute, and in many countries incoming calls are free.

VOICE-OVER INTERNET PROTOCOL (VOIP)

If you have Web access while traveling, you might consider a broadband-based telephone service (in technical terms, **Voice over Internet protocol,** or **VoIP**) such as Skype (www.skype.com) or Vonage (www.vonage.com), which allows you to make free international calls if you use their services from your laptop or in a cybercafe. The people you're calling must also use the service for it to work; check the sites for details.

INTERNET/E-MAIL

WITHOUT YOUR OWN COMPUTER

To find cybercafes in your destination check **www.cybercaptive.com** and **www.cybercafe.com**.

Most major airports have **Internet kiosks** that provide basic Web access for a per-minute fee that's usually higher than cybercafe prices. Check out copy shops like **Kinko's** (FedEx Kinko's), which offers computer stations with fully loaded software (as well as Wi-Fi).

WITH YOUR OWN COMPUTER

More and more hotels, resorts, airports, cafes, and retailers are going **Wi-Fi** (wireless fidelity), becoming "hotspots" that offer free high-speed Wi-Fi access or charge a small fee for usage. Most laptops sold today have built-in wireless capability. To find public Wi-Fi hotspots at your destination, go to **www.jiwire.com**; its Hotspot Finder holds the world's largest directory of public wireless hotspots.

For dial-up access, most business-class hotels throughout the world offer dataports for laptop modems, and a few thousand hotels in Europe now offer free high-speed Internet access.

Wherever you go, bring a **connection kit** of the right power and phone adapters, a spare phone cord, and a spare Ethernet network cable—or find out whether your hotel supplies them to guests.

Online Traveler's Toolbox

Veteran travelers usually carry some essential items to make their trips easier. Following is a selection of handy online tools to bookmark and use.

- **Airplane Food** (www.airlinemeals.net)
- **Airplane Seating** (www.seatguru.com and www.airlinequality.com)
- **Foreign Languages for Travelers** (www.travlang.com)
- **Maps** (www.mapquest.com)
- **Subway Navigator** (www.subwaynavigator.com)
- **Time and Date** (www.timeanddate.com)
- **Travel Warnings** (http://travel.state.gov, www.fco.gov.uk/travel, www.voyage.gc.ca, and www.dfat.gov.au/consular/advice)
- **Universal Currency Converter** (www.xe.com/ucc)
- **Visa ATM Locator** (www.visa.com), **MasterCard ATM Locator** (www.mastercard.com)
- **Weather** (www.intellicast.com and www.weather.com)

Frommers.com: The Complete Travel Resource

It should go without saying, but we highly recommend **Frommers.com,** voted Best Travel Site by *PC Magazine.* We think you'll find our expert advice and tips; independent reviews of hotels, restaurants, attractions, and preferred shopping and nightlife venues; vacation giveaways; and an online booking tool indispensable before, during, and after your travels. We publish the complete contents of over 128 travel guides in our **Destinations** section covering nearly 3,800 places worldwide to help you plan your trip. Each weekday, we publish original articles reporting on **Deals and News** via our free **Frommers.com Newsletter** to help you save time and money and travel smarter. We're betting you'll find our new **Events** listings (http://events.frommers.com) an invaluable resource; it's an up-to-the-minute roster of what's happening in cities everywhere—including concerts, festivals, lectures and more. We've also added weekly **Podcasts, interactive maps,** and hundreds of new images across the site. Check out our **Travel Talk** area featuring **Message Boards** where you can join in conversations with thousands of fellow Frommer's travelers and post your trip report once you return.

10 Getting There

FLYING FROM NORTH AMERICA

Most major airlines charge competitive fares to European cities, but price wars break out regularly and fares can change overnight. Tickets tend to be cheaper if you fly midweek or off season. **High season** on most routes is usually from June to mid-September—the most expensive and most crowded time to travel. **Shoulder season** is from April to May, mid-September to October, and December 15 to December 24. **Low season**—with the cheapest fares—is from November to December 14 and December 25 to March.

MAJOR NORTH AMERICAN AIRLINES North American carriers with frequent service and flights to Europe are **Air Canada** (✆ **888/247-2262;** www.aircanada.ca), **American Airlines** (✆ **800/433-7300;** www.aa.com), **Continental Airlines** (✆ **800/231-0856;** www.continental.com), **Delta Airlines** (✆ **800/221-1212;** www.delta.com), **Northwest KLM Airlines** (✆ **800/225-2525;** www.nwa.com), and **US Airways/America-West** (✆ **800/622-1015;** www.usairways.com).

EUROPEAN NATIONAL AIRLINES Not only will the national carriers of European countries offer the greatest number of direct flights from the United States (and can easily book you through to cities beyond the major hubs), but since their entire U.S. market is to fly you to their home country, they often run more competitive deals than most North American carriers. Major national and country-affiliated European airlines include the following:

- **Austria:** Austrian Airlines. In the U.S. and Canada: ✆ 800/843-0002. In the U.K.: ✆ 020/7766-0300. www.aua.com.
- **Belgium:** Brussels Airline. In the U.S. and Canada: ✆ 866/308-2230. In the U.K.: ✆ 0121/767-8712. www.brusselsairline.com.

Tips Getting Through the Airport

- Arrive at the airport 1 hour before a domestic flight and 2 hours before an international flight; if you show up late, tell an airline employee and he or she will probably whisk you to the front of the line.
- Beat the ticket-counter lines by using airport electronic kiosks or even online check-in from your home computer, from where you can print out boarding passes in advance. Curbside check-in is also a good way to avoid lines.
- Bring a current, government-issued photo ID such as a driver's license or passport. Children 17 and under do not need government-issued photo IDs for flights within the U.S., but they do for international flights to most countries.
- Speed up security by removing your jacket and shoes before you're screened. In addition, remove metal objects such as big belt buckles. If you've got metallic body parts, a note from your doctor can prevent a long chat with the security screeners.
- Use a TSA-approved lock for your checked luggage. Look for Travel Sentry certified locks at airport shops, luggage or travel shops, and Brookstone stores (or online at www.brookstone.com).

- **Czech Republic:** CSA Czech Airlines. In the U.S.: ✆ 800/223-2365. In Canada: ✆ 863/293-8702. In the U.K.: ✆ 0871/663-3747. In Australia: ✆ 02/8248-0000. www.csa.cz.
- **France:** Air France. In the U.S.: ✆ 800/237-2747. In Canada: ✆ 800/667-2747. In the U.K.: ✆ 0870/242-9242. www.airfrance.com.
- **Germany:** Lufthansa. In the U.S.: ✆ 800/645-3880. In Canada: ✆ 800/563-5954. In the U.K.: ✆ 0871/945-9747. In Australia: ✆ 1300-655-727. In New Zealand: ✆ 0800/945220. www.lufthansa-usa.com.
- **Greece:** Olympic Airlines. In the U.S.: ✆ 800/223-1226, or 718/269-2200 in New York State. In Canada: ✆ 514/878-9691 in Montréal, or 905/676-4841 in Toronto. In the U.K.: 0870/606-0460. In Australia: ✆ 02/9251-2044. www.olympicairlines.com.
- **Hungary:** Malev Hungarian Airlines. In the U.S.: ✆ 800/223-6884. In Canada: ✆ 866/379-7313. In the U.K.: ✆ 0870/909-0577; www.malev.hu.
- **Ireland:** Aer Lingus. In the U.S.: ✆ 800/IRISH-AIR. In the U.K.: ✆ 0870/876-5555. www.aerlingus.com.
- **Italy:** Alitalia. In the U.S. and Canada: ✆ 800/223-5730. In the U.K.: ✆ 0871/424-1424. www.alitalia.com.
- **The Netherlands:** Northwest KLM. In the U.S. and Canada: ✆ 800/225-2525. In the U.K.: ✆ 08705/074074. www.klm.com.
- **Portugal:** TAP Air Portugal. In the U.S.: ✆ 800/221-7370. In the U.K.: ✆ 0845/601-0932. www.tap-airportugal.pt.
- **Scandinavia (Denmark, Norway, Sweden):** SAS Scandinavian Airlines. In the U.S.: ✆ 800/221-2350. In the

U.K.: ✆ 0871/521-2772. In Australia: ✆ 1300/727-707. www.scandinavian.net.

- **Spain:** Iberia. In the U.S. and Canada: ✆ 800/772-4642. In the U.K.: ✆ 0870/609-0500. www.iberia.com.
- **Switzerland:** Swiss International Airlines. In the U.S.: ✆ 877/359-7947. In Canada: ✆ 877/359-7947. In the U.K.: ✆ 0845/601-0956. www.swiss.com.
- **United Kingdom:** (1) British Airways. In the U.S. and Canada: ✆ 800/247-9297. In the U.K.: ✆ 0870/850-9850. In Australia: ✆ 1300/767-177. www.britishairways.com. (2) Virgin Atlantic Airways. In the U.S. and Canada: ✆ 800/821-5438. In the U.K.: ✆ 0870/574-7747. In Australia: ✆ 1300/727-340. www.virgin-atlantic.com.

GETTING TO THE CONTINENT FROM THE UNITED KINGDOM

BY TRAIN Many rail passes and discounts are available in the United Kingdom for travel in continental Europe. One of the most complete overviews is available from **Rail Europe Special Services Department,** 10 Leake St., London SE1 7NN (✆ **08448/484-088**). This organization is particularly well versed in information about discount travel as it applies to persons under 26, full-time or part-time students, and seniors.

The most prevalent option for younger travelers, the **EuroYouth passes,** are available only to travelers under 26 and entitle the pass holder to unlimited second-class rail travel in 26 European countries.

BY CHUNNEL The Eurostar train shuttles between London and both Paris and Brussels; trip time is under 3 hours (compared to 10 hr. on the traditional train-ferry-train route). **Rail Europe** (✆ **877/272-RAIL;** www.raileurope.com) sells tickets on the Eurostar between London and Paris or Brussels (both US$421 one-way).

For Eurostar reservations, call ✆ **800/EUROSTAR** in the U.S., 0870/5186-186 in London, or 08-92-35-35-39 in Paris; www.eurostar.com. Eurostar trains arrive at and depart from Waterloo Station in London, Gare du Nord in Paris, and Central Station in Brussels.

BY FERRY & HOVERCRAFT **Brittany Ferries** (✆ **0870/907-6103;** www.brittanyferries.com) is the largest British ferry/drive outfit, sailing from the southern coast of England to five destinations in Spain and France. From Portsmouth, sailings reach St-Malo and Caen; from Poole, Cherbourg. From Plymouth, sailings go to Santander in Spain. **P&O Ferries** (✆ **0871/664-5645;** www.poferries.com) operates car and passenger ferries between Portsmouth and Cherbourg (three departures a day; 5–7 hr.); between Portsmouth and Le Havre, France (three a day; 5 hr.); and between Dover and Calais, France (25 sailings a day; 1¼ hr.).

BY CAR Many car-rental companies won't let you rent a car in Britain and take it to the Continent, so always check ahead. There are many "drive-on/drive-off" car-ferry services across the Channel; see "By Ferry & Hovercraft," above. There are also Chunnel trains that run a drive-on/drive-off service every 15 minutes (once an hour at night) for the 35-minute ride between Ashford and Calais.

BY COACH Though travel by coach is considerably slower and less comfortable than travel by train, if you're on a budget you might opt for one of Eurolines's regular departures from London's Victoria Coach Station to destinations throughout Europe. Contact **Eurolines** at 52 Grosvenor Gardens, Victoria, London SW1W OAU (✆ **0870/514-3219;** www.eurolines.com).

FLYING FOR LESS: TIPS FOR GETTING THE BEST AIRFARE

- Passengers who can book their ticket either **long in advance or at the last**

minute, or who **fly midweek** or **at less-trafficked hours** may pay a fraction of the full fare. If your schedule is flexible, say so, and ask if you can secure a cheaper fare by changing your flight plans.

- Search **the Internet** for cheap fares. The most popular online travel agencies are **Travelocity.com** (www.travelocity.co.uk); **Expedia.com** (www.expedia.co.uk and www.expedia.ca); and **Orbitz.com**. In the U.K., go to **Travelsupermarket** (✆ **0845/345-5708;** www.travelsupermarket.com), a flight search engine that offers flight comparisons for the budget airlines whose seats often end up in bucket-shop sales. Other websites for booking airline tickets online include **Cheapflights.com, SmarterTravel.com, Priceline.com,** and **Opodo** (www.opodo.co.uk). Meta search sites (which find and then direct you to airline and hotel websites for booking) include **Sidestep.com** and **Kayak.com**—the latter includes fares for budget carriers like Jet Blue and Spirit as well as the major airlines. **Lastminute.com** is a great source for last-minute flights and getaways. In addition, most **airlines** offer online-only fares that even their phone agents know nothing about.
- Keep an eye on local newspapers for **promotional specials** or **fare wars,** when airlines lower prices on their most popular routes.
- **Consolidators,** also known as bucket shops, are wholesale brokers in the airline-ticket game. Consolidators buy deeply discounted tickets ("distressed" inventories of unsold seats) from airlines and sell them to online ticket agencies, travel agents, tour operators, corporations, and, to a lesser degree, the general public. Consolidators advertise in Sunday newspaper travel sections (often in small ads with tiny type), in both the U.S. and the U.K. They can be great sources for cheap international tickets. On the down side, bucket shop tickets are often rigged with restrictions, such as stiff cancellation penalties (as high as 50%–75% of the ticket price). And keep in mind that most of what you see advertised is of limited availability. Several reliable consolidators are worldwide and available online. **STA Travel** (✆ **800/781-4040;** www.statravel.com) has been the world's leading consolidator for students since purchasing Council Travel, but their fares are competitive for travelers of all ages. **Flights.com** (✆ **800/572-3149;** www.flights.com) has excellent fares worldwide, particularly to Europe. They also have "local" websites in 12 countries. **Air Tickets Direct** (✆ **888/858-8884;** www.airticketsdirect.com) is based in Montreal and leverages the currently weak Canadian dollar for low fares; they also book trips to places that U.S. travel agents won't touch, such as Cuba.
- Join **frequent-flier clubs.** Frequent-flier membership doesn't cost a cent, but it does entitle you to free tickets or upgrades when you amass the airline's required number of frequent-flier points. You don't even have to fly to earn points; **frequent-flier credit cards** can earn you thousands of miles for doing your everyday shopping. But keep in mind that award seats are limited, seats on popular routes are hard to snag, and more and more major airlines are cutting their expiration periods for mileage points—so check your airline's frequent-flier program so you don't lose your miles before you use them. ***Inside tip:*** Award seats are offered almost a year in advance, but seats also open up at the last minute, so if your travel plans

Tips Don't Stow It—Ship It

Though pricey, it's sometimes worthwhile to travel luggage-free. Specialists in door-to-door luggage delivery include **Virtual Bellhop** (✆ **877/235-5467;** www.virtualbellhop.com), **SkyCap International** (✆ **877/775-9227;** www.skycapinternational.com), and **Luggage Express** (✆ **866-SHIP-BAGS;** www.usxpluggageexpress.com).

are flexible, you may strike gold. To play the frequent-flier game to your best advantage, consult the community bulletin boards on **FlyerTalk** (www.flyertalk.com) or go to Randy Petersen's **Inside Flyer** (www.insideflyer.com). Petersen and friends review all the programs in detail and post regular updates on changes in policies and trends.

LONG-HAUL FLIGHTS: HOW TO STAY COMFORTABLE

- Your choice of airline and airplane will definitely affect your legroom. Find more details about U.S. airlines at **www.seatguru.com**. For international airlines, the research firm Skytrax has posted a list of average seat pitches at **www.airlinequality.com**.
- Emergency exit seats and bulkhead seats typically have the most legroom. Emergency exit seats are usually left unassigned until the day of a flight (to ensure that someone able-bodied fills the seats); it's worth getting to the ticket counter early to snag one of these spots for a long flight. Many passengers find that bulkhead seating (the row facing the wall at the front of the cabin) offers more legroom, but keep in mind that bulkheads are where airlines often put baby bassinets, so you may be sitting next to an infant.
- To have two seats for yourself in a three-seat row, try for an aisle seat in a center section toward the back of coach. If you're traveling with a companion, book an aisle and a window seat. Middle seats are usually booked last, so chances are good you'll end up with three seats to yourselves.
- Ask about entertainment options. Many airlines offer seat-back video systems where you get to choose your movies or play video games—but only on some of their planes. (Boeing 777s are your best bet.)
- To sleep, avoid the last row of any section or the row in front of an emergency exit, as these seats are the least likely to recline. Avoid seats near highly trafficked toilet areas. Avoid seats in the back of many jets—these can be narrower than those in the rest of coach. You also may want to reserve a window seat so you can rest your head and avoid being bumped in the aisle.
- Get up, walk around, and stretch every 60 to 90 minutes to keep your blood flowing. See the box "Avoiding 'Economy-Class Syndrome,'" under "Health & Safety," p. 21.
- Drink water before, during, and after your flight to combat the lack of humidity in airplane cabins. Avoid alcohol, which will dehydrate you.
- If you're flying with kids, don't forget to carry on toys, books, pacifiers, and chewing gum to help them relieve ear pressure buildup during ascent and descent.

11 Packages for the Independent Traveler

Package tours are simply a way to buy the airfare, accommodations, and other elements of your trip (such as car rentals, airport transfers, and sometimes even activities) at the same time and often at discounted prices.

All major airlines flying to Europe sell vacation packages, including **American Airlines Vacations** (✆ 800/321-2121; www.aavacations.com), **Delta Vacations** (✆ 800/654-6559; www.deltavacations.com), **Continental Airlines Vacations** (✆ 800/301-3800; www.covacations.com), and **United Vacations** (✆ 888/854-3899; www.unitedvacations.com). Several big **online travel agencies**—Expedia, Travelocity, Orbitz, and Lastminute.com—also do a brisk business in packages.

Some of the leading packagers offering European vacations include **EuroVacations** (www.eurovacations.com), an affiliate of Rail Europe, featuring highlights of such countries as England, France, Germany, Italy, and Spain, but also deals in eastern Europe. For more information, call ✆ **877/471-3876** or write EuroVacations at 851 SW Sixth, Suite 900, Portland, OR 97204. More great deals are offered by **Sherman's Travel** (www.shermanstravel.com), which features bargains on airfare and hotel deals, such as 10 days in the south of Spain or a Paris and Madrid combo. One of their most popular offerings is a trio of London, Paris, and Rome, including airfare and 2 nights in each capital. A 7-day Greek Islands tour, including Athens, is also featured. You can reach the outfit at editorial@shermanstravel.com. Another worthy contender is **I Travel to Europe** (www.itraveltoeurope.com), which puts together some hot package deals, including special-interest trips such as a 9-day escorted Tuscan Food and Wine festival, taking in Florence, Siena, and other trendy spots. One of their best deals is 2 weeks in southern Spain in winter, featuring airfare and hotels starting at US$899 per person. For more information, call ✆ **800/674-8883** or write to I Travel to Europe, 2300 Corporate Blvd., Suite 214, Boca Raton, FL 33431.

Travel packages are also listed in the travel section of your local Sunday newspaper. Or check ads in the national travel magazines such as *Arthur Frommer's Budget Travel Magazine, Travel + Leisure, National Geographic Traveler,* and *Condé Nast Traveler.*

Tips Ask Before You Go

Before you invest in a package deal or an escorted tour:

- Always ask about the **cancellation policy.** Can you get your money back? Is a deposit required?
- Ask about the **accommodations choices and prices** for each. Then look up the hotels' reviews in a Frommer's guide and check their rates online for your specific dates of travel. Also find out what types of rooms are offered.
- Request a complete **schedule** (escorted tours only).
- Ask about the **size** and demographics of the group (escorted tours only).
- Discuss what is included in the **price** (transportation, meals, tips, airport transfers, and so on; escorted tours only).
- Finally, look for **hidden expenses.** Ask whether airport departure fees and taxes, for example, are included in the total cost—they rarely are.

12 Escorted General-Interest Tours

Escorted tours are structured group tours, with a group leader. The price usually includes everything from airfare to hotels, meals, tours, admission costs, and local transportation.

The two largest tour operators conducting escorted tours of Europe are **Globus/Cosmos** (✆ **866/755-8581;** www.globusandcosmos.com) and **Trafalgar** (✆ **866/544-4434;** www.trafalgartours.com). Both companies have first-class tours that vary in prices. The differences are mainly in hotel location and the number of activities. There's little difference in the companies' services, so choose your tour based on the itinerary and preferred date of departure. Brochures are available at travel agencies, and all tours must be booked through travel agents.

Despite the fact that escorted tours require big deposits and predetermine hotels, restaurants, and itineraries, many people derive security and peace of mind from the structure they offer. Escorted tours—whether they're navigated by bus, motorcoach, train, or boat—let travelers sit back and enjoy the trip without having to drive or worry about details. They take you to the maximum number of sights in the minimum amount of time with the least amount of hassle. They're particularly convenient for people with limited mobility and they can be a great way to make new friends.

On the downside, you'll have little opportunity for serendipitous interactions with locals. The tours can be jam-packed with activities, leaving little room for individual sightseeing, whim, or adventure—plus they often focus on the heavily touristed sites, so you miss out on many a lesser-known gem.

13 Special-Interest Trips

CYCLING

Cycling tours are a great way to see Europe at your own pace. Some of the best are conducted by the **CTC** (Cyclists' Tourist Club), Parklands, Railton Rd., Guildford, Surrey, England GU2 9JX (✆ **0870/873-0060;** www.ctc.org.uk). **Hindriks European Bicycle Tours, Inc.,** P.O. Box 7010, Citrus Heights, CA 95621 (✆ **800/852-3258;** www.hindrikstours.com), leads 8-day bicycle tours throughout Europe. **ExperiencePlus!,** 415 Mason Court, Number 1, Fort Collins, CO 80524 (✆ **800/685-4565** or 970/484-8489; www.experienceplus.com), runs bike and walking tours across Europe. **Ciclismo Classico,** 30 Marathon St., Arlington, MA 02474 (✆ **800/866-7314** or 781/646-3377; www.ciclismoclassico.com), is an excellent outfit running tours of Italy. Florence-based **I Bike Italy, Inc.** ★, P.O. Box 64-3824, Vero Beach, FL (✆ **772/321-0267**; www.ibikeitaly.com), offers guided single-day rides in the Tuscan countryside.

HIKING

Wilderness Travel, 1102 9th St., Berkeley, CA 94710 (✆ **800/368-2794** or 510/558-2488; www.wildernesstravel.com), specializes in walking tours, treks, and inn-to-inn hiking tours of Europe, as well as less strenuous walking tours. **Sherpa Expeditions,** 131A Heston Rd., Hounslow, Middlesex, England TW5 0RF (✆ **020/8577-2717;** www.sherpaexpeditions.com), offers both self-guided and group treks through off-the-beaten-track regions. Two somewhat upscale walking tour companies are **Butterfield & Robinson,** 70 Bond St., Ste. 300, Toronto, ON M5B 1X3 (✆ **866/551-9090,** or 800/67-81-14-77 outside the U.S.; www.butterfield.com); and **Country Walkers,** P.O. Box 180, Waterbury, VT 05676 (✆ **800/464-9255** or 802/244-1387; www.countrywalkers.com).

Most European countries have associations geared toward aiding hikers and walkers. In England it's the **Ramblers' Association,** 87–90 Albert Embankment; London SE1 7TW, 2nd Floor, Camelford House (✆ **020/7339-8500;** www.ramblers.org.uk). In Italy, contact the **Club Alpino Italiano,** 6 Via Silvo Pellico, Milan 20121 (✆ **02/8646-3516;** www.caimilano.it). For Austria, try the **Osterreichischer Alpenverein (Austrian Alpine Club),** Wilhelm-Greil-Strasse 15, A-6010 Innsbruck (✆ **0512/59547;** www.alpenverein.at). In Norway, it's the **Norwegian Mountain Touring Association,** Dennorske Touristforening, Storgata 3, Box 7 Sentrum, 0101 Oslo (✆ **40-00-18-68;** www.turistforeningen.no).

HORSEBACK RIDING

One of the best companies is **Equitour,** P.O. Box 807, Dubois, WY 82513 (✆ **800/545-0019** or 307/455-3363; www.ridingtours.com), which offers 5- to 7-day rides through many of Europe's most popular areas, such as Tuscany and the Loire Valley.

EDUCATIONAL TRAVEL

The best (and one of the most expensive) of the escorted tour operators is **Group IST** (International Specialty Travel; ✆ **212/594-8787;** www.groupist.com), whose tours are first class all the way and accompanied by a certified expert in whatever field the trip focuses on. If you missed out on study abroad in college, the brainy **Smithsonian Journeys** (✆ 877/**338-8687;** www.smithsonianjourneys.org) may be just the ticket, albeit a pricey one. Study leaders are often world-renowned experts in their field. Journeys are carefully crafted and go to some of the most compelling places in Europe, avoiding tourist traps. Also contact your alma mater or local university to see if it offers summer tours open to the public and guided by a professor specialist.

The National Registration Center for Studies Abroad (NRCSA), P.O. Box 1393, Milwaukee, WI 53201 (✆ **414/278-0631;** www.nrcsa.com), and the **American Institute for Foreign Study (AIFS),** River Plaza, 9 W. Broad St., Stamford, CT 06902 (✆ **866/906-2437** or 203/399-5000; www.aifs.com), can help you arrange both study programs and summer programs abroad.

The biggest organization dealing with higher education in Europe is the **Institute of International Education (IIE),** with headquarters at 809 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017-3500 (✆ **212/883-8200;** www.iie.org). A few of its booklets are free, but for US$50, plus US$6 postage, you can buy the more definitive *Short Term Study Abroad.* To order publications, check out the IIE's online bookstore at www.iiebooks.org.

A clearinghouse for information on European-based language schools is **Lingua Service Worldwide,** 42 Artillery Rd., Woodbury, CT 06798 (✆ **800/394-LEARN** or 203/263-6294; www.linguaserviceworldwide.com).

CULINARY SCHOOLS

Cuisine International, P.O. Box 25228, Dallas, TX 75225 (✆ **214/373-1161;** www.cuisineinternational.com), brings together some of the top independent cooking schools and teachers based in various European countries so you can book your weeklong culinary dream vacation.

Apicius, Via Guelfa 85, 50129 Florence, Italy (✆ **055/2658135;** www.apicius.it), is the finest cooking school in Florence, an expert on Tuscan culinary arts. Its monthly programs are taught by local chefs and food experts, with an emphasis on wine appreciation. From May to October, the **International Cooking School of Italian Food and Wine,** 201 E. 28th St., Ste. 15B, New York, NY 10016-8538 (✆ **212/779-1921;** www.internationalcookingschool.com), offers courses in Bologna, the "gastronomic capital of Italy." **Le Cordon Bleu,** 8 rue Léon-Delhomme, 75015 Paris (✆ **800/457-2433** in the U.S., or 01-53-68-22-50; www.cordonbleu.edu), was established in 1895 as a means of spreading the tenets of French cuisine to the world at large. It offers many programs outside its flagship Paris school.

14 Getting Around Europe

BY TRAIN

In Europe, the shortest—and cheapest—distance between two points is lined with rail tracks. European trains are less expensive than those in the United States, far more advanced in many ways, and certainly more extensive. Modern high-speed trains (209kmph/130 mph) make the rails faster than the plane for short journeys, and overnight trains get you where you're going without wasting valuable daylight hours—and you save money on lodging to boot.

SOME TRAIN NOTES Many European high-speed trains, including the popular EC (EuroCity), IC (InterCity), and EN (EuroNight), require you to pay a **supplement** in addition to the regular ticket fare. It's included when you buy tickets but not in any rail pass, so check at the ticket window before boarding; otherwise, the conductor will sell you the supplement on the train—along with a fine. **Seat reservations** (US$20–US$50 or more, when a meal is included) are required on some high-speed runs—any marked with an R on a printed train schedule. You can usually reserve a seat within a few hours of departure, but be on the safe side and book your seat a few days in advance. You need to reserve sleeping couchettes or sleeping berths, too.

With two exceptions, there's no need to buy individual train tickets or make seat reservations **before you leave the United States.** However, on the high-speed Artesia run (Paris-Turin and Milan) you must buy a supplement, on which you can get a substantial discount if you have a rail pass, but only if you buy the supplement in the United States along with the pass. It's also wise to reserve a seat on the Eurostar, as England's frequent "bank holidays" (long weekends) book the train solid with Londoners taking a short vacation to Paris.

The difference between **first class** and **second class** on European trains is minor—a matter of 1 or 2 inches of extra padding and maybe a bit more elbow room. European **train stations** are usually as clean and efficient as the trains, if a bit chaotic at times. In stations you'll find posters showing the track number and timetables for regularly scheduled runs (departures are often on the yellow poster). Many stations also have tourist offices and hotel reservations desks, banks with ATMs, and newsstands where you can buy phone cards, bus and metro tickets, maps, and local English-language event magazines.

You can get many more details about train travel in Europe and automated schedule information by fax by contacting **Rail Europe** (✆ **877/272-RAIL;** fax 800/432-1329; www.raileurope.com). If you plan to travel a great deal on the European railroads, it's worth buying a copy of the ***Thomas Cook Timetable of European Passenger Railroads.*** It's available exclusively online at www.thomascookpublishing.com.

RAIL PASSES The greatest value in European travel has always been the **rail pass,** a single ticket allowing you unlimited travel (or travel on a certain number of days) within a set time period. If you plan on going all over Europe by train, buying a rail pass will end up being much less expensive than buying individual tickets. Plus, a rail pass gives you the freedom to hop on a train whenever you feel like it, and there's no waiting in ticket lines. For more focused trips, you might want to look into national or regional passes or just buy individual tickets as you go.

Passes Available in the United States The granddaddy of passes is the **Eurail Global Pass,** covering some 35 countries (most of western Europe except Britain).

It's best to buy this pass in the United States (they're available from some major European train stations but are up to 10% more expensive). You can get them from most travel agents, but the biggest supplier is **Rail Europe** (✆ **877/272-RAIL;** www.raileurope.com), which also sells most national passes, except for a few minor British ones. The company also publishes a free annual brochure, "Europe on Track," outlining a traveler's various pass and rail options.

The most popular pass is **The Global Pass,** which offers first-class travel for adults 26 years or older. Prices go up every year, but at press time options are US$796 for 15 days, US$1,032 for 21 days, US$1,281 for 1 month, US$1,808 for 2 months, or US$2,232 for 3 months. Substantial reductions are granted on the **First Class Saver Pass** for two or more people traveling together or for **Second Class Youth Travel** for those 25 years old or younger. Children ages 4 to 11, on their first day of travel, receive a 50% discount on the first-class adult fare, and those 3 and under travel for free.

You can also consider a **Eurail Select Pass,** allowing travel in three, four, or five bordering European countries. With this pass, you can tailor-make your own trip, traveling by train from 6 to 10 days within a 2-month period. For five countries, there is also a 15-day travel option.

A **Eurail Regional Pass** is for those who want to see only a small part of Europe in a short timeframe. A total of 25 regional passes are offered, granting train travel for 3 to 10 days within 2 months. You're allowed unlimited travel within one of the 25 available country combinations. Such a pass, for example, would grant you unlimited travel in both France and Switzerland, plus various other combinations such as Greece and Italy, or even a Scandinavia Pass granting travel in 4 countries. Seventeen countries, including Austria and Italy, participate in the **Eurail One Country Pass.** This pass grants unlimited train travel from 3 to 8 days within a 1-month period.

You have to study these passes carefully to see which one would be ideal for you. You can check online or call for the latest prices and offerings, which are subject to change in the lifetime of this edition.

If you plan on traveling in Great Britain, then **BritRail** (✆ **877/677-1066;** fax 877/477-1066; www.britrail.com), which specializes in rail passes for use in Great Britain, is your best bet.

Passes Available in the United Kingdom Many rail passes are available in the United Kingdom for travel in Britain and Europe. The most popular ticket is the **Interrail Card,** which is offered for persons who have lived in Europe at least 6 months. It offers unlimited travel in most European countries within 5 days,

Countries Honoring Train Passes

Eurail Countries: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland.

Tips

Train Trip Tips

To make your train travels as pleasant as possible, remember a few general rules:

- **Hold on to your train ticket** after it's been marked or punched by the conductor. Some European railroad systems require that you present your ticket when you leave the station platform at your destination.
- While you sleep—or even nap—**be sure your valuables are in a safe place.** You might temporarily attach a small bell to each bag to warn you if someone attempts to take it. If you've left bags on a rack in the front or back of the car, consider securing them with a small bicycle chain and lock to deter thieves, who consider trains happy hunting grounds.
- Few European trains have drinking fountains, and the dining car may be closed just when you're at your thirstiest, so **take along a bottle of mineral water.** As you'll soon discover, the experienced European traveler comes loaded with hampers of food and drink and munches away throughout the trip.
- If you want to leave bags in a train station locker, **don't let anyone help you store them in it.** A favorite trick among thieves is feigned helpfulness, and then pocketing the key to your locker while passing you the key to an empty one.

10 days, 22 days, or 1 month and is valid on all normal trains, or else high-speed trains such as TGV if you pay a supplement. The price depends on the trip duration and how many of the eight different "zones" you plan to travel in. Typical zones include Britain or Ireland; Finland, Norway, and Sweden; or else such combos as Austria, Denmark, Germany, and Switzerland. A typical fare for 5 days of travel within 10 days is 329€ (US$477) in first class, 249€ (US$361) in second class, and 159€ (US$231) for a youth fare.

For help in determining the best option for your trip and to buy tickets, stop in London at the **International Rail Centre** in Victoria Station (✆ **0871/200-4984**).

BY CAR

Many rental companies grant discounts if you **reserve in advance** (usually 48 hr.) from your home country. Weekly rentals are almost always less expensive than day rentals. Three or more people traveling together can usually get around cheaper by car than by train (even with rail passes).

When you reserve a car, be sure to ask if the price includes the E.U. value-added tax (VAT), personal accident insurance (PAI), collision-damage waiver (CDW), and any other insurance options. If not, ask what these extras cost, because at the end of your rental, they can make a big difference in your bottom line. The CDW and other insurance might be covered by your credit card if you use the card to pay for the rental; check with the card issuer to be sure.

If your credit card doesn't cover the CDW (and it probably won't in Ireland), **AIG Travel Guard International,** 1145 Clark St., Stevens Point, WI 54481 (✆ **800/826-4919** or 715/345-0505; www.travelguard.com), will insure you.

The Rules of the Road: Driving in Europe

- First off, know that European drivers tend to be more aggressive than their American counterparts.
- Drive on the right except in England, Scotland, and Ireland, where you drive on the left. And *do not drive* in the left lane on a four-lane highway; it is truly only for passing.
- If someone comes up from behind and flashes his lights at you, it's a signal for you to slow down and drive more on the shoulder so he can pass you more easily (two-lane roads here routinely become three cars wide).
- Except for the German Autobahn, most highways do indeed have speed limits of around 100 to 135kmph (60–80 mph).
- Remember that everything's measured in kilometers here (mileage and speed limits). For a rough conversion, 1km = .6 mile.
- Be aware that although gas may look reasonably priced, the price is per liter, and 3.8 liters = 1 gallon—so multiply by 4 to estimate the equivalent per-gallon price.
- Never leave anything of value in the car overnight, and don't leave anything visible any time you leave the car (this goes double in Italy, triple in Naples).

Avis and Hertz, among other companies, require that you purchase a theft-protection policy in Italy.

The main car-rental companies are **Avis** (✆ **800/331-1212;** www.avis.com), **Budget** (✆ **800/472-3325;** www.budget.com), **Dollar** (✆ **800/800-3665;** www.dollar.com), **Hertz** (✆ **800/654-3001;** www.hertz.com), and **National** (✆ **800/227-7368;** www.nationalcar.com). U.S.-based companies specializing in European rentals are **Auto Europe** (✆ **800/223-5555;** www.autoeurope.com), **Europe by Car** (✆ **800/223-1516,** or 212/581-3040 in New York; www.europebycar.com), and **Kemwel Drive Europe** (✆ **877/820-0668;** www.kemwel.com). Europe by Car, Kemwel, and **Renault USA** (✆ **800/221-1052** or 212/730-0676; www.renaultusa.com) also offer a low-cost alternative to renting for longer than 15 days: **short-term leases** in which you technically buy a fresh-from-the-factory car and then sell it back when you return it. All insurance is included, from liability and theft to personal injury and CDW, with no deductible. And unlike at many rental agencies, which won't rent to anyone under 25, the minimum age for a lease is 18.

The **AAA** supplies good maps to its members. **Michelin maps** (✆ **800/423-0485;** www.michelin.com) are made for the tourist. The maps rate cities as "uninteresting" (as a tourist destination); "interesting"; "worth a detour"; or "worth an entire journey." They also highlight particularly scenic stretches of road in green, and have symbols pointing out scenic overlooks, ruins, and other sights along the way.

BY PLANE

Though trains remain the cheapest and easiest way to get around in Europe, air transport options have improved drastically in the past few years. Intense competition with rail and ferry companies has slowly forced airfares into the bargain basement. **British Airways** (✆ **800/AIR WAYS** in the U.S., or 0870/850-9850 in the U.K.; www.britishairways.com) and other scheduled airlines fly regularly from London to Paris for only £100 (US$200) round-trip, depending on the season. Lower fares usually apply to midweek flights and carry advance-purchase requirements of 2 weeks or so.

The biggest airline news in Europe is the rise of the **no-frills airline** modeled on American upstarts like Southwest. By keeping their overhead down through electronic ticketing, forgoing meal service, and flying from less popular airports, these airlines are able to offer low fares. Most round-trip tickets are US$40 to US$170. This means now you can save lots of time, and even money, over long train hauls, especially from, say, London to Venice or from central Europe out to peripheral countries like Greece and Spain. Budget airlines include **EasyJet** in England (✆ **0871/244-2366;** www.easyjet.com); **Ryanair** in England (✆ **0871/246-0000;** www.ryanair.com) and in Ireland (✆ **1530-787-787**); and **Brussels Airlines** in Belgium (✆ **0902/51-600;** www.brusselsairlines.com). Be aware, though, that the names might change because these small airlines are often economically vulnerable and can fail or merge with a big airline. Still, as quickly as one disappears, another will appear.

Lower airfares are also available throughout Europe on **charter flights** rather than regularly scheduled ones. Look in local newspapers to find out about them. Consolidators cluster in cities like London and Athens.

Flying across Europe on regularly scheduled airlines can destroy a budget and be super expensive. Whenever possible, book your total flight on one ticket before leaving. For example, if you're flying from New York to Rome, but also plan to visit Palermo, Florence, and Turin, have the total trip written up on one ticket. Don't arrive in Rome and book separate legs of the journey, which costs far more when it's done piecemeal.

American citizens can contact **Europe by Air** (✆ **888/321-4737;** www.europebyair.com) for its Europe flight pass serving 30 countries, 30 airlines, and 150 European cities. It costs only US$99 to US$129 to travel one-way between these cities.

BY BUS

Bus transportation is readily available throughout Europe; it sometimes is less expensive than train travel and covers a more extensive area but can be slower and much less comfortable. European buses, like the trains, outshine their American counterparts, but they're perhaps best used only to pick up where the extensive train network leaves off. One major bus company serves all the countries of western Europe (no service to Greece): **Eurolines** in London (✆ **0870/514-3219;** www.eurolines.com), whose staff can check schedules, make reservations, and quote prices.

15 Tips on Accommodations

Traditional European hotels tend to be simpler than American ones and emphasize cleanliness and friendliness over amenities. For example, even in the cheapest American chain motel, free cable is as standard as indoor plumbing. In Europe, however, few hotels below the moderate level even have in-room TVs.

Most European countries rate hotels by stars, ranging from five stars (grand luxe) to one star (modest). A four-star hotel offers first-class accommodations, a three-star hotel is moderately priced, and a one- or two-star hotel is inexpensively priced. Governments grant stars based on a rigid criterion, evaluating such amenities as elevators, private bathrooms, pools, and air-conditioning. The hotel with the most stars is not necessarily the most elegant or charming. For example, a five-star hotel might be an ugly, modern building, whereas a one-star hotel might be a town mansion but with no elevator, bar, or restaurant.

Unless otherwise noted, all hotel rooms in this book have **private en suite bathrooms.** However, the standard European hotel bathroom might not look like what you're used to. For example, the European concept of a shower is to stick a nozzle in the bathroom wall and a drain in the floor. Shower curtains are optional. In some cramped private bathrooms, you'll have to relocate the toilet paper outside the bathroom before turning on the shower and drenching the whole room. Another interesting fixture is the "half tub," in which there's only room to sit, rather than lie down. The half tub usually sports a shower nozzle that has nowhere to hang—so your knees get very clean and the floor gets very wet. Hot water may be available only once a day and not on demand—this is especially true with shared bathrooms. Heating water is costly, and many smaller hotels do it only once daily, in the morning.

In addition to the hotel recommendations listed in the destination chapters, **Untours** (✆ **888/868-6871;** www.untours.com) provides exceptional apartment, farmhouse, or cottage stays of 2 weeks or more in many European destinations for a reasonable price. The price includes air/ground transportation, cooking facilities, and on-call support from a local resident. Best of all: Untours—named the "Most Generous Company in America" by Newman's Own—donates most profits to provide low-interest loans to underprivileged entrepreneurs around the world (see website for details).

SAVING ON YOUR HOTEL ROOM

The **rack rate** is the maximum rate that a hotel charges for a room. Hardly anybody pays this price, however, except in high season or on holidays. To lower the cost of your room:

- **Ask about special rates or other discounts.** You may qualify for corporate, student, military, senior, frequent-flyer, trade union, or other discounts.
- **Dial direct.** When booking a room in a chain hotel, you'll often get a better deal by calling the individual hotel's reservation desk rather than the chain's main number.
- **Book online.** Many hotels offer Internet-only discounts, or supply rooms to Priceline, Hotwire, or Expedia at rates much lower than the ones you can get through the hotel itself.
- **Remember the law of supply and demand.** Resort hotels are most crowded and therefore most expensive on weekends, so discounts are usually available for midweek stays. Business hotels in downtown locations are busiest during the week, so you can expect big discounts over the weekend. Many hotels have high-season and low-season prices, and booking even 1 day after high season ends can mean big discounts.
- **Look into group or long-stay discounts.** If you come as part of a large group, you should be able to negotiate a bargain rate. Likewise, if you're planning a long stay (at least 5 days), you might qualify for a discount. As a general rule, expect 1 night free after a 7-night stay.
- **Avoid excess charges and hidden costs.** When you book a room, ask whether the hotel charges for parking. Use your own cellphone, pay

phones, or prepaid phone cards instead of dialing direct from hotel phones, which usually have exorbitant rates. And don't be tempted by the room's minibar offerings. Finally, ask about local taxes and service charges, which can increase the cost of a room by 15% or more.

- **Book an efficiency.** A room with a kitchenette allows you to shop for groceries and cook your own meals. This is a big money saver, especially for families on long stays.
- **Consider enrolling in hotel "frequent-stay" programs,** which are upping the ante lately to win the loyalty of repeat customers. Frequent guests can now accumulate points or credits to earn free hotel nights, airline miles, in-room amenities, merchandise, tickets to concerts and events, discounts on sporting facilities—and even credit toward stock in the participating hotel, in the case of the Jameson Inn hotel group. Perks are awarded not only by many chain hotels and motels (Hilton HHonors, Marriott Rewards, Wyndham By Request, to name a few), but individual inns and B&Bs. Many chain hotels partner with other hotel chains, car-rental firms, airlines, and credit card companies to give consumers additional incentive to do repeat business.

LANDING THE BEST ROOM

Somebody has to get the best room in the house. It might as well be you. You can start by joining the hotel's frequent-guest program, which may make you eligible for upgrades. A hotel-branded credit card usually gives its owner "silver" or "gold" status in frequent-guest programs for free. Always ask about a corner room. They're often larger and quieter, with more windows and light, and they often cost the same as standard rooms. When you make your reservation, ask if the hotel is renovating; if it is, request a room away from the construction. Ask about nonsmoking rooms, rooms with views, rooms with twin, queen-, or king-size beds. If you're a light sleeper, request a quiet room away from vending machines, elevators, restaurants, bars, and discos. Ask for a room that has been most recently renovated or redecorated.

If you aren't happy with your room when you arrive, ask for another one. Most lodgings will be willing to accommodate you.

In resort areas, particularly in warm climates, ask the following questions before you book a room:

- What's the view like? Cost-conscious travelers may be willing to pay less for a back room facing the parking lot, especially if they don't plan to spend much time in their room.
- Does the room have air-conditioning or ceiling fans? Do the windows open? If they do, and the nighttime entertainment takes place alfresco, you may want to find out when showtime is over.
- What's included in the price? Your room may be moderately priced, but if you're charged for beach chairs, towels, sports equipment, and other amenities, you could end up spending more than you bargained for.
- How far is the room from the beach and other amenities? If it's far, is there transportation to and from the beach, and is it free?

2

Austria

by Darwin Porter & Danforth Prince

Austria stands at the crossroads of Europe, as it did in the heyday of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Its capital, Vienna, stranded during the postwar years on the edge of western Europe, is taking its place again as an important international city.

The country offers plenty to do, from exploring historic castles and palaces to skiing on some of the world's finest alpine slopes.

1 Vienna ★★★

Vienna still retains much of the glory and grandeur of the empire's heady days. Museum treasures from all over Europe, baroque palaces through which Maria Theresa and her brood wandered, Johann Strauss's lively music, Gustav Klimt's paintings, the concert halls, the unparalleled opera—it's all still here, as if the empire were still flourishing.

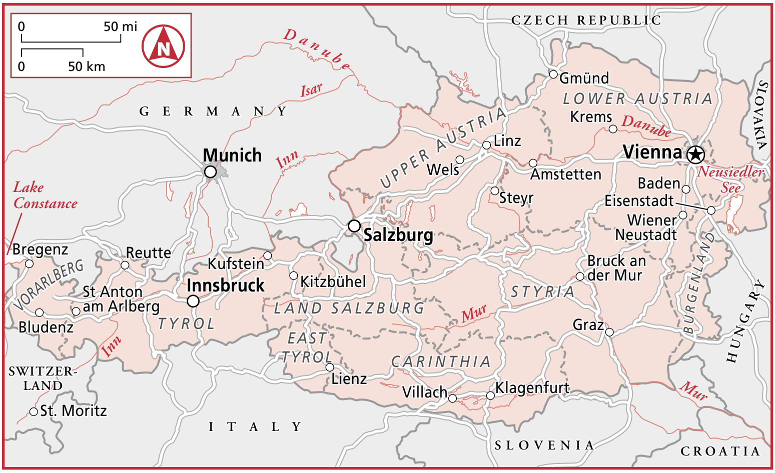
Tourism is growing as thousands arrive every year to view Vienna's great art and architecture, to feast on lavish Viennese pastries, to explore the Vienna Woods, to sail down the Danube, to attend Vienna's balls, operas, and festivals, and to listen to the "music that never stops."

Visitors today face a newer and brighter Vienna, a city with more *joie de vivre* and punch than it's had since before the war. There's also a downside: Prices are on the rise—they haven't reached the height of the Ferris wheel at the Prater, but they're climbing there.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **By Plane** **Vienna International Airport** (**VIE; ✆ 01/70070;** www.viennaairport.at) is about 19km (12 miles) southeast of the city center. There's regular bus service between the airport and the **City Air Terminal,** adjacent to the Vienna Hilton and directly across from the **Wien Mitte/Landstrasse** rail station, where you can easily connect with subway and tram lines. Buses run every 20 minutes from 5am to midnight and hourly from midnight to 5am. The trip takes about 20 minutes and costs 6€ ($8.70) per person. Tickets are sold on the bus and must be purchased with euros. There's also bus service between the airport and two railroad stations, the Westbahnhof and the Südbahnhof, leaving every 30 minutes to an hour. Fares are also 6€ ($8.70). There is also a direct city/airport train from Wien Mitte to the airport that takes 16 minutes and costs 9€ ($13).

The official **Vienna Tourist Information Office** in the arrival hall of the airport is open daily from 8:30am to 9pm.



Austria

0
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50 km
N
CZECH REPUBLIC
Danube
Isar
GERMANY
Munich
Inn
Lake Constance
Bregenz
Reutte
VORARLBERG
St Anton am Arlberg
Bludenz
Kufstein
Innsbruck
Kitzbühel
TYROL
Inn
SWITZERLAND
St. Moritz
ITALY
Gmünd
LOWER AUSTRIA
Krems
Danube
Vienna
UPPER AUSTRIA
Linz
Wels
Amstetten
Steyr
Salzburg
SLOVAKIA
Neusiedler See
Baden
Eisenstadt
Wiener Neustadt
Bruck an der Mur
STYRIA
LAND SALZBURG
Mur
Graz
BURGENLAND
HUNGARY
EAST TYROL
Lienz
CARINTHIA
Villach
Klagenfurt
Mur
SLOVENIA
CROATIA

By Train Vienna has four principal rail stations, with frequent connections from all Austrian cities and towns and from all major European cities. For train information for all stations, call ✆ **05/1717.**

Westbahnhof (West Railway Station), on Europaplatz, is for trains arriving from western Austria, France, Germany, Switzerland, and some eastern European countries. It has frequent links to major Austrian cities such as Salzburg, which is a 3-hour train ride from Vienna. The Westbahnhof connects with local trains, the U3 and U6 underground lines, and several tram and bus routes.

Südbahnhof (South Railway Station), on Südtirolerplatz, has train service to southern and eastern Austria, Italy, Hungary, Slovenia, and Croatia. It is linked with local rail service and tram and bus routes.

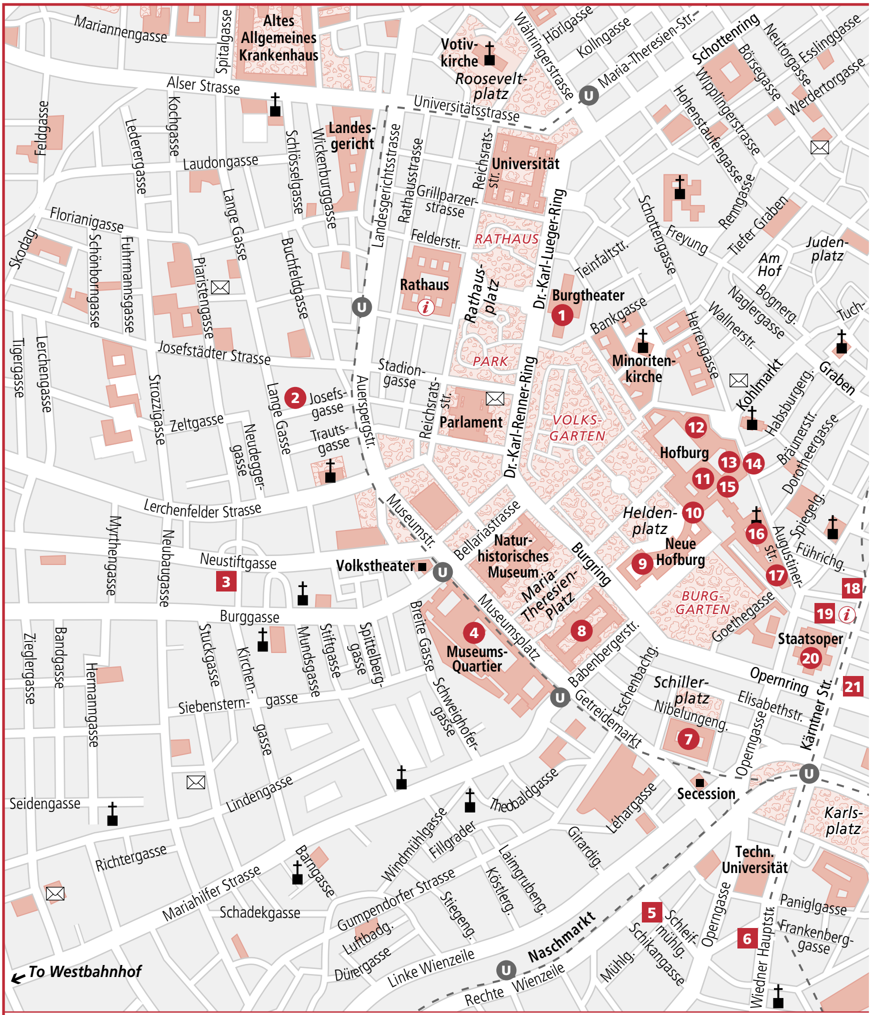
Both of these stations house useful travel agencies **(Österreichisches Verkehrsbüro)** that provide tourist information and help with hotel reservations. In the Westbahnhof the agency is in the upper hall and at the Südbahnhof, in the lower hall.

Other stations in Vienna include **Franz-Josef Bahnhof,** on Franz-Josef-Platz, used mainly by local trains, although connections are made here to Prague and Berlin. You can take the D-tram line to the city's Ringstrasse from here. **Wien Mitte,** at Landstrasser Hauptstrasse 1, is also a terminus for local trains, plus a depot for trains to the Czech Republic and to Vienna International Airport.

By Bus The **City Bus Terminal** is at the Wien Mitte rail station, Landstrasser Hauptstrasse 1. This is the arrival depot for Post buses and Bundesbuses from points all over the country, and also the arrival point for private buses from various European cities. The terminal has lockers, currency-exchange kiosks, and a ticket counter open daily from 6:15am to 6pm. For bus information, call ✆ **05/1717** daily from 6:15am to 6pm.

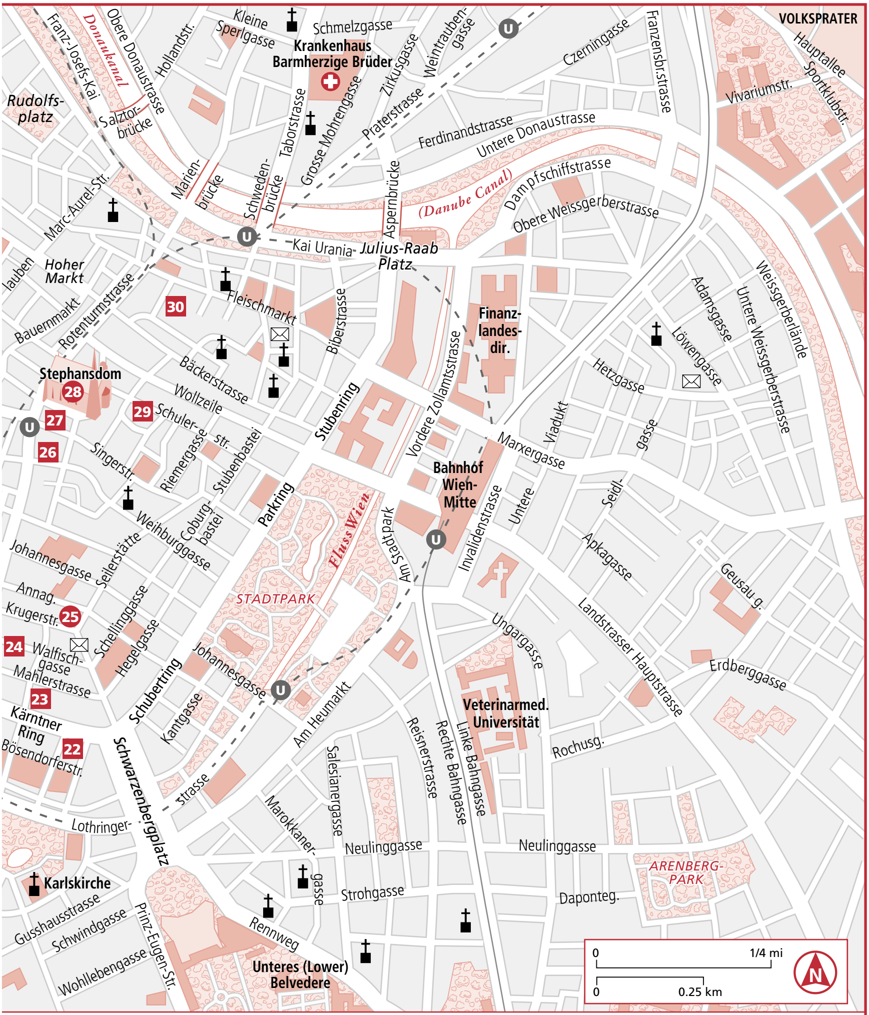
By Car You can reach Vienna from all directions via major highways *(Autobahnen)* or by secondary highways. The main artery from the west is Autobahn A1, coming in from Munich 468km (291 miles), Salzburg 336km (209 miles), and Linz 187km (116

Vienna


Mariannengasse
Spitalgasse
Altes Allgemeines Krankenhaus
Votivkirche
Roosevelt-platz
Währingerstrasse
Hörlgasse
Kolingasse
Maria-Theresien-Str.
Schottenring
Neutorgasse
Esslinggasse
Börsegasse
Werdertorgasse
Alser Strasse
Universitätsstrasse
Feldgasse
Kochgasse
Lederergasse
Laudongasse
Schlösselgasse
Wickenburggasse
Landesgericht
Landesgerichtsstrasse
Rathausstrasse
Reichsrats-str.
Universität
Wipplingerstrasse
Hohenstaufengasse
Renngasse
Grillparzer-strasse
Florianigasse
Lange Gasse
Buchfeldgasse
Felderstr.
RATHAUS
Dr.-Karl-Lueger-Ring
Schottengasse
Freyung
Tiefer Graben
Judenplatz
Am Hof
Skodag.
Schönborngasse
Fuhrmannsgasse
Piaristengasse
Rathaus
Rathausplatz
Teinfaltstr.
Burgtheater
1
Bankgasse
Naglergasse
Bognerg.
Tuchl.
Tigergasse
Lerchengasse
Josefstädter Strasse
Stadiongasse
PARK
Minoritenkirche
Herrengasse
Wallnerstr.
Kohlmarkt
Graben
Strozzigasse
Zeltgasse
Neudeggergasse
Lange Gasse
2
Josefsgasse
Trautsgasse
Auerspergstr.
Reichsrats-str.
Parlament
Dr.-Karl-Renner-Ring
VOLKSGARTEN
12
Hofburg
13
14
11
15
Habsburgerg.
Bräunerstr.
Dorotheergasse
Lerchenfelder Strasse
Museumstr.
Bellariastrasse
Heldenplatz
10
16
Spiegelg.
Myrthengasse
Neubaugasse
Neustiftgasse
3
Volkstheater
Naturhistorisches Museum
Maria-Theresien-Platz
Burgring
Neue Hofburg
9
Augustinerstr.
17
Führichg.
18
Burggasse
Museumsplatz
BURGGARTEN
Goethegasse
19
Staatsoper
20
Zieglergasse
Bandgasse
Hermanngasse
Stuckgasse
Kirchengasse
Mundsgasse
Stiftgasse
Spittelberggasse
Breite Gasse
4
Museumsquartier
8
Babenbergerstr.
Eschenbachg.
Schillerplatz
Opernring
Elisabethstr.
21
Kärntner Str.
Siebensterngasse
Schweighofergasse
Getreidemarkt
Nibelungeng.
7
Operngasse
Lindengasse
Seidengasse
Theobaldgasse
Lehargasse
Secession
Karlsplatz
Richtergasse
Windmühlgasse
Fillgrader
Laimgrubeng.
Girardig.
Techn. Universität
Mariahilfer Strasse
Barnabiteng.
Schadekgasse
Gumpendorfer Strasse
Stiegeng.
Köstlerg.
5
Schleifmühlg.
Operngasse
Paniglgasse
Frankenberggasse
Luftbadg.
Dürergasse
Naschmarkt
Schikanedergasse
6
Mühlg.
Wiedner Hauptstr.
To Westbahnhof
Linke Wienzeile
Rechte Wienzeile
U

ATTRACTIONS ●

Albertina	**17**
Augustinerkirche	**16**
Burgtheater	**1**
Die Burgkapelle	**13**
Domkirche St. Stephan	**28**
Gemäldegalerie der Akademie der Bildenden Kunste (Academy of Fine Arts)	**7**
Haus der Musik	**25**
Hofburg Palace Complex	**10**
Hofburgkapelle (Palace Chapel)	**15**
Kaiserappartements (Imperial Apartments)	**12**
Kunsthistorisches Museum (Museum of Art History)	**8**
Lipizzaner Museum	**13**
MuseumQuartier	**4**
Neue Hofburg	**9**
Schatzkammer (Imperial Treasury)	**11**
Spanische Reitschule (Spanish Riding School)	**14**
Vienna's English Theatre	**2**
Wiener Staatsoper (Opera House)	**20**


VOLKSPRATER
Hauptallee
Sportklubstr.
Vivariumstr.
Franzensbr.strasse
Czerningasse
Weintrauben-gasse
Zirkusgasse
Schmelzgasse
Kleine Sperlgasse
Krankenhaus Barmherzige Brüder
Hollandstr.
Obere Donaustrasse
Donaukanal
Franz-Josefs-Kai
Rudolfs-platz
Salztor-brücke
Taborstrasse
Grosse Mohrengasse
Praterstrasse
Ferdinandstrasse
Untere Donaustrasse
Marien-brücke
Schweden-brücke
Aspernbrücke
(Danube Canal)
Dampfschiffstrasse
Obere Weissgerberstrasse
Kai Urania
Julius-Raab Platz
Marc-Aurel-Str.
Hoher Markt
lauben
Bauernmarkt
Rotenturmstrasse
Fleischmarkt
Biberstrasse
Finanz-landes-dir.
Adamsgasse
Löwengasse
Weissgerberlände
Untere Weissgerberstrasse
Hetzgasse
Stephansdom
Bäckerstrasse
Wollzeile
Schuler-str.
Singerstr.
Riemergasse
Stubenbastei
Stubenring
Vordere Zollamtsstrasse
Viadukt
Marxergasse
gasse
Bahnhof Wien-Mitte
Seidl-
Untere
Invalidenstrasse
Weihburggasse
Coburg-bastei
Parkring
Fluss Wien
Am Stadtpark
Johannesgasse
Seilerstätte
Annag.
Krugerstr.
Walfisch-gasse
Mahlerstrasse
Schellinggasse
Hegelgasse
STADTPARK
Apkagasse
Geusau g.
Landstrasser Hauptstrasse
Ungargasse
Erdberggasse
Kärntner Ring
Bösendorferstr.
Schubertring
Kantgasse
Johannesgasse
Am Heumarkt
Veterinarmed. Universität
Rochusg.
Schwarzenbergplatz
strasse
Lothringer-
Salesianergasse
Reisnerstrasse
Rechte Bahngasse
Linke Bahngasse
Marokkaner-gasse
Neulinggasse
Neulinggasse
ARENBERG-PARK
Strohgasse
Daponteg.
Karlskirche
Gusshausstrasse
Schwindgasse
Wohllebengasse
Prinz-Eugen-Str.
Rennweg
Unteres (Lower) Belvedere
U
30
28
27
29
26
25
24
23
22
0
1/4 mi
0
0.25 km
N

ACCOMMODATIONS 🟥

Drei Kronen	5
Falkensteiner Hotel Am Schottenfeld	3
Grand Hotel Wien	23
Hotel Astoria	18
Hotel Bristol	21
Hotel Das Triest	6
Hotel Imperial	22
Hotel Kaiserin Elisabeth	26
Hotel Kärntnerhof	30
Hotel König Von Ungarn	29
Hotel Pension Suzanne	24
Hotel Royal	27
Hotel Sacher Wien	19

Vienna
Salzburg
AUSTRIA
Innsbruck

✝ Church
✉ Post Office
ⓘ Information
— Railway
- - Ⓤ U-Bahn

miles). Autobahn A2 arrives from the south, from Graz 200km (124 miles) and Klagenfurt 309km (192 miles). Autobahn A4 comes in from the east, connecting with Rte. E58, which runs to Bratislava and Prague. Autobahn A22 takes traffic from the northwest, and Rte. E10 connects to the cities and towns of southeastern Austria and Hungary.

VISITOR INFORMATION **Tourist Office** The official **Wien Tourist-Information,** Albertinaplatz 7 (✆ **01/211-14-481;** www.info.wien.at), is open daily from 9am to 7pm. You can make room reservations here.

Websites Besides **Wien Tourist-Information** (www.info.wien.at), go to the **Austrian National Tourist Office** (www.austria-tourism.at/us) for current information on culture and events.

CITY LAYOUT Vienna has evolved into one of the largest metropolises of central Europe, with a surface area covering 415 sq. km (160 sq. miles). It's divided into 23 districts *(Bezirke),* each identified by a Roman numeral.

The size and shape of the **First District,** known as the **Innere Stadt (Inner City),** roughly corresponds to the original borders of the medieval city. Other than the Cathedral of St. Stephan, very few Gothic or medieval buildings remain—many were reconstructed in the baroque or neoclassical style, whereas others are modern replacements of buildings bombed during World War II. As Austria's commercial and cultural nerve center, the central district contains dozens of streets devoted exclusively to pedestrian traffic. The most famous of these is **Kärntnerstrasse,** which bypasses the Vienna State Opera House during its southward trajectory toward the province of Carinthia (Kärnten).

Ringstrasse is a circular boulevard about 4km (2½ miles) long whose construction between 1859 and 1888 was one of the most ambitious (and controversial) examples of urban restoration in the history of central Europe. The boulevard surrounds the

Native Behavior

Get accustomed to hearing *Grüss Gott* (God bless you) when Austrians greet you and *Auf Wiedersehen* when they leave. These greetings are practiced by everybody from your hotel manager to the shoeshine man.

Although no one will kick you off the premises, it is a local custom to dress up for a night at the opera or ballet. You can show up in a jogging suit or jeans but you might feel out of place.

Austria is perhaps the most formal of the countries reviewed in this guide. Yes, some gents nostalgic for the old Austro-Hungarian Empire still bow and click their heels when introduced to a lady. Prepare to shake hands on both meeting and parting. The Austrians are great sticklers for titles, however minor or honorific, including *Doktor* or *Professor.*

If you've never hung out in coffeehouses before, making one your second living room, Austria provides a wonderful introduction to this custom. The Viennese especially can sit for hour after hour over a single cup of coffee reading magazines and newspapers or else watching the world parade by.

Value The Vienna Card

The **Vienna Card** gives you access to all public modes of transportation (subway, bus, and tram) within Vienna—as well as discounts in city museums, shops, and restaurants—for a single discounted price. A 24-hour network pass costs 5.70€ ($8.30) and is good for a full day of public transport. A 72-hour network pass sells for 19€ ($27). There's also an 8-day ticket, priced at 28€ ($41), that contains eight individual partitions. Each of these, when stamped, is good for 1 day of unlimited travel. An individual can opt to reserve all eight of the partitions for his or her own use, thereby gaining 8 days of cost-effective travel on the city's transport system. Or the partitions can be subdivided among a group of several riders, allowing—for example—two persons 4 days each of unlimited rides. Vienna Cards are easy to find throughout the capital, or you can buy one outside Vienna with a credit card by calling ✆ **01/7984-40028.**

Inner City. Confusingly, the name of this boulevard changes many times during its encirclement of the Inner City. Names that apply to it carry the suffix *-ring:* for example, Opernring, Schottenring, Burgring, Dr.-Karl-Lueger-Ring, Stubenring, Parkring, Schubertring, and Kärntner Ring.

Surrounding Ringstrasse and the Inner City, in a more or less clockwise direction, are the inner suburban districts (2–9), which contain many hotels and restaurants popular for their close proximity to the city center. The outer districts (10–23) form another concentric ring of suburbs, comprising a variety of neighborhoods from industrial parks to rural villages.

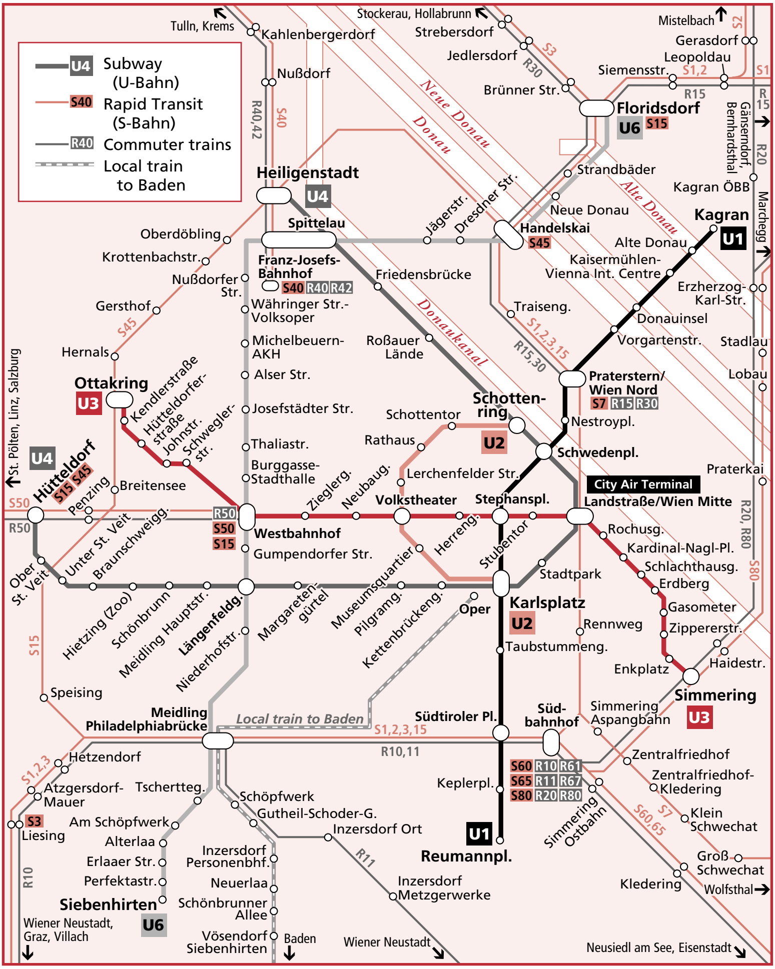
Northeast of the Inner City, beyond the Danube Canal, is the **2nd District,** home to the famous amusement park the Prater. East of the center, in the **3rd District,** you'll find the art treasures and baroque setting of the Belvedere Palace. West of the center is Schönbrunn Palace, located in the **13th District.**

GETTING AROUND **By Public Transportation** **Wiener Verkehrsbetriebe (Vienna Transport),** with its network of facilities covering hundreds of miles, can take you where you want to go—by U-Bahn (subway), tram (streetcar), or bus. **Informationdienst der Wiener Verkehrsbetriebe (Vienna Public Transport Information Center)** has five locations: Opernpassage (an underground passageway adjacent to the Wiener Staatsoper), Karlsplatz, Stephansplatz (near Vienna's cathedral), Westbahnhof, and Praterstern. For information about any of these outlets, call ✆ **01/790-9105.**

Vienna maintains a uniform fare that applies to all forms of public transport. A ticket for the bus, subway, or tram will cost 1.70€ ($2.50) if you buy it in advance at a Tabac-Trafiks (a store or kiosk selling tobacco products and newspapers) or 2.20€ ($3.20) if you buy it onboard. Smart Viennese buy their tickets in advance, usually in blocks of at least five at a time, from any of the city's thousands of Tabac-Trafiks or at any of the public transport centers noted above. No matter what vehicle you decide to ride within Vienna, remember that once a ticket has been stamped (validated) by either a machine or a railway attendant, it's valid for one trip in one direction, anywhere in the city, including transfers.

By U-Bahn (Subway) The U-Bahn consists of five lines labeled as U1, U2, U3, U4, and U6 (there is no U5). Karlsplatz, in the heart of the Inner City, is the most

Vienna Public Transport


U4 Subway (U-Bahn)
S40 Rapid Transit (S-Bahn)
R40 Commuter trains
Local train to Baden
Tulln, Krems
Kahlenbergerdorf
Stockerau, Hollabrunn
Strebersdorf
Jedlersdorf
Mistelbach
Gerasdorf
Leopoldau
Siemensstr.
S1,2
S1
S2
S3
R30
Brünner Str.
R15
Floridsdorf
U6
S15
Gänserndorf, Bernhardsthal
R20
Nußdorf
R40,42
S40
Neue Donau
Donau
Strandbäder
Alte Donau
Kagran ÖBB
Marchegg
Heiligenstadt
U4
Spittelau
Jägerstr.
Dresdner Str.
Neue Donau
Handelskai
S45
Kagran
U1
Alte Donau
Oberdöbling
Krottenbachstr.
Nußdorfer Str.
Franz-Josefs-Bahnhof
S40 R40 R42
Friedensbrücke
Kaisermühlen-Vienna Int. Centre
Erzherzog-Karl-Str.
Gersthof
Währinger Str.-Volksoper
Traiseng.
Donauinsel
S45
Michelbeuern-AKH
Roßauer Lände
Donaukanal
S1,2,3,15
R15,30
Vorgartenstr.
Stadlau
Hernals
Alser Str.
Lobau
Ottakring
U3
Kendlerstraße
Hütteldorfer-straße
Johnstr.
Schwegler-str.
Josefstädter Str.
Schottenring
Praterstern/Wien Nord
S7 R15 R30
Nestroypl.
St. Pölten, Linz, Salzburg
U4
Hütteldorf
S15 S45
Thaliastr.
Schottentor
Rathaus
U2
Schwedenpl.
Penzing
Breitensee
Burggasse-Stadthalle
Zieglerg.
Neubaug.
Lerchenfelder Str.
City Air Terminal
Praterkai
S50
R50
Volkstheater
Stephanspl.
Landstraße/Wien Mitte
R20, R80
S80
Ober St. Veit
Unter St. Veit
Braunschweigg.
R50
S50
S15
Westbahnhof
Gumpendorfer Str.
Herreng.
Stubentor
Rochusg.
Kardinal-Nagl-Pl.
Schlachthausg.
Erdberg
Stadtpark
Hietzing (Zoo)
Schönbrunn
Meidling Hauptstr.
Längenfeldg.
Niederhofstr.
Margareten-gürtel
Museumsquartier
Pilgramg.
Kettenbrückeng.
Oper
Karlsplatz
U2
Rennweg
Gasometer
Zippererstr.
Taubstummeng.
Haidestr.
Enkplatz
S15
Speising
Simmering
U3
Meidling Philadelphiabrücke
Local train to Baden
S1,2,3,15
Südtiroler Pl.
Süd-bahnhof
Simmering Aspangbahn
R10,11
Hetzendorf
S1,2,3
Atzgersdorf-Mauer
Tschertteg.
S60 R10 R61
S65 R11 R67
S80 R20 R80
Zentralfriedhof
Zentralfriedhof-Kledering
Keplerpl.
Schöpfwerk
S3
Liesing
Am Schöpfwerk
Gutheil-Schoder-G.
Inzersdorf Ort
S7
Simmering Ostbahn
S60,65
Klein Schwechat
Alterlaa
Inzersdorf Personenbhf.
R11
U1
Reumannpl.
Erlaaer Str.
Groß-Schwechat
Perfektastr.
Neuerlaa
Inzersdorf Metzgerwerke
Kledering
Wolfsthal
R10
Siebenhirten
Schönbrunner Allee
Wiener Neustadt, Graz, Villach
U6
Vösendorf Siebenhirten
Baden
Wiener Neustadt
Neusiedl am See, Eisenstadt

important underground station for visitors, as the U1, U2, and U4 converge here. The U2 traces part of the Ring, the U4 goes to Schönbrunn, and the U1 stops in Stephansplatz. The U3 also stops in Stephansplatz and connects with the Westbahnhof. The U-Bahn runs daily from 6am to midnight.

By Bus Buses traverse Vienna in all directions and operate Monday through Saturday from 6am to 10pm and Sunday from 6am to 8pm. Bus nos. 1A, 2A, and 3A will get you around the Inner City. Convenient night buses are available on weekends and holidays starting at 12:15am. They go from Schwedenplatz to the outer suburbs (including Grinzing). Normal tickets are not valid on these late "N" buses. Instead, you pay a special fare of 1.50€ ($2.20) onboard.

By Tram Riding the red-and-white trams *(Strassenbahn)* is not only a practical way to get around, but a great way to see the city. Tram stops are well marked and lines are labeled as numbers or letters. Lines 1 and 2 will bring you to all the major sights on the Ringstrasse. Line D skirts the outer Ring and goes to the Südbahnhof, whereas line 18 goes between the Westbahnhof and the Südbahnhof.

By Taxi Taxi stands are marked by signs, or you can call for a radio cab by phoning ✆ **31300,** 81400, 44444, 60160, or 40100. Fares are indicated on an officially calibrated taximeter. The basic fare is 2.50€ ($3.70), plus 1.10€ ($1.60) per kilometer. For rides after 11pm, and for trips on Sunday and holidays, there's a surcharge of 1€ ($1.50). There is an additional charge of 2€ ($2.90) if the taxi is ordered by phone.

By Car Major car-rental companies operating in Vienna include **Avis,** Opernring 3–5 (✆ **800/331-1212** in the U.S. and Canada, or 01/587-62-41 at the Vienna airport; U-Bahn: Karlsplatz); **Budget Rent-a-Car** (✆ **800/527-0700** in the U.S., or 01/70-0732711 at the Vienna Airport; U-Bahn: Landstrasse/Wien Mitte); and **Hertz,** at the airport (✆ **800-654-3001** in the U.S., or 01/700732661).

By Bicycle Vienna has more than 250km (155 miles) of marked bicycle paths within the city limits. In the summer, many Viennese leave their cars in the garage and ride bikes. You can take bicycles on specially marked U-Bahn cars for free, but only Monday to Friday from 9am to 3pm and 6:30pm to midnight. On weekends in July and August bicycles are carried free from 9am to midnight.

Rental stores abound at the Prater and along the banks of the Danube Canal, which is the favorite bike route for most Viennese. One of the best of the many sites specializing in bike rentals is **Pedalpower,** Ausstellungsstrasse 3 (✆ **01/729-7234;** www.pedalpower.at), which is open March to October from 9am to 7pm. The Vienna Tourist Board can also supply a list of rental shops and more information about bike paths. Bike rentals begin at about 28€ ($41) per day. You are supplied with a map for a self-guided tour.

FAST FACTS: Vienna

American Express The office at Kärntnerstrasse 21–23 (✆ **01/512-40-040**), near Stock-im-Eisenplatz, is open Monday to Friday 9am to 5:30pm and Saturday 9am to noon.

Business Hours Most shops are open Monday to Friday 9am to 6pm and Saturday 9am to noon, 12:30pm, or 1pm, depending on the store. On the first Saturday of every month, shops customarily remain open until 4:30 or 5pm. The tradition is called *langer Samstag.*

Currency Austria uses the **euro** (€). At press time, 1€ = US$1.45.

Currency Exchange During off-hours you can exchange money at *bureaux de change* (exchange bureaus) throughout the Inner City (there's one at the intersection of Kohlmarkt and the Graben), as well as at travel agencies, train stations, and the airport. There's also a 24-hour exchange service at the post office (Hauptpostamt) at Fleischmarkt 19.

Dentists & Doctors For dental problems, call ✆ **01/512-2078.** A list of physicians can be found in the telephone directory under *Arzte.* If you have a medical emergency at night, call ✆ **141** daily 7pm to 7am.

Drugstores Called *Apotheke,* they're open Monday to Friday 8am to noon and 2 to 6pm and Saturday from 8am to noon. Each Apotheke posts in its window a list of shops that take turns staying open at night and on Sunday.

Embassies & Consulates The embassy of the **United States** is at Boltzmanngasse 16, A-1090 Vienna (✆ **01/31339-0;** U-Bahn: Stadtpark). The consular section, Parkring 12, A-1010 Vienna (✆ **01/31339-0**), handles lost passports, tourist emergencies, and other matters. Both are open Monday to Friday 8:30am to noon and 1 to 2pm.

The embassy of **Canada,** Laurenzerberg 2 (✆ **01/531-38-3000**), is open Monday to Friday 8:30am to 12:30pm and 1:30 to 3:30pm. The embassy of the **United Kingdom,** Jauresgasse 12 (✆ **01/71613-0**), is open Monday to Friday 10am to noon and 2 to 4pm. The embassy of **Australia,** Mattiellistrasse 2–4 (✆ **01/50674-0**), is open Monday to Friday 8:30am to 4:30pm. The **New Zealand** Consulate General's office, Salesianergasse 15/3 (✆ **01/318-8505**), is open Monday to Friday 8:30am to 5pm, but it's best to call to see if it's actually open. The embassy of **Ireland,** Rotenturn Strasse 16–18 (✆ **01/715-4246**), is open Monday to Friday 9:30 to 11:30am and 1:30 to 4pm.

Emergencies Call ✆ **122** to report a fire, ✆ **133** for the police, or ✆ **144** for an ambulance.

Internet Access **Café Stein,** Währingerstrasse 6–8 (✆ **01/319-72-419**), offers Internet access and is open Monday to Saturday 7am to 1am, and Sunday 9 to 1am. The service is free but you have to bring your own laptop.

Police The emergency number is ✆ **133.**

Post Office Post offices in Vienna can be found in the heart of every district. Addresses for these can be found in the telephone directory under "Post." Post offices are generally open for mail services Monday to Friday from 7am to noon and 2 to 6pm. The central post office (Hauptpostamt), Barbaragasse 2 (✆ **01/51570**), and most general post offices are open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Safety In recent years, Vienna has been plagued by purse snatchers. Small foreign children often approach sympathetic adults and ask for money. As the adult goes for his wallet or her purse, full-grown thieves rush in and grab the money, fleeing with it. Unaccompanied women should hold onto their purses tightly, and never open them in public.

Telephone The **country code** for Austria is **43.** The **city code** for Vienna is **1;** use this code when you're calling from outside Austria. If you're within Austria, use **01** before the local number (**01** is included in all telephone numbers in this chapter, so it is not necessary to add any other numbers when calling these telephone numbers within Austria).

Hotels add huge surcharges to long-distance calls; go to the post office instead. Consider purchasing a **phone card** at any post office.

Tipping A service charge of 10% to 15% is included on hotel and restaurant bills, but it's a good policy to leave something extra for waiters and 2€ ($2.90) per day for your hotel maid. Railroad station, airport, and hotel porters get 1.50€ ($2.20) per piece of luggage, plus a 1€ ($1.50) tip. Tip your hairdresser

10% of the bill, and give the shampoo person a 1.50€ ($2.20) gratuity. Toilet attendants are usually given .50€ (75¢), and coat-check attendants expect .50€ to 1.25€ (75¢–$1.80).

WHERE TO STAY

INNERE STADT (INNER CITY)

Very Expensive

Grand Hotel Wien ★★★ Some of the most discerning hotel guests in Europe, often music lovers, prefer this seven-story deluxe hotel to the more traditional and famous Imperial or Bristol. Only a block from the Staatsoper, it's a honey, and has been at the hub of Viennese social life since the turn of the 20th century. You enter a world of beveled mirrors, crystal chandeliers, and a grand staircase. The spacious accommodations are posh, with all the modern extras such as heated floors, phones in the marble bathrooms, and even "antifog" mirrors. The more expensive units have more elaborate furnishings and decoration, including delicate stucco work.

Kärnter Ring 9, A-1010 Vienna. ✆ **01/515-800.** Fax 01/515-13-10. www.grandhotelwien.com. 205 units. 390€–490€ ($566–$711) double; from 1,139€ ($1,652) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 30€ ($44). U-Bahn: Karlsplatz. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; cafe; 2 bars; health club; business center; shopping arcade; salon; room service; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, beverage maker, hair dryer, trouser press, safe, Wi-Fi.

Hotel Bristol ★★★ This six-story landmark is a superb choice—only the Imperial is grander. When it was constructed in 1894 across the street from the State Opera, it was the ultimate in luxury style, but it's been updated to give guests the benefit of black-tiled bathrooms equipped with tub/shower combos and modern conveniences. Rooms are sumptuously appointed. The club floor offers luxurious comfort, enhanced by period furnishings. Corkscrew columns of rare marble grace the **Korso,** Bristol's restaurant, which is one of the best in Vienna.

Kärntner Ring 1, A-1015 Vienna. ✆ **888/625-5144** in the U.S., or 01/515-160. Fax 01/515-16-550. www.westin.com/bristol. 140 units. 355€–434€ ($515–$629) double; from 805€ ($1,167) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 30€ ($44). U-Bahn: Karlsplatz. Tram: 1 or 2. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants (1 seasonal); bar; fitness center; Jacuzzi; sauna; business center; room service; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms; solarium. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

Hotel Imperial ★★★ This hotel is Vienna's grandest and the most "imperial" looking in Austria, 2 blocks from the State Opera and 1 block from the Musikverein. The hotel was built in 1869 as a private residence and was converted into a private hotel in 1873. Everything is outlined against a background of polished marble, crystal chandeliers, Gobelin tapestries, and fine rugs. Some of the royal suites are palatial, but all rooms are soundproof and generally spacious, with deluxe full bathrooms. The **Hotel Imperial Restaurant** is a fabled turn-of-the-20th-century restaurant.

Kärntner Ring 16, A-1015 Vienna. ✆ **800/325-3589** in the U.S., or 01/501100. Fax 01/5011-0410. www.luxurycollection.com/imperial. 138 units. 355€–434€ ($515–$629) double; from 782€ ($1,134) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 30€ ($44). U-Bahn: Karlsplatz. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; health club; sauna; room service; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Hotel Sacher Wien ★★★ Much of the glory of the Hapsburgs is still evoked by the public rooms here, although the hotel, founded in 1876, is no longer the grandest in Vienna, having lost out to the Bristol or Imperial. The red velvet, crystal chandeliers, and brocaded curtains are reminiscent of Old Vienna. The reception desk is fairly flexible about making arrangements for salons or apartments, or joining two rooms together. Most accommodations are generous in size and often have sitting areas and midsize marble bathrooms with tub/shower combinations. In a major new development in 2005, the hotel added two additional upper floors, creating 42 new accommodations, opening onto some of the most panoramic views of any hotel in Vienna. We prefer these rooms to the ones down below because of their greater amenities, such as illuminated mirrors, plasma TVs, and marble bathrooms, and, of course, those room terraces. The hotel also launched one of the most sophisticated spas of any hotel in Vienna.

Philharmonikerstrasse 4, A-1010 Vienna. ✆ **01/514560.** Fax 01/512-56-810. www.sacher.com. 152 units. 385€–580€ ($558–$841) double; 800€–1,290€ ($1,160–$1,871) junior suite; from 1,790€ ($2,596) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 30€ ($44). U-Bahn: Karlsplatz/Oper. Tram: 1, 2, 62, 65, D, or J. Bus: 4A. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; cafe; bar; spa; fitness center; room service; massage; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

Expensive

Hotel Astoria ★ This landmark is for nostalgia buffs who want to recall the grand life of the closing days of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. A first-class hotel, the Astoria has a desirable location on the shopping mall close to St. Stephan's Cathedral and the State Opera. Decorated in a slightly frayed late-19th-century style, the hotel offers well-appointed and traditionally decorated rooms. The interior rooms tend to be too dark, and singles are just too cramped. Bathrooms are luxurious with dual basins and heated towel racks.

Kärntnerstrasse 32–34, A-1015 Vienna. ✆ **01/515-770.** Fax 01/515-77-82. www.austria-trend.at. 118 units. 440€–500€ ($638–$725) double; from 550€ ($798) suite. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 30€ ($44). U-Bahn: Stephansplatz. Tram: 1, 2, or D. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; room service; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

Hotel Das Triest ★★ *Finds* Sir Terence Conran, the famous English architect and designer, has created the interior decoration for this contemporary hotel in the center of Vienna, a 5-minute walk from St. Stephan's Cathedral. Conran has done for Das Triest what Philippe Starck did for New York's Paramount Hotel—created a stylish address in the heart of one of the world's most important cities. An emerging favorite with artists and musicians, this hip hotel has such grace notes as a courtyard garden and cozy fireplace. Its cross-vaulted rooms, which give the structure a distinctive flair, have been transformed into lounges and suites. Guest rooms are midsize to spacious, tastefully furnished, and comfortable.

Wiedner Hauptstrasse 12, A-1040 Vienna. ✆ **01/589-18.** Fax 01/589-18-80. www.dastriest.at. 72 units. 273€ ($396) double; 338€ ($490) junior suite; from 556€ ($806) suite. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 25€ ($36). U-Bahn: Karlsplatz. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; fitness center; sauna; business center; salon; room service; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, trouser press, safe, Wi-Fi.

Hotel König Von Ungarn ★ In a choice site on a narrow street near the cathedral, this hotel has been in the business for more than 4 centuries and is Vienna's oldest continuously operated accommodations. It's an evocative, intimate, and cozy retreat in an early-17th-century building. Everywhere you look you'll find low-key luxury, tradition, and modern convenience. Guest rooms have been remodeled with Biedermeier accents and traditional furnishings. Most bathrooms are generous in size and have dual basins, tub/shower combinations, and tiled walls. The professional staff is highly efficient, keeping the hotel spotless. The hotel restaurant is one of Vienna's finest.

Schulerstrasse 10, A-1010 Vienna. ✆ **01/515-84-0.** Fax 01/515-848. www.kvu.at. 33 units. 208€ ($302) double; 290€–340€ ($421–$493) apt. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Nearby parking 18€ ($26). U-Bahn: Stephansplatz. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; room service; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Moderate

Falkensteiner Hotel Am Schottenfeld ★ *Finds* Modern, innovative, and young at heart, this designer hotel is alluring, attracting a young clientele. The lighting seems to set the stage for every room in the hotel, from the colored lights in the lounge to the natural light in other public rooms. The bedrooms are furnished in a sleek, contemporary, and rather chic style, with marble floored bathrooms. The neighborhood surrounding the hotel is part of its allure, as it's filled with junk shops, trendy boutiques, small bars, good restaurants, antiquarian bookshops, and Internet cafes.

Schottenfeldgasse 74, A-1070 Vienna. ✆ **01/526-5181.** Fax 01/526-81-160. www.falkensteiner.com. 91 units. 157€–249€ ($228–$361) double; 50€ ($73) extra for junior suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 13€ ($19). U-Bahn: Mariahilfer Strasse. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; room service; laundry service/dry cleaning; sauna; solarium; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

Hotel Kaiserin Elisabeth ★ This yellow-stoned hotel is conveniently located near the cathedral. The interior is decorated with Oriental rugs on well-maintained marble and wood floors. The small, quiet rooms have been considerably updated since Wolfgang Mozart, Richard Wagner, Franz Liszt, and Edvard Grieg stayed here, and their musical descendants continue to patronize the place. Polished wood, clean linen, and perhaps another Oriental rug grace each guest room. Bathrooms are a bit cramped, but they are tiled and equipped with tub/shower combinations and vanity mirrors.

Weihburggasse 3, A-1010 Vienna. ✆ **01/515-260.** Fax 01/515-267. www.kaiserinelisabeth.at. 63 units. 216€ ($313) double; 245€ ($355) suite. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 20€ ($29). U-Bahn: Stephansplatz. **Amenities:** Restaurant; breakfast room; bar; room service; laundry/dry cleaning service. *In room:* A/C (in some), TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

Hotel Royal ★★ The lobby of this hotel less than a block from St. Stephan's contains the piano where Wagner composed *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg.* Each good-size room is furnished differently, in a style influenced by 19th-century Italy, with some good reproductions of antiques and an occasional original. The entire facility was built in 1960 and reconstructed in 1982. Try for a room with a balcony and a view of the cathedral. Corner rooms with spacious foyers are also desirable, although those facing the street tend to be noisy. Most bathrooms have both tub and shower.

Singerstrasse 3, A-1010 Vienna. ✆ **01/515680.** Fax 01/513-9698. www.abnet.at/hotel/vienna/royal/index.html 81 units. 180€–200€ ($261–$290) double; 255€ ($370) suite. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Nearby parking 24€ ($35). U-Bahn: Stephansplatz. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; room service; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer.

Inexpensive

Drei Kronen ★ The celebrated architect Ignaz Drapala designed this splendid Art Nouveau building in a charming section of Vienna close to the famous Naschmarkt. The hotel enjoys one of Vienna's best locations, close to such monuments as the Vienna State Opera and St. Stephan's Cathedral. The midsize-to-spacious guest rooms are fresh and bright, with comfortable furnishings along with immaculate bathrooms with shower. Some of the rooms are large enough to contain three beds.

Schleifmuehlgasse 25, A-1040 Vienna. ✆ **01/587-32-89.** Fax 01/587-32-89-11. www.hotel3kronen.at. 41 units. 75€–119€ ($109–$173) double; 90€–139€ ($131–$202) triple. Rates include breakfast buffet. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 15€ ($22). U-Bahn: Karlsplatz. **Amenities:** Breakfast room; lounge; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV, safe (in some).

Hotel Kärntnerhof ★ Kids A 4-minute walk from the cathedral, the Kärntnerhof advertises itself as a family-oriented hotel because there are many triples and the suites sleep four to six guests. The decor of the public areas is tastefully arranged around Oriental rugs, well-upholstered chairs and couches with cabriole legs, and an occasional 19th-century portrait. The midsize rooms are more up-to-date, usually with the original parquet floors and striped or patterned wallpaper set off by curtains. The small private bathrooms glisten with tile walls and floors; about half of them contain tub/shower combinations.

Grashofgasse 4, A-1011 Vienna. ✆ **01/512-19-23.** Fax 01/513-22-28-33. www.karntnerhof.com. 44 units. 105€–162€ ($152–$235) double; 170€–200€ ($247–$290) suite. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 16€ ($23). U-Bahn: Stephansplatz. **Amenities:** Breakfast room; lounge; room service; laundry/dry cleaning service. *In room:* TV.

Hotel Pension Suzanne ★ Kids Only a 45-second walk from the opera house, this is a real discovery. Once you get past its postwar facade, the interior warms considerably, brightly decorated in a comfortable, traditional style, with antique beds, plush chairs, and the original molded ceilings. Rooms are midsize and exceedingly well maintained, facing either the busy street or else a courtyard. Families often stay here because some accommodations contain three beds. A number of guest rooms are like small apartments with kitchenettes. Each unit comes with a private bathroom with a tub/shower combination.

Walfischgasse 4, A-1010 Vienna. ✆ **01/513-25-07.** Fax 01/513-25-00. www.pension-suzanne.at. 25 units. 98€–112€ ($142–$162) double; 119€–121€ ($173–$175) apt. Rates include continental breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. No parking. U-Bahn: Karlsplatz. **Amenities:** Breakfast room; lounge; babysitting; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV, hair dryer, safe.

WHERE TO DINE

INNERE STADT (INNER CITY)

Very Expensive

Drei Husaren ★★★ VIENNESE/INTERNATIONAL Just off Kärntnerstrasse, this enduring favorite—a Viennese landmark since 1935—serves an inventive and classic Viennese cuisine. To the music of Gypsy melodies, you'll dine on such stellar dishes as freshwater salmon with pike soufflé, mussel soup, breast of guinea fowl, an array of sole dishes, and longtime favorites like *Tafelspitz* (savory boiled beef). The chef specializes in veal, including his deliciously flavored Kalbsbrücken Metternich. The place is justifiably celebrated for its repertoire of more than 35 hors d'oeuvres, which waitstaff roll around the dining room on four separate carts.

Weihburggasse 4. ✆ **01/512-10-92-0.** Reservations required. Main courses 29€–38€ ($42–$55); *menu dégustation* (6 courses) 83€ ($120); 4-course fixed-price business lunch 40€ ($58). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily noon–3pm and 6pm–1am. U-Bahn: Stephansplatz.

König von Ungarn (King of Hungary) ★ VIENNESE/INTERNATIONAL This beautifully decorated restaurant is inside the famous hotel of the same name. Food is well prepared but traditional—not at all experimental. You dine under a vaulted ceiling in an atmosphere of crystal, chandeliers, antiques, and marble columns. If you're in doubt about what to order, try the Tafelspitz. Other seasonal choices include a ragout of seafood with fresh mushrooms, tournedos of beef with a mustard-and-horseradish sauce, and appetizers like scampi in caviar sauce. The service is superb.

Schulerstrasse 10. ✆ **01/515-840.** Reservations required. Main courses 15€–20€ ($22–$29); fixed-price menu 39€–49€ ($57–$71) dinner. AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 6–10:30pm. U-Bahn: Stephansplatz. Bus: 1A.

Korso bei der Oper ★★★ VIENNESE/INTERNATIONAL This chic and glittering choice is decorated with tasteful paneling, sparkling chandeliers, and, flanking either side of a baronial fireplace, two of the most breathtaking baroque columns in Vienna. The kitchen concocts an alluring mixture of traditional and modern cuisine. Your meal may feature filet of char with a sorrel sauce, saddle of veal with cèpe mushrooms and homemade noodles, or the inevitable Tafelspitz. The rack of lamb is excellent, as are the medallions of beef with a shallot-infused butter sauce and Roquefort-flavored noodles. The wine list is extensive.

In the Hotel Bristol, Kärntneering 1. ✆ **01/515-16-546.** Reservations required. Main courses 25€–40€ ($36–$58); fixed-price menu 35€–45€ ($51–$65) lunch, 60€–90€ ($87–$131) dinner. AE, DC, MC, V. Sun–Fri noon–3pm; daily 6pm–1am. U-Bahn: Karlsplatz. Tram: 1 or 2.

Mörwald im Ambassador ★★★ VIENNESE/INTERNATIONAL In the Hotel Ambassador, this is the most stylish and one of the best restaurants in Vienna. Bankers, diplomats, and what one local food critic called "Helmut Lang–clad hipsters" show up here to see and be seen, but also to enjoy the delectable modern Viennese cuisine of Christian Domschitz. He's shown a genius for giving classic Viennese dishes a modern twist. Prepared with élan and precision, some of his best dishes include saddle of suckling pig with white cabbage dumplings, veal meatloaf with puréed spring onions, and a spicy brook char, one of the better fish offerings. You might start with his velvety-smooth foie gras in Kirschwasser. For dessert, we recommend the diced semolina pancakes.

In the Hotel Ambassador, Kärntner Strasse 22. ✆ **01/961-61-161.** Reservations required. Main courses 25€–40€ ($36–$58). Mon–Sat 11am–3pm and 6:30–11pm. AE, DC, MC, V. U-Bahn: Stephansplatz.

Sacher Hotel Restaurant ★ AUSTRIAN/INTERNATIONAL This is a long-enduring favorite for pre- or postopera dining. It seems as if all celebrities who come to Vienna eventually are seen either in the **Red Bar,** with its adjacent dining room, where live piano music is presented every evening from 7pm to midnight, or in the brown-and-white **Anna Sacher Room,** the site of many a high-powered meal. There's no better place in Vienna to sample the restaurant's most famous dish, Tafelspitz, that's fit for an emperor. The chef serves it with a savory, herb-flavored sauce. Other delectable dishes include fish terrine and veal steak with morels. For dessert, the Sacher torte enjoys world renown. It's primarily a chocolate sponge cake that's sliced in half and filled with apricot jam. This most famous of pastries in Vienna was supposedly created in 1832 by Franz Sacher when he served as Prince Metternich's apprentice.

Philharmonikerstrasse 4. ✆ **01/514-560.** Reservations required. Main courses 25€–42€ ($36–$61). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily noon–3pm and 6–11:30pm. U-Bahn: Karlsplatz.

Steirereck ★★★ VIENNESE/AUSTRIAN/INTERNATIONAL *Steirereck* means "corner of Styria," which is exactly what Heinz and Margarethe Reitbauer have created in the rustic decor of this intimate restaurant. It has been acclaimed by some Viennese as the best restaurant in the city. The Reitbauers offer both traditional Viennese dishes and "New Austrian" selections. You might begin with a caviar-semolina dumpling, roasted turbot with fennel (served as an appetizer), or the most elegant and expensive item of all, gooseliver Steirereck. The menu is wisely limited and well prepared, changing daily depending on the fresh produce available at the market. The restaurant is popular with after-theater diners. The large wine cellar holds some 35,000 bottles. In addition to the fabled restaurant, there is also Ess. Bar, plus a Light-Restaurant for gourmet-level food during the day, and Meierei, which is all about dairy products with, among other offerings, 150 kinds of cheese.

Steirereck im Stadtpark. ✆ **01/713-31-68.** Reservations required. Main courses 22€–42€ ($32–$61); 3-course fixed-price lunch 38€ ($55); 5-course fixed-price dinner 47€ ($68). AE, DC, MC, V. Steirereck-Restaurant Mon–Fri from 7pm; Light-Restaurant Mon–Fri 11am–5pm; Meierei Mon–Fri 2pm–midnight; Ess. Bar 5pm–midnight. Closed holidays. U-Bahn: Stadtpark.

Expensive

Dö & Co ★ CONTINENTAL/INTERNATIONAL Stylish, upscale, and rather expensive, this restaurant is owned by one of Austria's most esoteric food stores. Its location is on the seventh floor of the aggressively ultramodern Haas Haus, which stands in jarring proximity to Vienna's cathedral. Menu items change with the season, but considering the rarefied nature of the organization presenting it, each is appropriately rare, and unusual. Examples include Uruguayan beef, Austrian venison, grilled baby turbot from the coast of Norway, deep-fried monkfish, and carpaccio "Parmigiana," as well as traditional Austrian specialties. There's also a repertoire of Thai dishes, including crispy pork salad, red curried chicken, and sweet-and-sour red snapper. And there's a "wok buffet," wherein you assemble the ingredients for your meal on a plate, and then deliver it to a uniformed chef who will quick-sear it for you with whatever sauces you want.

In the Haas Haus, Stephansplatz 12 ✆ **01/535-39-69.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 18€–32€ ($26–$46); set menus 45€–55€ ($65–$80). V. Daily noon–3pm and 6pm–midnight. U-Bahn: Stephansplatz.

Plachutta ★ VIENNESE Few restaurants have built such a culinary shrine around one dish: Tafelspitz, the boiled beef dish that was the favorite of Emperor Franz Josef throughout his prolonged reign. Whichever of the 10 versions you order, it will invariably come with sauces and garnishes that perk up what sounds like a dull dish into a delectable culinary traipse through the tastes of yesteryear. The differences between the versions are a function of the cut of beef you request as part of your meal. Regardless of the cut you specify, your meal will be accompanied with hash brown potatoes, chives, and an appealing mixture of horseradish and chopped apples.

Wollzeile 38. ✆ **01/512-1577.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 15€–35€ ($22–$51). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 11:30am–midnight. U-Bahn: Stubentor.

Wiener Rathauskeller ★★ VIENNESE/INTERNATIONAL City halls throughout the Teutonic world have traditionally maintained restaurants in their basements, and Vienna is no exception. In half a dozen richly atmospheric dining rooms, with high vaulted ceilings and stained-glass windows, you can enjoy good and reasonably priced food. The chef's specialty is a Rathauskellerplatte for two, consisting of various cuts of meat, including a veal schnitzel, lamb cutlets, and pork medallions. Beginning at 8pm, live musicians ramble through the world of operetta, waltz, and *Schrammel* (traditional Viennese music), as you dine.

Rathausplatz 1. ✆ **01/405-12-10.** Reservations required. Main courses 12€–40€ ($17–$58). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat 11:30am–3pm and 6–11pm. U-Bahn: Rathaus.

Coffeehouses & Cafes

One of the best-known cafes in Vienna also pays more attention to its window displays than any of its competitors. The windows of the **Café Demel,** Kohlmarkt 14 (✆ **01/535-17-17-0;** U-Bahn: Stephansplatz or Herrengasse), are filled with fanciful tributes to a changing array of themes, some of which have made, in a small-scale way, local history. Depending on the season, you might see spun-sugar and marzipan depictions of Christmas or *Midsummer Night's Dream* characters; depictions of famous Austrian emperors or composers; autumn or spring foliage in the city's parks; even effigies of famous visitors to the city. Inside is a splendidly baroque Viennese landmark with black marble tables, cream-colored embellished plaster walls, and crystal chandeliers covered with white milk-glass globes. Dozens of pastries are offered every day, including cream-filled horns *(Gugelhupfs).* It's open daily 10am to 7pm.

Café Dommayer, Auhofstrasse 2 (✆ **01/877-54-60;** U-Bahn: Schönbrunn), boasts a reputation for courtliness that dates from 1787. In 1844, Johann Strauss, Jr., made his musical debut here, and beginning in 1924, the site became known as *the* place in Vienna for tea dancing. During clement weather, a garden with seats for 300 opens in back. The rest of the year, the venue is restricted to a high-ceilinged black-and-white old-world room. Every Saturday from 2 to 4pm, a pianist and violinist perform; and on the first Saturday of every month, an all-woman orchestra plays mostly Strauss from 2 to 4pm. It's open daily 7am to 10pm.

One of the Ring's great cafes, **Café Landtmann,** Dr.-Karl-Lueger-Ring 4 (✆ **01/24-100-0;** tram: 1, 2, or D), dates from the 1880s. Overlooking the Burgtheater and the Rathaus, it has traditionally drawn a mix of politicians, journalists, and actors, and was Freud's favorite. The original chandeliers and the prewar chairs have been refurbished. We highly suggest spending an hour or so here, whether perusing the newspapers, sipping on coffee, or planning the day's itinerary. The cafe is open daily 7:30am to midnight (meals are served 11am–11:30pm).

Moderate

Griechenbeisl AUSTRIAN This local favorite opened in 1450 and is still one of Vienna's leading restaurants. It has a labyrinthine collection of dining areas on three floors, all with low vaulted ceilings, smoky paneling, and wrought-iron chandeliers. As you go in, be sure to see the so-called inner sanctum, with signatures of such former patrons as Mozart, Beethoven, and Mark Twain. The food is hearty, ample, and solidly bourgeois. Menu items include deer stew, both Hungarian and Viennese goulash, sauerkraut garni, Wiener schnitzel, and venison steak—in other words, all those favorite recipes from Grandmother's kitchen. As an added treat, the restaurant features nighttime accordion and zither music.

Fleischmarkt 11. ✆ **01/533-19-77.** Reservations required. Main courses 5€–24€ ($7.30–$35). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 11:30am–1am (last orders at 11:30pm). Tram: N, 1, 2, or 21.

Inexpensive

Augustinerkeller AUSTRIAN The beer and wine flow at this Viennese legend. Augustinerkeller, in the basement of the part of the Hofburg complex that shelters the Albertina Collection, has served wine, beer, and food since 1857, although the vaulted ceilings and sense of timelessness evoke an establishment even older than that. It attracts a lively group of patrons from all walks of life, and sometimes they get boisterous, especially when the Schrammel music goes late into the night. It's one of the best values for wine tasting in Vienna. Aside from the wine and beer, the establishment serves simple food, including roast chicken on a spit, schnitzel, and Tafelspitz. Most dishes are at the low end of the price scale.

Augustinerstrasse 1. ✆ **01/533-1026.** Main courses 12€–22€ ($17–$32). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 11am–midnight. U-Bahn: Herrengasse.

Buffet Trzésniewski ★ SANDWICHES Everyone in Vienna knows about this place, from the most hurried office workers to the city's elite hostesses. Its current incarnation is unlike any buffet you may have seen, with six or seven cramped tables and a rapidly moving queue of clients who jostle for space next to the glass countertops. You'll indicate to the waitress the kind of sandwich you want, and if you can't read German signs, just point. Most people come here for the delicious finger sandwiches, which include 18 combinations of cream cheese, egg, onion, salami, mushrooms, herring, green and red peppers, tomatoes, lobster, and many more items. If you order a drink, the cashier will give you a rubber token, which you'll present to the person at the far end of the counter.

Dorotheergasse 1. ✆ **01/512-3291.** Reservations not accepted. Sandwiches 1.50€ ($2.20). No credit cards. Mon–Fri 8:30am–7:30pm; Sat 9am–5pm. U-Bahn: Stephansplatz.

Café Leopold ★ INTERNATIONAL Critics have defined this restaurant as a postmodern version, in architectural form, of the Viennese expressionist paintings (including many by Egon Schiele) that are exhibited within the museum that contains it. During the day, the place functions as a conventional cafe and restaurant, serving a postmodern blend of *Mitteleuropaïsche* (central European) and Asian food. Three nights a week, however, from around 10pm until at least 2am, any hints of kitsch and coziness are banished as soon as a DJ begins cranking out dance tunes for a hard-drinking denizens-of-the-night crowd.

In the Leopold Museum, Museumsplatz 1. ✆ **01/523-67-32.** Reservations not necessary. Main courses 5€–12€ ($7.30–$17); 2-course set-price menu 10€ ($15). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 10am–2am. U-Bahn: Volkstheater or Babenbergstrasse/MuseumsQuartier.

Café Restaurant Halle INTERNATIONAL Set within the Kunsthalle, this is the direct competitor of the also-recommended Café Leopold. Larger, and with a more sophisticated menu than the Café Leopold's, it's a postmodern, airy, big-windowed quartet of wood-trimmed, cream-colored rooms. The menu will always contain a half-dozen meal-size salads, many garnished with strips of steak, chicken, or shrimp; two daily homemade soups; and a rotating series of platters.

In the Kunsthalle Wien, Museumsplatz 1, in the MuseumsQuartier. ✆ **01/523-70-01.** Reservations not necessary. Main courses 8€–16€ ($12–$23). MC, V. Daily 10am–2am. U-Bahn: MuseumsQuartier.

Gulaschmuseum ★ AUSTRIAN/HUNGARIAN If you thought that *Gulasch* (goulash) was available in only one form, think again. This restaurant celebrates at least 15 varieties of it, each of them an authentic survivor of the culinary traditions of

Hungary, and each redolent with the taste of that country's most distinctive spice, paprika. You can order versions of goulash based on roast beef, veal, pork, and fried chicken livers. Vegetarians rejoice: Versions made with potatoes, beans, or mushrooms are also available. Boiled potatoes and rough-textured brown or black bread will usually accompany your choice. An excellent beginning is a dish so firmly associated with Hungary that it's been referred to as the Magyar national crepe, *Hortobágyi Palatschinken,* stuffed with minced beef and paprika-flavored cream sauce.

Schulerstrasse 20. ✆ **01/512-10-17.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 7€–14€ ($10–$20). MC, V. Mon–Fri 11:30am–11pm; Sat–Sun 10am–11pm. U-Bahn: Wollzeile or Stephansplatz.

Hansen ★ MEDITERRANEAN/INTERNATIONAL Part of the charm of this intriguing and stylish restaurant involves trekking through masses of plants and elaborate garden ornaments on your way to your dining table. Choose from a small but savory menu that changes every week. Excellent examples include a spicy bean salad with strips of chicken breast served in a summer broth; risotto with cheese and sour cherries; and poached *Saibling* (something akin to trout from the cold-water streams of the Austrian Alps) with a potato-and-celery purée and watercress.

In the cellar of the Börsegebäude (Vienna Stock Exchange), Wipplingerstrasse 34 at the Schottenring. ✆ **01/532-05-42.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 9.50€–19€ ($14–$28). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri 9am–9pm (last order 8pm); Sat 9am–5pm (last order 3pm). U-Bahn: Schottenring.

Palmenhaus AUSTRIAN Architectural grace and marvelous food combine for a happy marriage here. Many architectural critics consider the Jugendstil glass canopy of this greenhouse the most beautiful in Austria. A sophisticated menu changes monthly, and might include perfectly prepared fresh Austrian goat cheese with stewed peppers and zucchini salad; young herring with sour cream, horseradish, and deep-fried beignets stuffed with apples and cabbage; or breast of chicken layered with goose-liver. If you've already eaten, no one will mind if you drop in just for a drink and one of the voluptuous pastries.

In the Burggarten. ✆ **01/533-1033.** Reservations recommended for dinner. Main courses 15€–25€ ($22–$36); pastries 3.50€–7.80€ ($5.10–$11). AE, DC, MC. V. Daily 10am–2am (closed Sun–Mon Nov–Mar). U-Bahn: Opera.

Zu den 3 Hacken ★ AUSTRIAN Cozy, small-scale, and charming, this restaurant was established 350 years ago and today bears the reputation as the oldest *Gasthaus* (travern) in Vienna. In 1827, Franz Schubert had an ongoing claim to one of the establishment's tables as a site for entertaining his cronies. There are three dining rooms, each paneled and each evocative of an inn high in the Austrian Alps. Expect an old-fashioned menu replete with the kind of dishes that fueled the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The best examples are Tafelspitz (boiled beef), beef goulash, mixed grills piled high with chops and sausages, and desserts that include Hungarian-inspired *Palatschinken* (crepes) with chocolate-hazelnut sauce.

Singerstrasse 28. ✆ **01/5125895.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 6.90€–17€ ($10–$25). DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat 11:30am–midnight. U-Bahn: Stephansplatz.

Zwölf-Zwölf-Apostelkeller VIENNESE For those seeking a taste of Old Vienna, this is the place. Sections of this old wine tavern's walls predate 1561. Rows of wooden tables stand under vaulted ceilings, with lighting provided partially by streetlights set into the masonry floor. This place is popular with students, partly because of its low prices and because of its proximity to St. Stephan's. In addition to beer and wine, the establishment serves hearty Austrian fare. Specialties include roast pork with dumplings, Hungarian goulash soup, a limited number of vegetarian dishes, and a *Schlachtplatte* (hot black pudding, liverwurst, pork, and pork sausage with a hot bacon-and-cabbage salad).

Sonnenfelsgasse 3. ✆ **01/512-67-77.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 6€–22€ ($8.70–$32). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 11am–midnight. Tram: 1, 2, 21, D, or N. Bus: 1A. U-Bahn: Stephansplatz.

SEEING THE SIGHTS OF VIENNA

The Inner City (Innere Stadt) is the tangle of streets from which Vienna grew in the Middle Ages. Much of your exploration will be confined to this area, encircled by the boulevards of "The Ring" and the Danube Canal. The main street of the Inner City is **Kärntnerstrasse,** most of which is a pedestrian mall. The heart of Vienna is **Stephansplatz,** the square on which St. Stephan's Cathedral sits.

SIGHTSEEING SUGGESTIONS FOR FIRST-TIME VISITORS

If You Have 1 Day Begin at **St. Stephan's Cathedral,** and from there branch out for a tour of the enveloping Inner City. But first, climb the tower of the cathedral for a panoramic view of the city (you can also take an elevator to the top). Stroll down **Kärntnerstrasse,** the main shopping artery, and enjoy the 11am ritual of coffee in a grand cafe, such as the **Café Imperial.** In the afternoon, visit **Schönbrunn,** seat of the Hapsburg dynasty. Have dinner in a typical Viennese wine tavern.

If You Have 2 Days On the second day, explore other major attractions of Vienna, including the **Hofburg,** the **Imperial Crypts,** and the **Kunsthistorisches Museum.** In the evening, attend an opera performance or some other musical event.

If You Have 3 Days On your third day, try to attend a performance of either the **Spanish Riding School** (Tues–Sat) or the **Vienna Boys' Choir** (singing at Sun Mass). Explore the **Belvedere Palace** and its art galleries; visit the art complex at MuseumsQuartier; stroll through the **Naschmarkt,** the city's major open-air market; and cap the day with a visit to one or more of Vienna's cabarets, wine bars, or beer cellars.

EXPLORING THE HOFBURG PALACE COMPLEX ★★★

The winter palace of the Hapsburgs, known for its vast, impressive courtyards, the Hofburg sits in the heart of Vienna. To reach it (you can hardly miss it), head up Kohlmarkt to Michaelerplatz 1, Burgring (✆ **01/533-75-70;** www.hofburg-wien.at). You can take the U-Bahn to Stephansplatz, Herrengasse, or Mariahilferstrasse, or else tram no. 1, 2, D, or J to Burgring.

This complex of imperial edifices, the first of which was constructed in 1279, grew and grew as the empire did, so that today the Hofburg Palace is virtually a city within a city. The palace, which has withstood three major sieges and a great fire, is called simply *die Burg,* or "the palace," by Viennese. Of its more than 2,600 rooms, fewer than two dozen are open to the public.

Schatzkammer (Imperial Treasury) ★★★ This is the greatest treasury in the world. It's divided into two sections: the Imperial Profane and the Sacerdotal Treasuries. One part displays the crown jewels and an assortment of imperial riches; the other exhibits ecclesiastical treasures. The most outstanding exhibit is the imperial crown, dating from 962. It's so big that even though padded, it probably slipped down over the ears of many a Hapsburg at his coronation. Studded with emeralds, sapphires, diamonds, and rubies, this 1,000-year-old symbol of sovereignty is a priceless treasure. Also on display is the imperial crown worn by the Hapsburg rulers from 1804 to the end of the empire. You'll see the saber of Charlemagne and the holy lance. Among great Schatzkammer prizes is the Burgundian Treasure seized in the 15th century, rich in vestments, oil paintings, gems, and robes.

Hofburg, Schweizerhof. ✆ **01/525-240.** Admission 10€ ($15) adults, 7.50€ ($11) students and children under 17. Wed–Mon 10am–6pm.

Kaiserappartements (Imperial Apartments) ★★ The Hofburg complex includes the Kaiserappartements, where the emperors and their wives and children lived, on the first floor. To reach these apartments, enter via the rotunda of Michaelerplatz. The apartments are richly decorated with tapestries, many from Aubusson. The Imperial Silver and Porcelain Collection provides an insight into Hapsburg court etiquette. Most of these pieces are from the 18th and 19th centuries. Leopoldinischer Trakt (Leopold's Apartments) dates from the 17th century. These Imperial Apartments are more closely associated with Franz Josef than with any other emperor.

Michaeler Platz 1 (inside the Ring, about a 4-min. walk from Herrengasse; entrance via the Kasertor in the Inneren Burghof). ✆ **01/533-75-70.** Admission 9.90€ ($14) adults, 8.90€ ($13) students under 26, 4.90€ ($7.10) children 6–15, free for children 5 and under. Daily 9am–5pm (July–Aug to 5:30pm). U-Bahn: U-1 or U-3 to Herrengasse. Tram: 1, 2, D, or J to Burgring.

Die Burgkapelle (Home of the Vienna Boys' Choir) Construction of this Gothic chapel began in 1447 during the reign of Emperor Frederick III, but the building was subsequently massively renovated. From 1449, it was the private chapel of the royal family. Today the Burgkapelle is the home of the **Hofmusikkapelle (Court Musicians)** ★★, an ensemble consisting of the Vienna Boys' Choir and members of the Vienna State Opera chorus and orchestra. Written applications for reserved seats should be sent at least 8 weeks in advance. Use a credit card; do not send cash or checks. For reservations, write to Verwaltung der Hofmusikkapelle, Hofburg, A-1010 Vienna. If you fail to reserve in advance, you might be lucky enough to secure tickets from a block sold at the Burgkapelle box office every Friday from 11am to 1pm or 3 to 5pm. The line starts forming at least half an hour before that. If you're willing to settle for standing room, it's free.

Hofburg (entrance on Schweizerhof). ✆ **01/533-9927.** http://viennaboyschoir.info. Mass: Seats 5€–45€ ($7.30–$65); standing room free. Masses (performances) held only Jan–June and mid-Sept to Dec, Sun, and holidays 9:15am. U-Bahn: Stephansplata.

Moments **The Vienna Boys' Choir**

In 1498, the emperor Maximilian I decreed that 12 boys should be included among the official court musicians. Over the next 500 years, this group evolved into the world-renowned Vienna Boys' Choir *(Wiener Sängerknaben).* They perform in Vienna at various venues, including the Staatsoper, the Volksoper, and Schönbrunn Palace. The choir also performs at Sunday and Christmas Masses with the Hofmusikkapelle (Court Musicians) at the Burgkapelle (see above review for details). The choir's boarding school is at Augartenpalais, Obere Augartenstrasse. For more information on where they are performing and how to get tickets, go to the choir's website (**www.wsk.at**).

Neue Hofburg The last addition to the Hofburg complex was the Neue Hofburg (New Château). Construction started in 1881 and continued until work was halted in 1913. The palace was the residence of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the nephew and heir apparent of Franz Josef, whose assassination at Sarajevo set off the chain of events that led to World War I. The **arms and armor collection** ★★ is second only to that of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. It's in the **Hofjagd and Rüstkammer,** on the second floor of the New Château. On display are crossbows, swords, helmets, pistols, and armor. Another section, the **Musikinstrumentensammlung** ★ (✆ **01/525-244-471**), is devoted to musical instruments, mainly from the 17th and 18th centuries. In the **Ephesos-Museum** (**Museum of Ephesian Sculpture; ✆ 01/525-24-476**), with an entrance behind the Prince Eugene monument, you'll see high-quality finds from Ephesus in Turkey and the Greek island of Samothrace.

Heldenplatz. ✆ **01/525-24-0.** www.khm.at. Admission 10€ ($15) adults, 7.50€ ($11) students and 17 and under. Wed–Mon 10am–6pm. U-Bahn: Mariahilfer STR.

Albertina ★★ Housing one of the greatest graphics collections in the world, and closed for a decade, the Albertina reopened in 2003. It offers more exhibition space than before, a new restaurant, and a four-story graphic-arts collection ranging from the late Gothic era through the present day. It's housed in the neoclassical Albertina Palace, the largest residential palace in Vienna, and it's named for Albert, duke of Saxony-Teschen (1738–1822), who launched the collection. Today it comprises some 65,000 drawings and a million prints that include such Old Masters as Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Manet, and Rubens. Its most important collection is the Dürer exhibition; unfortunately, much of the art you see from that master is a copy; the originals, such as *Praying Hands,* are shown only during special exhibitions.

For the first time, visitors can walk through the historic state rooms designed for Archduke Charles (1771–1847), who defeated Napoleon at the Battle of Aspern in 1809. Unknown to many of the Viennese themselves, the Albertina contains a wealth of 20th-century art from Jackson Pollock to Robert Rauschenberg.

The graphic arts on parade here go back to the 14th century. Yes, Poussin; yes, Fragonard; yes, Rembrandt—the list of artists on exhibit seems limitless. Allow at least 3 hours just to skim the surface.

Albertinaplatz 1. ✆ **01/53483.** www.albertina.at. Admission 9.50€ ($14) adults, 8€ ($12) seniors, 7€ ($10) students, free for children 5 and under. Daily 10am–6pm (Wed to 9pm). U-Bahn: Stephansplatz.

Augustinerkirche This church was constructed in the 14th century as part of the Hofburg complex to serve as the parish church of the imperial court. In the latter part of the 18th century it was stripped of its baroque embellishments and returned to the original Gothic features. The Chapel of St. George, dating from 1337, is entered from the right aisle. The **Tomb of Maria Christina** ★, the favorite daughter of Maria Theresa, is housed in the main nave near the rear entrance, but there's no body in it. (The princess was actually buried in the Imperial Crypt.) This richly ornamented empty tomb is one of Canova's masterpieces. The royal weddings of Maria Theresa and François of Lorraine (1736), Marie Antoinette and Louis XVI of France (1770), Marie-Louise of Austria and Napoleon (1810, but by proxy—he didn't show up), and Franz Josef and Elizabeth of Bavaria (1854) were all held in the church. The most convenient, and dramatic, time to visit is Sunday at 11am, when a High Mass is celebrated with choir, soloists, and orchestra.

Augustinerstrasse 1. ✆ **01/533-70-99.** Free admission. Daily 6:30am–6pm. U-Bahn: Stephansplatz.

Spanische Reitschule (Spanish Riding School) ★ The Spanish Riding School is in the crystal-chandeliered white ballroom in an 18th-century building of the Hofburg complex. We always marvel at the skill and beauty of the sleek Lipizzaner stallions as their adept trainers put them through their paces in a show that hasn't changed in 4 centuries. These are the world's most famous, classically styled equine performers. Reservations for performances must be made in advance, as early as possible. Order your tickets for the Sunday and Wednesday shows by writing to **Spanische Reitschule,** Hofburg, A-1010 Vienna (fax 01/533-903-240), or through a travel agency in Vienna (tickets for Sat shows can be ordered only through a travel agency). Tickets for training sessions with no advance reservations can be purchased at the entrance.

Michaelerplatz 1, Hofburg. ✆ **01/533-9032.** www.srs.at. Regular performances 38€–130€ ($55–$189) seats, 20€–25€ ($29–$36) standing room. Morning exercise with music 12€ ($17) adults, 9€ ($13) seniors, 6€ ($8.70) for children over 6; children 2 and under not admitted. Training session with music and guided tour 19€ ($28) adults, 16€ ($23) seniors, 12€ ($17) children over 6. Regular shows Mar–June and Sept to mid-Dec, most Sun at 11am and some Fri at 6pm. Classical dressage with music performances Apr–June and Sept, most Sun at 11am. Training session months vary, but are held Tues–Sat 10–11am. Call ahead for open dates. U-Bahn: Stephansplatz.

Lipizzaner Museum The latest attraction at the Hofburg is this museum near the stables of the famous white stallions. The exhibition begins with the historic inception of the Spanish Riding School in the 16th century and extends to the stallions' near destruction in the closing weeks of World War II. Exhibits such as paintings, historic engravings, drawings, photographs, uniforms, and bridles, plus video and film presentations, bring to life the history of the Spanish Riding School, offering an insight into the breeding and training of these champion horses. Visitors to the museum are able to see through a window into the stallions' stables while they are being fed and saddled.

Reitschulgasse 2. ✆ **01/533-86-59.** www.lipizzaner.at. Admission 5€ ($7.30) adults, 3.60€ ($5.20) seniors and children, 10€ ($15) family card (2 adults, 3 children). Daily 9am–6pm. U-Bahn: Stephansplatz.

EXPLORING THE MUSEUMSQUARTIER COMPLEX ★★★

With the opening of this long-awaited giant modern-art complex, critics claim that the assemblage of art installed in 18th-century royal stables has tipped the city's cultural center of gravity from Hapsburgian pomp into the new millennium. This massive structure, one of the 10 largest cultural complexes in the world, has been likened to a combination of the Guggenheim Museum and New York's Museum of Modern Art, with the Brooklyn Academy of Music, a children's museum, an architecture and design center, theaters, art galleries, video workshops, and much more thrown in for good measure. There is even an ecology center and a tobacco museum. For more information, go the MuseumsQuartier website at **www.mqw.at**.

Kunsthalle Wien ★ Cutting-edge contemporary and classic modern art are showcased here. Exhibits focus on specific subjects and seek to establish a link between modern art and current trends. You'll find works by everyone from Picasso and Juan Miró to Jackson Pollock and Paul Klee, from Wassily Kandinsky to Andy Warhol and, surprise, Yoko Ono. From expressionism to cubism to abstractionism, exhibits reveal the major movements in contemporary art since the mid–20th century. The five floors can be explored in 1 to 2 hours, depending on what interests you.

Museumsplatz 1. ✆ **01/521-890.** www.kunsthallewien.at. Admission 7€–8.50€ ($10–$12) adults; 5.50€–7€ ($8–$10) seniors, students, and children. Thurs–Tues 10am–7pm (Thurs to 9pm).

Leopold Museum ★★ This extensive collection of Austrian art includes the world's largest treasure trove of the works of Egon Schiele (1890–1918), who was once forgotten in art history but now takes his place alongside van Gogh and Modigliani in the ranks of great doomed artists, dying before he was 28. His collection of art at the Leopold includes more than 2,500 drawings and watercolors and 330 oil canvases. Other Austrian modernist masterpieces include paintings by Oskar Kokoschka, the great Gustav Klimt, Anton Romaki, and Richard Gerstl. Major statements in Arts and Crafts from the late 19th and 20th centuries include works by Josef Hoffmann, Kolo Moser, Adolf Loos, and Franz Hagenauer.

Museumsplatz 1. ☎ **01/525-70-0.** www.leopoldmuseum.org. Admission 9€ ($13) adults, 5.50€ ($8) students and children 8 and older. Mon–Wed and Fri–Sun 10am–6pm; Thurs 10am–9pm.

MUMOK (Museum of Modern Art Ludwig Foundation) ★ This gallery presents one of the most outstanding collections of contemporary art in central Europe. It comprises mainly works from American Pop Art mixed with concurrent Continental movements such as the Hyperrealism of the 1960s and 1970s. The museum features five exhibition levels (three of them aboveground and two underground). So that it will be easier to cross and compare a single art movement such as cubism or surrealism, paintings "in the same family" are grouped together. Expect to encounter works by all the fabled names such as Robert Indiana, Jasper Johns, Roy Lichtenstein, Robert Rauschenberg, George Segal, and, of course, Andy Warhol.

Museumsplatz 1. ☎ **01/525-00.** www.mumok.at. Admission 9€ ($13). Tues–Sun 10am–6pm (Thurs to 9pm).

OTHER TOP ATTRACTIONS IN THE INNER CITY

Domkirche St. Stephan (St. Stephan's Cathedral) ★★★ The cathedral was founded in the 12th century in what was the town's center. Stephansdom was virtually destroyed in a 1258 fire, and in the early 14th century the ruins of the Romanesque basilica gave way to a Gothic building. It suffered terribly in the Turkish siege of 1683 and from the Russian bombardments of 1945. Reopened in 1948, the cathedral is today one of the greatest Gothic structures in Europe, rich in woodcarvings, altars, sculptures, and paintings. The chief treasure of the cathedral is the carved, wooden **Wiener Neustadt altarpiece** ★★ that dates from 1447. Richly painted and gilded, the altar was discovered in the Virgin's Choir. In the Apostles' Choir look for the curious **Tomb of Emperor Frederick III** ★★. Made of a pinkish Salzburg marble, the carved 17th-century tomb depicts hideous little hobgoblins trying to enter and wake the emperor from his eternal sleep. The steeple, rising some 135m (443 ft.), has come to symbolize the very spirit of Vienna. You can climb the 343-step South Tower, which dominates the Viennese skyline and offers a view of the Vienna Woods. Called Alter Steffl (Old Steve), the tower with its needle-like spire was built between 1350 and 1433. The North Tower (Nordturm), reached by elevator, was never finished, but was crowned in the Renaissance style in 1579. From here you get a panoramic sweep of the city and the Danube.

Stephansplatz 3. ☎ **01/515-52-3526.** www.stephanskirche.at. Cathedral free admission; tour of catacombs 4€ ($5.80) adults, 1.50€ ($2.20) children 14 and under. Guided tour of cathedral 4€ ($5.80) adults, 1.50€ ($2.20) children 14 and under. North Tower 4€ ($5.80) adults, 1.50€ ($2.20) children 14 and under; South Tower 3€ ($4.40) adults, 2.50€ ($3.70) students, 1€ ($1.50) children 14 and under. Evening tours June–Sept, including tour of the roof, 10€ ($15) adults, 4€ ($5.80) children 14 and under. Cathedral daily 6am–10pm except times of service. Tour of catacombs Mon–Sat 10, 11, and 11:30am, 12:30, 1:30, 2, 2:30, 3:30, 4, and 4:30pm; Sun 2, 2:30, 3, 3:30, 4, and 4:30pm. Guided tour of cathedral Mon–Sat 9am and 1pm; Sun 3pm. Special evening tour Sat 7pm (June–Sept). North Tower Oct–Mar daily 8am–5pm; Apr–Sept daily 6am–10pm. South Tower daily 6am–10pm. Bus: 1A, 2A, or 3A. U-Bahn: Stephansplatz.

Gemäldegalerie der Akademie der Bildenden Kunste (Gallery of Painting and Fine Arts) ★ Visit this painting gallery to see the *Last Judgment* by the incomparable Hieronymus Bosch. In this work, the artist conjured up all the demons of the nether regions for a terrifying view of the suffering and sins of humankind. The gallery also houses many 15th-century Dutch and Flemish paintings and several works by Lucas Cranach the Elder. The academy is noted for its 17th-century art by Van Dyck, Rembrandt, Botticelli, and a host of others. Rubens is represented here by more than a dozen oil sketches. You can see Rembrandt's *Portrait of a Woman* and scrutinize Guardi's scenes of 18th-century Venice.

Schillerplatz 3. ✆ **01/588-16-225.** www.akademiegalerie.at. Admission 7€ ($10) adults; 4€ ($5.80) seniors, students, and children. Tues–Sun 10am–4pm. U-Bahn: Karlsplatz.

Haus der Musik ★ Mozart is long gone, but Vienna finally got around to opening a full-scale museum devoted to music. This hands-on museum is high-tech. You can take to the podium and conduct the Vienna Philharmonic. Wandering the halls and niches of this museum, you encounter nostalgic reminders of the great composers who have lived in Vienna, not only Mozart but Beethoven, Schubert, Brahms, and others. In the rooms you can listen to your favorite renditions of their works and explore their memorabilia. A memorial, *Exodus,* pays tribute to the Viennese musicians driven into exile or murdered by the Nazis. At the **Musicantino Restaurant** on the top floor you can enjoy a panoramic view of the city.

Seilerstätte 30. ✆ **01/516-48-51.** www.hdm.at. Admission 10€ ($15) adults, 8.50€ ($12) students and seniors, 5.50€ ($8) children 11 and under; free for children 2 and under. Daily 10am–10pm. U-Bahn: Stephansplatz.

Kunsthistorisches Museum (Museum of Art History) ★★★ Across from the Hofburg, this huge building houses the fabulous art collections gathered by the Hapsburgs. A highlight is the fine collection of ancient Egyptian and Greek art. The museum also has works by many of the greatest European masters, such as Velázquez, Titian, Brueghel the Elder, Van Dyck, Ruben, Rembrandt, and Dürer. ***Warning:*** Because of ongoing restoration, not all of the rooms may be open when you visit.

Maria-Theresien-Platz, Burgring 5. ✆ **01/525-24-4025.** www.khm.at. Admission 10€ ($15) adults, 7.50€ ($11) students and ages 17 and under. Tues–Sun 10am–6pm (Thurs to 9pm). U-Bahn: Mariahilferstrasse. Tram: 1, 2, D, or J.

Liechtenstein Museum ★★★ This collection of art treasures from the Liechtenstein's princely collections are installed in the royal family palace in the Rossau district. For the first time visitors can see this fabled collection of Raphaels, Rubens, and Rembrandts, one of the world's greatest private art collections. The palace itself is a work of art, dating from the late 17th and early 18th centuries. Art, such as works by Frans Hals and Van Dyck, is displayed in the neoclassical Garden Palace, which became Vienna's first museum when it opened its doors in 1807. There are some 1,700 works of art in the collection, although not all of them can be displayed at once, of course. There are some 200 works of art spread over eight galleries. Works range from the 13th to the 19th centuries, and include *Venus in Front of the Mirror* (ca. 1613) by Peter Paul Rubens, who is clearly the star of the museum. The galleries also present sculptures, antiques, and rare porcelain. Of spectacular beauty is the splendid **Hercules Hall** ★, the largest secular baroque room in Vienna. Frescoes were painted between 1704 and 1708 by Andrea Pozzo.

Lichtenstein Garden Palace, Fürstengasse 1. ✆ **01/3195767252.** www.liechtensteinmuseum.at. Admission 10€ ($15) adults, 8€ ($12) seniors, 5€ ($7.30) students, 2€ ($2.90) children under 14; family ticket 20€ ($29). Fri–Mon 10am–5pm. U-Bahn: Rossauer Lände. Tram: D to Porzellangasse.

ATTRACTIONS OUTSIDE THE INNER CITY

Schönbrunn Palace ★★★ A Hapsburg palace of 1,441 rooms, Schönbrunn was designed and built between 1696 and 1712 in a grand baroque style meant to surpass that of Versailles. When Maria Theresa became empress in 1740, she changed the original plans, and the Schönbrunn we see today, with its delicate rococo touches, is her conception. It was the imperial summer palace during Maria Theresa's 40-year reign, the scene of great ceremonial balls, lavish banquets, and the fabulous receptions during the Congress of Vienna in 1815. The State Apartments are the most stunning. Much of the interior ornamentation is in 23½-karat gold, and many porcelain tile stoves are in evidence. Of the 40 rooms that you can visit, particularly fascinating is the "Room of Millions" decorated with Indian and Persian miniatures, the grandest rococo salon in the world.

Schönbrunner Schlossstrasse. ✆ **01/811-13-239.** www.schoenbrunn.at. Admission 9.50€–15€ ($14–$22) adults, 8.50€–13€ ($12–$19) students, 4.70€–7.90€ ($6.80–$11) children 6–15, free for children 5 and under. **Note:** Tickets have a price range because admission is based on how many areas you wish to view. Apr–Oct daily 8:30am–5pm (until 6pm July–Aug); Nov–Mar daily 8:30am–5pm. U-Bahn: Schönbrunn.

Österreichische Galerie Belvedere ★★ The Belvedere Palace was built as a summer home for Prince Eugene of Savoy and consists of two palatial buildings. The pond reflects the sky and palace buildings, which are made up of a series of interlocking cubes, and the interior is dominated by two great, flowing staircases. The Unteres Belvedere (Lower Belvedere), with its entrance at Rennweg 6A, was constructed from 1714 to 1716 and contains the Gold Salon, one of the palace's most beautiful rooms. It also houses the Barockmuseum (Museum of Baroque Art). The original sculptures from the Neuermarkt fountain, the work of Georg Raphael Donner, are displayed here. The Oberes Belvedere (Upper Belvedere) was started in 1721 and completed in 1723. It contains the Gallery of 19th- and 20th-Century Art, with an outstanding collection of the works of Gustav Klimt, including his extraordinary *Judith.* The Museum of Medieval Austrian Art is in the Orangery.

Prinz-Eugen-Strasse 27. ✆ **01/79557-0.** www.belvedere.at. Admission 9.50€ ($14) adults, 7.50€ ($11) seniors, 6€ ($8.70) students, free for children 5 and under. Tues–Sun 10am–6pm (last entrance 5:30pm). Tram: D to Schloss Belvedere.

ORGANIZED TOURS

Wiener Rundfahrten (Vienna Sightseeing Tours), Graf Starhemberggasse 25 (✆ **01/712-46-83-0;** www.viennasightseeingtours.com; U-Bahn: Landstrasse Wien Mitte), offers some of the best-organized tours of Vienna and its surroundings. Tours depart from a signposted area in front of the State Opera (U-Bahn: Karlsplatz) and include running commentary in both German and English.

CITY TOURS A **"Historical City Tour,"** which includes visits to Schönbrunn and Belvedere palaces, leaves the Staatsoper daily at 9:45am and 2pm (in summer also at 10:30am; U-Bahn: Karlsplatz). It lasts about 3½ hours and costs 35€ ($51) adults and 15€ ($22) children. It's ideal for visitors who are pressed for time and yet want to be shown the major (and most frequently photographed) monuments of Vienna. It takes you past the historic buildings of Ringstrasse—the State Opera, Hofburg Palace, museums, Parliament, City Hall, the Burgtheater, the University, and the Votive Church—into the heart of Vienna.

Another tour, **"Following Sisi's Footsteps,"** is the same as the "Historical City Tour" except that you also watch the Lipizzaner horses being trained at the Spanish

Riding School. These tours leave at 9:45am Tuesday to Saturday. They cost 38€ ($55) adults and 15€ ($22) children, with the entrance fee to the Spanish Riding School (see above) to be paid separately.

TOURS OUTSIDE THE CITY **"Vienna Woods—Mayerling,"** another popular excursion, lasting about 4 hours, leaves from the Staatsoper and takes you to the towns of Perchtoldsdorf and Modling, and also to the Abbey of Heiligenkreuz, a center of Christian culture since medieval times. The tour also takes you for a short walk through Baden, the spa that was once a favorite summer resort of the aristocracy. Tours cost 42€ ($61) adults and 15€ ($22) children.

THE SHOPPING SCENE

Vienna is known for the excellent quality of its works, including petit point, hand-painted porcelain, work by goldsmiths and silversmiths, handmade dolls, ceramics, enamel jewelry, wrought-iron articles, and leather goods. Also popular is loden, a boiled and rolled wool fabric made into overcoats, suits, and hats, as well as knitted sweaters. Popular destinations can be found on **Kärntnerstrasse,** between the Staatsoper and Stock-im-Eisen-Platz; the **Graben,** between Stock-im-Eisen-Platz and Kohlmarkt; **Kohlmarkt,** between the Graben and Michaelplatz; and **Rotensturmstrasse,** between Stephansplatz and Kai. You can also shop on **Mariahilferstrasse,** between Babenbergerstrasse and Schönbrunn, one of the longest streets in Vienna; **Favoritenstrasse,** between Südtiroler Platz and Reumannplatz; and **Landstrasser Hauptstrasse.**

The **Naschmarkt** is a vegetable-and-fruit market with a lively scene every day. It's at Linke and Rechte Wienzeile, south of the opera district.

Albin Denk, Graben 13 (☎ **01/512-44-39;** www.albindenk.24on.cc; U-Bahn: Stephansplatz), is the oldest continuously operating porcelain store in Vienna, in business since 1702. You'll see thousands of objects from Meissen, Dresden, and other regions.

Opened in 1830 by the Plankl family, **Loden Plankl,** Michaelerplatz 6 (☎ **01/533-80-32;** www.loden-plankl.at; U-Bahn: Stephansplatz), is the oldest and most reputable outlet in Vienna for traditional Austrian clothing. You'll find Austrian loden coats, shoes, trousers, dirndls, jackets, lederhosen, and suits for men, women, and children. The building, opposite the Hofburg, dates from the 17th century. The three-floor **Ö. W. (Österreichische Werkstatten),** Kärntnerstrasse 6 (☎ **01/512-24-18;** U-Bahn: Stephansplatz), sells hundreds of handmade art objects from Austria. Some 200 leading artists and craftspeople throughout the country organized this cooperative to showcase their wares. It's easy to find, only half a minute's walk from St. Stephan's Cathedral.

VIENNA AFTER DARK

The best source of information about what's happening on the cultural scene is ***Wien Monatsprogramm,*** distributed free at tourist information offices and at many hotel reception desks. ***Die Presse,*** the Viennese daily, publishes a special magazine in its Thursday edition outlining the major cultural events for the coming week. It's in German but might still be helpful.

THE PERFORMING ARTS

OPERA & CLASSICAL MUSIC Music is at the heart of cultural life in Vienna. This has been true for a couple of centuries or so, and the city continues to lure composers, musicians, and music lovers.

Wine Tasting in the *Heurigen*

Heurigen are Viennese wine taverns, celebrated in operettas, films, and song. They are found on the outskirts of Vienna, principally in Grinzing (the most popular district) and in Sievering, Neustift, Nussdorf, or Heiligenstadt. **Grinzing** (tram: 38) lies at the edge of the Vienna Woods, a 15-minute drive northwest of the center.

Only 20 minutes from Vienna, **Weingut Wolff,** Rathstrasse 50, Neustift (✆ **01/440-37-27;** www.wienerheuriger.at; bus no. 35), is one of the most durable of Heurigen. Although aficionados claim the best are "deep in the countryside" of Lower Austria, this one comes closest on the borderline of Vienna to offering an authentic experience. In summer, you're welcomed to a flower-decked garden set against a backdrop of ancient vineyards. You can really fill up your platter here, with some of the best *wursts* (sausages) and roast meats (especially the delectable pork), as well as fresh salads. Find a table under a cluster of grapes and sample the fruity young wines, especially the chardonnay, Sylvaner, and Gruner Veltliner. The tavern is open daily from 11am to 1am with main courses ranging from 8€ to 15€ ($12–$22).

Altes Presshaus, Cobenzlgasse 15 (✆ **01/320-02-03**), was established in 1527, the oldest continuously operating Heurige in Grinzing, with an authentic cellar you might ask to visit. The place has an authentic, smoke-stained character with wood paneling and antique furniture. The garden terrace blossoms throughout the summer. Live music is also a part of your meal. Try such Heurigen-inspired fare as smoked pork shoulder, roast pork shank, sauerkraut, potatoes, and dumplings. Meals cost 10€ to 15€ ($15–$22); special featured menus are 21€ to 26€ ($30–$38); themed menus (Wiener menu, chicken menu, Hauer menu, low-fat menu, and steak menu) run 17€ to 25€ ($25–$36); drinks begin at 2€ ($2.90). Wine packages can be added for 6€ to 20€ ($8.70–$29). It's open March to October daily from 4 to 11pm.

The **Wiener Staatsoper (State Opera),** Opernring 2 (✆ **01/5144-42250;** www.staatsoper.at; U-Bahn: Karlsplatz), is one of the three most important opera houses in the world. With the Vienna Philharmonic in the pit, some of the leading opera stars of the world perform here. In their day, Richard Strauss and Gustav Mahler worked as directors. Daily performances are given September through June. Tickets range from 3.50€ to 255€ ($5.10–$370). Tours are offered two to five times daily, for 5€ ($7.30) per adult, 4€ ($5.80) seniors, 2€ ($2.90) students and children; times are posted on a board outside the entrance.

Count yourself fortunate if you get to hear a concert at **Musikverein,** Dumbastrasse 3 (✆ **01/505-8190;** www.musikverein.at; U-Bahn: Karlsplatz). The Golden Hall is regarded as one of the four acoustically best concert halls in the world. Some 600 concerts per season (Sept–June) are presented here. Only 10 to 12 of these are played by the Vienna Philharmonic, and those are subscription concerts, which are always sold out long in advance. Standing room is available at almost any performance, but you must line up hours before the show. Tickets are 6€ to 7€ ($8.70–$10); 10€ to 80€ ($15–$116) for seats. The box office is open Monday to Friday 9am to 8pm; Saturday from 9am to 1pm.

Vienna is the home of four major symphony orchestras, including the world-acclaimed Vienna Symphony and the Vienna Philharmonic. In addition to the ÖRF Symphony Orchestra and the Niederöster-reichische Tonkünstler, there are dozens of others, ranging from smaller orchestras to chamber orchestras. The orchestras sometimes perform at the **Konzerthaus,** Lothringerstrasse 20 (✆ **01/242-00-100;** www.konzerthaus.at; U-Bahn: Stadt-Park), a major concert hall with three auditoriums, and also the venue for chamber music and other programs.

THEATER For performances in English, head to **Vienna's English Theatre,** Josefsgasse 12 (✆ **01/402-12-60-0;** www.englishtheatre.at; U-Bahn: Rathaus). The **Burgtheater (National Theater),** Dr.-Karl-Lueger-Ring 2 (✆ **01/5144-41-40;** www.burgtheater.at; tram no. 1, 2, D, or J to Burgtheater), produces classical and modern plays. Even if you don't understand German, you might want to attend a performance here, especially if a familiar Shakespeare play is being staged. This is one of Europe's premier repertory theaters. Tickets are 5€ to 45€ ($7.30–$65) for seats, 1€ to 5€ ($1.50–$7.30) for standing room.

NIGHTCLUBS, CABARETS & BARS

The noteworthy architect Adolf Loos designed the very dark, sometimes mysterious **Loos American Bar,** Kärntnerdurchgang 10 (✆ **01/512-32-83;** U-Bahn: Stephansplatz), in 1908. Today it welcomes singles, couples who tend to be bilingual and very hip, and all manner of clients from the arts and media scenes of Vienna. The mixologist's specialties include six kinds of martinis, plus five kinds of Manhattans. It's open Sunday to Wednesday noon to 4am, and Thursday to Saturday noon to 5am.

The most famous jazz pub in Austria, **Jazzland,** Franz-Josefs-Kai 29 (✆ **01/533-25-75;** U-Bahn: Schwedenplatz), is noted for the quality of its U.S.- and central European–based performers. It's in a deep, 200-year-old cellar, of the type the Viennese used to store staples during the city's many sieges. Amid exposed brick walls and dim lighting, you can order drinks or dinner. The place is open Monday to Saturday from 7pm to 1am. Music begins at 9pm, and three sets are performed.

In a surprising location in the Leopold Museum, **Café Leopold,** Museumsplatz 1 (✆ **01/523-67-32**), is all the rage. It has a revolving cycle of DJs, each vying for local fame, and a wide selection of party-colored cocktails, priced from 7€ ($10). The cafe-and-restaurant section of this place is open Sunday to Wednesday 10am to 2am, and Thursday and Friday 10am to 4am. The disco operates Thursday to Saturday 10pm to between 2 and 4am, depending on business. There's no cover.

Alfi's Goldener Spiegel, Linke Wienzeile 46 (entrance on Stiegengasse; ✆ **01/586-6608;** U-Bahn: Kettenbrückengasse), is the most enduring gay restaurant in Vienna and also its most popular gay bar, attracting mostly male clients to its position near Vienna's Naschmarkt. The place is very cruisy. The bar is open Wednesday to Monday 7pm to 2am.

Frauencafé, Lange Gasse 11 (✆ **01/406-37-54;** U-Bahn: Volkstheater), is exactly what a translation of its name would imply: a politically conscious cafe for lesbians and (to a lesser degree) heterosexual women who appreciate the company of other women.

2 Salzburg ★★★

A baroque city on the banks of the Salzach River, set against a mountain backdrop, Salzburg is the beautiful capital of the state of Salzburg. The city and the river were named after its early residents who earned their living in the salt mines. In this "heart of the heart of Europe," Mozart was born in 1756, and the composer's association with the city beefs up tourism.

The **Old Town** lies on the left bank of the river, where a monastery and bishopric were founded in 700. From that start, Salzburg grew in power and prestige, becoming an archbishopric in 798. In the heyday of the prince-archbishops, the city became known as the "German Rome." Responsible for much of its architectural grandeur are those masters of the baroque, Fischer von Erlach and Lukas von Hildebrandt.

The City of Mozart, "Silent Night," and *The Sound of Music*—Salzburg lives essentially off its rich past. It is a front-ranking cultural mecca for classical music year-round. The city is the setting for the Salzburg Festival, a world-renowned annual event that attracts music lovers, especially Mozart fans, from all over the globe. Salzburg's natural setting among alpine peaks on both banks of the Salzach River gives it the backdrop perpetuating its romantic image.

As one of Europe's greatest tourist capitals, most of Salzburg's day-to-day life spins around promoting its music and its other connections. Although *The Sound of Music* was filmed in 1964, this Julie Andrews blockbuster has become a cult attraction and is definitely alive and well in Salzburg. Ironically, Austria was the only country in the world where the musical failed when it first opened. It played for only a single week in Vienna, closing after audiences dwindled.

Salzburg is only a short distance from the Austrian-German frontier, so it's convenient for exploring many of the attractions of Bavaria (see chapter 8). Situated on the northern slopes of the Alps, the city lies at the intersection of traditional European trade routes and is well served by air, Autobahn, and rail.

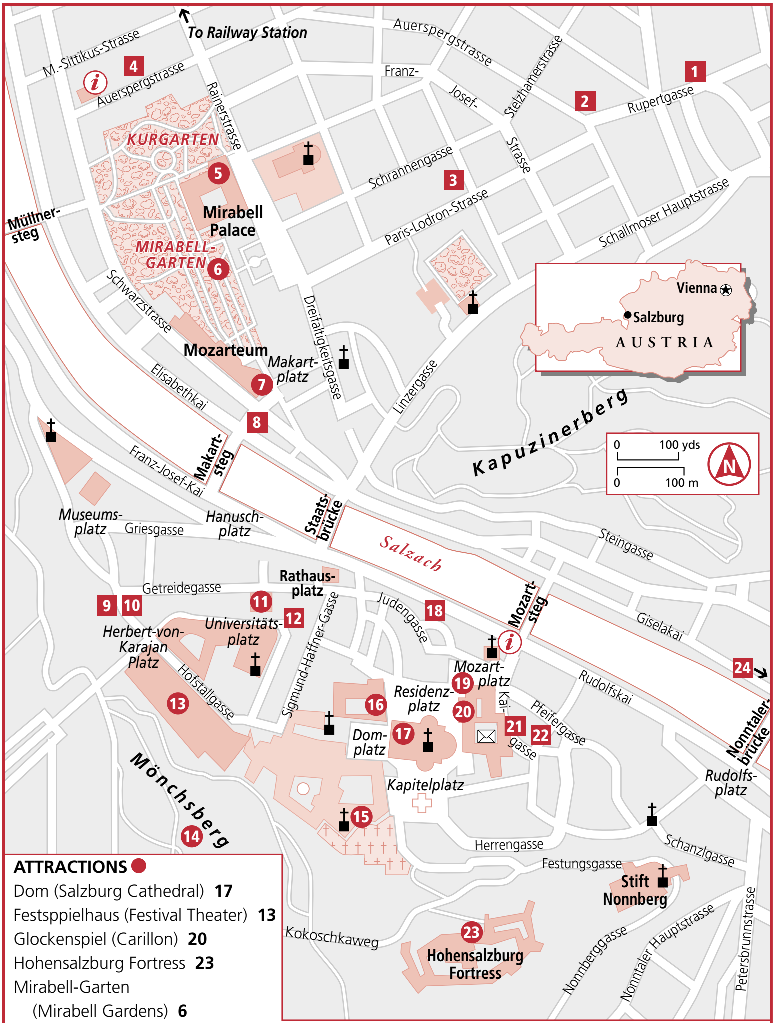
ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **By Plane** The **Salzburg Airport–W.A. Mozart,** Innsbrucker Bundesstrasse 95 (✆ **0662/8580-7911;** www.salzburg-airport.com), lies 3km (1¾ miles) southwest of the city center. It has regularly scheduled air service to all Austrian airports, as well as to Frankfurt, Amsterdam, Brussels, Berlin, Dresden, Düsseldorf, Hamburg, London, Paris, and Zurich. Major airlines serving the Salzburg airport are Austrian Airlines (✆ **800/843-0002** in the U.S., or 888/817-4444 in Canada) and Lufthansa (✆ **800/399-5838** in the U.S.).

Bus no. 2 runs between the airport and Salzburg's main rail station. Departures are frequent, and the 20-minute trip costs 1.80€ ($2.60) one-way for adults, .90€ ($1.30) for children. By taxi it's only about 15 minutes, but you'll pay at least 10€ to 15€ ($15–$22).

By Train Salzburg's main rail station, the **Salzburg Hauptbahnhof,** Südtirolerplatz (✆ **05/1717**), is on the major rail lines of Europe, with frequent arrivals from all the main cities of Austria and from European cities such as Munich. Between 5:05am and 8:05pm, trains arrive every 30 minutes from Vienna (trip time: 3½ hr.); a one-way fare is 44€ ($64). There are eight daily trains from Innsbruck (2 hr.); a one-way fare is 32€ ($46). Trains also arrive every 30 minutes from Munich (2½ hr.), with a one-way ticket costing 2€ ($2.90).

Salzburg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Schallmoser Hauptstrasse
KURGARTEN
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MIRABELL-GARTEN
Müllner-steg
Schwarzstrasse
Mozarteum
Makart-platz
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Staats-brücke
Museums-platz
Griesgasse
Hanusch-platz
Salzach
Steingasse
Getreidegasse
Rathaus-platz
Universitäts-platz
Herbert-von-Karajan Platz
Sigmund-Haffner-Gasse
Judengasse
Mozart-steg
Giselakai
Hofstallgasse
Mozart-platz
Residenz-platz
Kai-gasse
Pfeifergasse
Rudolfskai
Dom-platz
Kapitelplatz
Nonntaler-brücke
Rudolfs-platz
Mönchsberg
Herrengasse
Festungsgasse
Schanzlgasse
Stift Nonnberg
Kokoschkaweg
Hohensalzburg Fortress
Nonnberggasse
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ⓘ Information
✉ Post Office

Value The Salzburg Card

The **Salzburg Card** not only lets you use **unlimited public transportation,** but acts as an admission ticket to the city's most important **cultural sights.** With the card you can visit Mozart's birthplace, the Hohensalzburg fortress, the Residenz gallery, the world-famous water fountain gardens at Hellbrunn, the Baroque Museum in the Mirabell Gardens, and the gala rooms in the Archbishop's Residence. The card is also good for sights outside of town, including the Hellbrunn Zoo, the open-air museum in Grossingmain, the salt mines of the Dürnberg, and the gondola trip at Untersberg. The card, approximately the size of a credit card, comes with a brochure with maps and sightseeing hints.

A card costs 24€ ($35) for 24 hours, 32€ ($46) for 48 hours, and 37€ ($54) for 72 hours. Children from 6 to 15 years of age receive a 50% discount. You can buy the pass from Salzburg travel agencies, the airport, hotels, tobacconists, and municipal offices.

From the train station, buses depart to various parts of the city, including the Altstadt. Or you can walk to the Altstadt in about 20 minutes. Taxis are also available. The rail station has a currency exchange and storage lockers.

By Car Salzburg is 334km (208 miles) southwest of Vienna and 152km (94 miles) east of Munich. It's reached from all directions by good roads, including Autobahn A8 from the west (Munich), A1 from the east (Vienna), and A10 from the south. Rte. 20 comes into Salzburg from points north and west, and Rte. 159 serves towns and cities from the southeast.

VISITOR INFORMATION **Tourist Offices** The **Salzburg Information Office,** Auerspergstrasse 6 (✆ **0662/88987-0;** www.salzburginfo.at; bus no. 5, 6, or 51), is open July to August, daily from 9am to 7pm, and September, Monday to Saturday from 9am to 6pm. The office makes hotel reservations for a 10% deposit (which will be credited to your hotel bill), plus a 2.20€ ($3.20) booking fee. There's also a **tourist information office** on Platform 2A of the Hauptbahnhof, Südtirolerplatz (✆ **0662/88987-340**).

CITY LAYOUT Most of what visitors come to see lies on the left bank of the Salzach River in the **Altstadt (Old Town).** If you're driving, you must leave your car in the modern part of town—the right bank of the Salzach—and enter the Old Town on foot, as most of it is for pedestrians only.

The heart of the inner city is **Residenzplatz,** which has the largest and finest baroque fountain this side of the Alps. On the western side of the square stands the **Residenz,** palace of the prince-archbishops, and on the southern side of the square is the **Salzburg Cathedral** (or Dom). To the west of the Dom lies **Domplatz,** linked by archways dating from 1658. Squares to the north and south appear totally enclosed. On the southern side of Max-Reinhardt-Platz and Hofstallgasse, edging toward **Mönchsberg,** stands the **Festspielhaus (Festival Theater),** built on the foundations of the 17th-century court stables.

GETTING AROUND **By Bus/Tram** The city buses and trams provide quick, comfortable service through the city center from the Nonntal parking lot (located just next to the old city center) to Sigsmundsplatz, the city-center parking lot. The one-ride fare is 1.80€ ($2.60) adults, .90€ ($1.30) children 6 to 15; those 5 and under travel free. Note that buses stop running at 11pm.

By Taxi You'll find taxi stands scattered at key points all over the city center and in the suburbs. The **Salzburg Funktaxi–Vereinigung** (radio taxis) office is at Rainerstrasse 27 (✆ **0662/8111** to order a taxi in advance). Fares start at 3€ ($4.40).

By Car Driving a car in Salzburg isn't recommended. However, you'll probably want a car for touring the areas outside the city (such as Land Salzburg), as using public transportation can be time-consuming. Arrangements for car rentals are always best if made in advance. Try **Avis** (✆ **0662/877278**) or **Hertz** (✆ **0662/876674**), both at Ferdinand-Porsche-Strasse 7 and open Monday to Friday 8:30am to 6pm and Saturday 8am to 1pm.

By Horse-Drawn Cab You rent a horse-drawn cab (called a *Fiaker* in German) at Residenzplatz (✆ **0664/3081765;** www.fiaker-salzburg.at). Four people usually pay 35€ ($51) for 20 to 25 minutes, 66€ ($96) for 50 minutes, and 99€ ($144) for 1 hour and 15 minutes. But all fares are subject to negotiation.

By Bicycle City officials have developed a network of bicycle paths, which are indicated on city maps. May through September, you can rent bicycles at **Topbike,** at the Staatsbrücke or Main Bridge (✆ **0627/24656;** www.topbike.at), daily from 9am to 7pm. Rentals cost about 16€ ($23) per day, with a 20% discount for Salzburg Cardholders.

FAST FACTS: Salzburg

American Express The office at Mozartplatz 5–7, adjacent to Residenzplatz (✆ **0662/8080-544;** bus no. 5 or 6), is open Monday to Friday 9am to 5:30pm and Saturday 9am to noon.

Business Hours Most shops and stores are open Monday to Friday 9am to 6pm and Saturday usually 9am to noon. Some of the smaller shops shut down at noon for a lunch break. Salzburg observes *langer Samstag,* which means that most stores stay open until 5pm on selected Saturdays. Banks are open Monday to Friday 8am to noon and 2 to 4:30pm.

Currency Exchange You can exchange money at the Hauptbahnhof on Südtirolerplatz daily 7am to 10pm, and at the airport daily 9am to 4pm.

Dentists For an English-speaking dentist, call **Dentistenkammer,** Faberstrasse 2 (✆ **0662/87-34-66**).

Doctors If you suddenly fall ill, your best source of information for finding a doctor is the reception desk of your hotel. If you want a comprehensive list of doctors and their respective specialties, which you can acquire in Salzburg or even before your arrival, contact **Ärztekammer für Salzburg,** Bergstrasse 14, A-5020 Salzburg (✆ **0662/87-13-27**). And if your troubles flare up over a weekend, the **Medical Emergency Center of the Austrian Red Cross** maintains a hot line (✆ **141**), which you can use to describe your problem. A staff member there will either ask you to visit their headquarters at Karl Renner Strasse 7, or send a medical expert to wherever you're staying. This service is available from 5pm on Friday to 8am on Monday, and on public holidays.

Drugstores (Apotheke) Larger pharmacies, especially those in the city center, tend to remain open without a break Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm and Saturday 8am to noon. For night service, and service on Saturday afternoon and Sunday, pharmacies display a sign giving the address of the nearest pharmacy that has agreed to remain open over the weekend or throughout the night. A pharmacy that's particularly convenient to Salzburg's commercial center is **Elisabeth-Apotheke,** Elisabethstrasse 1 (✆ **0662/87-14-84**), north of Rainerstrasse toward the train station.

Embassies & Consulates The consular agency of the **United States,** at Alter Markt 1 (✆ **0662/84-87-76**), is open Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 9am to noon to assist U.S. citizens with emergencies. The consulate of **Great Britain,** at Alter Markt 4 (✆ **0662/84-81-33**), is open Monday through Friday from 9am to noon.

Emergencies Call ✆ **133** for police, ✆ **122** to report a fire, and ✆ **144** for an ambulance.

Internet Access The most convenient cafe with Internet capability is the **Internet Café,** Mozartplatz (✆ **0662/84-48-22;** bus no. 5 or 6), across from the tourist office. It's open daily 9am to 11pm and charges 9€ ($13) per hour of Internet access.

Post Office The main post office is at Residenzplatz 9 (✆ **0662/844-12-10;** bus no. 5 or 6). The post office at the main railway station is open Monday to Friday 7am to 9:30pm, Saturday 7am to 2pm, and Sunday 7am to 6pm.

Telephone The **country code** for Austria is **43.** The **city code** for Salzburg is **662;** use this code when you're calling from outside Austria. If you're within Austria, use **0662.**

WHERE TO STAY

ON THE LEFT BANK (ALTSTADT)

Very Expensive

Goldener Hirsch ★★★ The award for the finest hotel in Salzburg goes to this place, steeped in legend and with a history dating from 1407. The hotel is built on a small scale yet it absolutely exudes aristocratic elegance, which is enhanced by the superb staff. Near Mozart's birthplace, the hotel is composed of four medieval town houses, three of which are joined together in a labyrinth of rustic hallways and staircases. The fourth, called "The Coppersmith's House," is across the street and contains 17 charming, spacious rooms. All rooms in the complex are beautifully furnished and maintained, with luxurious full-size bathrooms.

Getreidegasse 37, A-5020 Salzburg. ✆ **800/325-3589** in the U.S. and Canada, or 0662/8084-0. Fax 0662/843349. www.goldenerhirsch.com. 69 units. 180€–670€ ($261–$972) double; 320€–1,200€ ($464–$1,740) suite. Higher rates at festival time (the 1st week of Apr and mid-July to Aug). AE, DC, MC, V. You can double-park in front of the Getreidegasse entrance or at the Karajanplatz entrance, and a staff member will take your vehicle to the hotel's garage for 28€ ($41). Bus: 55. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; room service; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

Expensive

Altstadt Radisson SAS ★★ This is not your typical Radisson property—in fact, it's a radical departure for the chain in style and charm. Dating from 1377, it's a luxuriously and elegantly converted Altstadt hostelry. Its closest rivals in town are the old-world Goldener Hirsch and the Sacher Salzburg Osterreichischer Hof, to which it comes in third. The old and new are blended in perfect harmony here, and the historic facade conceals top-rate comforts and amenities. In a structure this large, rooms naturally vary greatly in size, but all have a certain charm and sparkle and are exceedingly comfortable with some of the city's best beds, plus luxurious bathrooms with showers.

Rudolfskai 28/Judengasse 15, A-5020 Salzburg. ✆ **0662/848-571.** Fax 0662/848-571-6. www.austria-trend.at. 62 units. 245€–600€ ($355–$870) double; 450€–650€ ($653–$943) suite. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 25€ ($36). Bus: 55 or 77. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; room service; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

Moderate

Altstadthotel Weisse Taube This hotel is in the pedestrian area of the Old Town a few steps from Mozartplatz, but you can drive up to it to unload baggage. Constructed in 1365, the Weisse Taube has been owned by the Haubner family since 1904. Rooms are, for the most part, renovated and comfortably streamlined, with traditional furnishings, frequently renewed beds, and small but efficiently laid-out bathrooms with tub/shower combinations. The whole place is kept up with spotless housekeeping.

Kaigasse 9, A-5020 Salzburg. ✆ **0662/84-24-04.** Fax 0662/84-17-83. www.weissetaube.at. 31 units. 98€–169€ ($142–$245) double. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Garage 7€–9€ ($10–$13). Bus: 3, 5, 6, or 25. **Amenities:** Breakfast room; lounge. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer.

Hotel Best Western Elefant Near the Old Town Rathaus, in a quiet alley off Getreidegasse, is this well-established, family-run hotel in one of Salzburg's most ancient buildings—more than 700 years old. The well-furnished and high-ceilinged rooms have small bathrooms with tub/shower combinations. Inside the hotel are two restaurants serving Austrian and international cuisine: the vaulted Bürgerstüberl, where high wooden banquettes separate the tables, and the historic Ratsherrnkeller, known as the wine cellar of Salzburg in the 17th century.

Sigmund-Haffner-Gasse 4, A-5020 Salzburg. ✆ **800/780-7234** in the U.S. and Canada, or 0662/84-33-97. Fax 0662/84-01-0928. www.elefant.at. 31 units. 165€–198€ ($239–$287) double. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Nearby parking 8€ ($12). Bus: 1, 3, 5, or 6. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; room service; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C (in some), TV, minibar, hair dryer, iron, safe.

Hotel Blaue Gans Only a short walk from the much more expensive Goldener Hirsch, the much-renovated "Blue Goose" has been functioning as an inn for more than 400 years. The building that houses the inn is probably 700 years old, but the rooms have been renovated. All have good beds with firm mattresses and full bathrooms. Those facing the courtyard are quieter and much more desirable. Room nos. 332 and 336 are the most spacious.

Getreidegasse 41-43, A-5020 Salzburg. ✆ **0662/84-24-910**. Fax 0662/84-24-91-9. www.blauegans.at. 37 units. 119€–205€ ($173–$297) double; 280€–399€ ($406–$579) junior suite. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 15€ ($22). Bus: 1 or 2. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

INEXPENSIVE

Pension Wolf *Value* Ideally located near Mozartplatz, this place dates from 1429. A stucco exterior with big shutters hides the rustic and inviting interior that is decorated with a few baroque touches and often sunny rooms. Many new bathrooms have been installed, making this a more inviting choice than ever. The rooms are a bit cramped, as are the shower-only bathrooms. Still, this pension represents very good value for high-priced Salzburg. Since the hotel is usually full, reservations are imperative.

Kaigasse 7, A-5020 Salzburg. ☎ **0662/8434530.** Fax 0662/8424234. www.hotelwolf.com. 15 units. 98€–190€ ($142–$276) double; 198€–248€ ($287–$360) junior suite. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, MC, V. No parking. Tram: 3, 5, or 6. **Amenities:** Breakfast room; lounge; babysitting. *In room:* TV.

ON THE RIGHT BANK

Expensive

Sacher Salzburg Osterreichischer Hof ★★★ Only the Goldener Hirsch rivals this charmer. Built as the Hotel d'Autriche in 1866, this hotel has survived the ravages of war and been renovated countless times. A new era began when the Gürtler family, owners of the Hotel Sacher in Vienna, took over in 1988, turning the hotel into a jewel amid the villas on the riverbank. The cheerful rooms are well furnished, quite spacious, and individually decorated; each has a luxurious bathroom equipped with a tub/shower combo. Try to reserve one overlooking the river. The cafe serves Austria's most fabled pastry, the original Sacher torte.

Schwarzstrasse 5–7, A-5020 Salzburg. ☎ **800/745-8883** in the U.S. and Canada, or 0662/88-977. Fax 0662/889-77-551. www.sacher.com. 116 units. 170€–320€ ($247–$464) double; from 575€ ($834) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 25€ ($36). Bus: 1, 5, 6, 29, or 51. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; 2 bars; cafe; lounge; fitness center; sauna; room service; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms; 1 room for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

Salzburg Sheraton Hotel ★★ One of the crown jewels of the Sheraton chain, this government-rated five-star seven-story hotel opened in 1984 in a desirable location about a 10-minute walk from Mozartplatz. The Austrian architect who designed this place took great pains to incorporate it into its 19th-century neighborhood. Rooms have thick wall-to-wall carpeting and contain beds with built-in headboards. Bathrooms have makeup mirrors and hair dryers. The exclusive junior, queen, and presidential suites are filled with elegant Biedermeier furniture. Half the rooms overlook the Mirabell Gardens.

Auerspergstrasse 4, A-5020 Salzburg. ☎ **800/325-3535** in the U.S., or 0662/88-99-90. Fax 0662/88-17-76. www.sheraton.com/Salzburg. 163 units. 150€–365€ ($218–$529) double; 310€–605€ ($450–$877) junior suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 15€ ($22). Bus: 1. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; indoor pool; sauna; room service; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms; 1 room for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

Moderate

Hotel Auersperg ★ With its own sunny gardens, this traditional family-run hotel consists of two buildings: a main structure and a less expensive and less desirable annex. There's an old-fashioned look of charm wherever you go, from the reception hall with its molded ceilings to the antiques-filled drawing room to the convivial and informal library bar. The warm, cozy, and large guest rooms are especially inviting, with excellent beds and well-equipped bathrooms with tubs and showers.

Auerspergstrasse 61, A-5027 Salzburg. ☎ **0662/889-44-0.** Fax 0662/88-944-55. www.auersperg.at. 51 units. 125€–168€ ($181–$244) double; 180€–240€ ($261–$348) suite. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking.

Bus: 15 from the train station. **Amenities:** Breakfast room; bar; fitness center; sauna; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

Inexpensive

Altstadthotel Wolf-Dietrich ★ Two 19th-century town houses were joined to make this select little hotel. The lobby and ground-floor reception area have a friendly and elegant atmosphere and bright, classical furnishings. The smallish rooms are appealing and comfortably furnished, with tiny bathrooms with tub/shower combinations. Most rooms are at the lower end of the price scale. The **Ärlich Restaurant** is Austria's first licensed organic restaurant. The ground-floor cafe, **Weiner Kaffeehaus,** is reminiscent of the extravagant coffeehouses built in the 19th century in Vienna, Budapest, and Prague.

Wolf-Dietrich-Strasse 7, A-5020 Salzburg. ✆ **0662/87-12-75.** Fax 0662/88-23-20. www.salzburg-hotel.at. 27 units. 129€–194€ ($187–$281) double; 164€–224€ ($238–$325) suite. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 12€ ($17). Restaurant closed Feb–Mar 15. Bus: 1, 2, 5, 6, or 51. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar, cafe; indoor pool; spa; sauna; room service; babysitting; laundry service; solarium; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer.

Hotel Gastein ★ This prosperous-looking Teutonic villa lies amid calm green scenery on the bank of the Salzach River. Only a few minutes from the center of the town's oldest boroughs, the house offers true Salzburg atmosphere. You'll feel like you're staying in an upper-class private home. During the annual music festival the place is filled with musicians, who love the spacious flowering garden for breakfast or afternoon tea. The large guest rooms have furniture crafted by well-known Salzburg artists, firm beds, and private balconies. Bathrooms, though often small, are exceedingly well maintained and equipped with tub/shower combinations.

Ignaz-Rieder-Kai 25, A-5020 Salzburg. ✆ **0662/62-25-65.** Fax 0662/62-25-659. www.hotel-gastein.at. 13 units. 118€–168€ ($171–$244) double; 228€–265€ ($331–$384) suite. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. Bus: 49. **Amenities:** Breakfast room; lounge; nonsmoking units. *In room:* TV, minibar, Wi-Fi.

Pension Bergland ★ *Finds* Cozy, personalized, and substantial, this guesthouse sits in a quiet residential neighborhood. It welcomes visitors in a "music room" where there's a bar serving beer, wine, and coffee, and a collection of guitars and lutes displayed on the walls. Guest rooms are comfortable, minimalist, and modern looking, with larger-than-expected bathrooms containing tub/shower combinations. The pension will rent you a bike and dispense information about where to ride.

15 Rupertsgasse, A-5020 Salzburg. ✆ **0662/872318.** Fax 0662/872318-8. www.berglandhotel.at. 17 units. 80€–135€ ($116–$196) double. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. Closed mid-Nov to mid-Dec. Bus: 27 or 29. **Amenities:** Breakfast room; lounge; bike rental; all nonsmoking rooms; library; music room. *In room:* TV, hair dryer, Wi-Fi.

WHERE TO DINE

Two special desserts you'll want to sample while here are the famous ***Salzburger Nockerln,*** a light mixture of stiff egg whites, as well as the elaborate confection known as the ***Mozart-Kugeln,*** with bittersweet chocolate, hazelnut nougat, and marzipan. You'll also want to taste the beer in one of the numerous Salzburg breweries.

ON THE LEFT BANK (OLD TOWN)

Very Expensive

Festungsrestaurant ★ SALZBURG/AUSTRIAN Come here and you'll be dining at the former stronghold of the prince-archbishops of Salzburg. The restaurants and gardens are actually in the castle, perched on a huge rock 122m (400 ft.) above the Old Town and the Salzach. The restaurant commands a panoramic view of the city

Cafe Society

Café-Restaurant Glockenspiel, Mozartplatz 2 (✆ **0662/84-14-03-0;** bus no. 5, 6, 49, 51, 55, or 95), is the city's most popular cafe, with about 100 tables with armchairs out front. You might want to spend an afternoon here, particularly when there's live chamber music. Upon entering, you can't miss a glass case filled with every caloric delight west of Vienna. For dinner, you can sit on the balcony and look over Salzburg's famous buildings while enjoying regional and international specialties. Many people, however, come just for the drinks and pastries. Try the Maria Theresia, which contains orange liqueur. In summer, the cafe is open daily from 9am to between 10pm and midnight, and in winter, it's open daily from 9am to between 7 and 8pm, depending on business and the season. Although snacks are available throughout opening hours, warm food is usually available until around 2 hours prior to closing. It's closed the second and third weeks of November and January.

Established in 1705, **Café Tomaselli** ★, Alter Markt 9 (✆ **0662/84-44-88;** bus no. 5, 6, 51, 55, or 95), opens onto one of the most charming cobblestone squares of the Altstadt. Aside from the summer chairs placed outdoors, you'll find a high-ceilinged room with many tables. It's a great place to just sit and talk. Another, more formal room to the right of the entrance with oil portraits of well-known 19th-century Salzburgers attracts a haute bourgeois crowd. A waiter will show you a pastry tray filled with 40 different kinds of cakes, which you're free to order or wave away. Other menu items include omelets, wursts, ice cream, and a wide range of drinks. Of course, the pastries and ice cream are all homemade. The cafe is open Monday to Saturday 7am to 9pm and Sunday 8am to 9pm.

and the surrounding countryside. From Easter to October classical concerts are held nightly in the *Fürstenzimmer,* often featuring the work of Mozart. The kitchen offers local specialties such as a Salzburger *Bierfleisch* (goulash) and Salzburger schnitzel, along with many other dishes. First-rate ingredients and skill in the kitchen tend to make for memorable dishes, topped off by the famous Salzburger Nockerl soufflé for dessert. In winter, when the restaurant is closed, the *Burgtaverne* inside the castle serves food and drink.

Hohensalzburg, Mönchsberg 34. ✆ **0662/84-17-80.** Reservations required July–Aug. Main courses 15€–45€ ($22–$65). MC, V. Apr–Oct daily 10am–9pm; Dec–Mar daily 10am–5pm. Closed Nov. Funicular from the Old Town.

Goldener Hirsch ★★★ AUSTRIAN/VIENNESE The best restaurant in Salzburg's best hotel attracts the brightest luminaries of the international music and business community. The venue is chic, top-notch, impeccable, and charming, richly sought after during peak season. It's staffed with a superb team of chefs and waiters who preside over an atmosphere of elegant simplicity. The food is so tasty and beautifully served that the kitchen ranks among the top two or three in Salzburg. Specialties include saddle of farm-raised venison with red cabbage; king prawns in an okra-curry ragout served with perfumed Thai rice; and tenderloin of beef and veal on morel cream sauce with cream potatoes. In season, expect a dish devoted to game.

Getreidegasse 37. ✆ **0662/80-84-0.** Reservations required. Main courses 25€–45€ ($36–$65). 3-course fixed-price lunch or dinner 40€ ($58); 5-course fixed-price dinner 60€ ($87). AE, MC, V. Daily noon–2:30pm and 6:30–10pm. Bus: 55.

Purzelbaum ★ AUSTRIAN/FRENCH In a residential neighborhood, this restaurant is near a duck pond at the bottom of a steep incline leading up to Salzburg Castle. During the Salzburg Festival you're likely to see the most dedicated music lovers in Europe hanging out here. Menu items change according to the whim of the chef and include such well-prepared dishes as turbot-and-olive casserole; lamb in white-wine sauce with beans and polenta; and the house specialty, scampi Grüstl, composed of fresh shrimp with sliced potatoes baked with herbs in a casserole.

Zugallistrasse 7. ✆ **0662/84-88-43.** Reservations required. Main courses 10€–21€ ($15–$30); 5-course fixed-price menu 46€ ($67). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat noon–2pm and 6–11pm. Also open Sun in Aug. Closed July 1–14. Bus: 55.

Moderate

Herzl Tavern ★★ *Value* AUSTRIAN/VIENNESE With an entrance on the landmark Karajanplatz, Herzl Tavern lies next door to the glamorous Goldener Hirsch, of which it's a part. Good value attracts both visitors and locals to its pair of cozy rooms, one paneled and timbered. Waitresses in dirndls serve appetizing entrees, which are likely to include roast pork with dumplings, various grills, game stew (in season), and, for the heartiest eaters, a farmer's plate of boiled pork, roast pork, grilled sausages, dumplings, and sauerkraut.

Karajanplatz 7. ✆ **0662/808-4889.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 10€–21€ ($15–$30). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 11:30am–10pm. Bus: 55.

Krimpelstätter SALZBURGER/AUSTRIAN This is an enduring Salzburg favorite dating from 1548. In summer, the beer garden, full of roses and trellises, attracts up to 300 visitors at a time. If you want a snack, a beer, or a glass of wine, head for the paneled door marked GASTEZIMMER in the entry corridor. If you're looking for a more formal, less visited area, three cozy antique dining rooms sit atop a flight of narrow stone steps. You'll find tasty and high-quality Land Salzburg regional cuisine featuring wild game dishes. Start with the cream of goose soup or homemade chamois sausage. Traditional main courses include roast pork with dumplings, schnitzel, and fried sausages with sauerkraut and potatoes. Spinach dumplings are topped with a cheese sauce, and marinated beef stew comes with noodles in butter.

Müllner Hauptstrasse 31. ✆ **0662/432-2740.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 7€–15€ ($10–$22). No credit cards. Tues–Sat 11am–midnight (also Mon May–Sept); Sun 11am–2pm. Closed 3 weeks in Jan. Bus: 27, 49, or 95.

Sternbräu AUSTRIAN This place seems big enough to have fed half the Austro-Hungarian army, with a series of rooms that follow one after the other in varying degrees of formality. The Hofbräustübl is a rustic fantasy. You can also eat in the chestnut-tree-shaded beer garden, usually packed on a summer's night, or under the weathered arcades of an inner courtyard. Daily specials include typical Austrian dishes such as Wiener and chicken schnitzels, trout recipes, cold marinated herring, Hungarian goulash, hearty regional soups, and lots of other *gutbürgerlich* selections. You come here for hearty portions—not for refined cuisine.

Griesgasse 23. ✆ **0662/84-21-40.** Reservations not accepted. Main courses 5.90€–15€ ($8.60–$22); fixed-price menu 12€–20€ ($17–$29). AE, MC, V. Daily 9am–11pm. Bus: 2, 5, 12, 49, or 51.

Stiftskeller St. Peter (Peterskeller) ★ AUSTRIAN/VIENNESE Legend has it that Mephistopheles met with Faust in this tavern, which isn't that far-fetched, considering it was established by Benedictine monks in A.D. 803. In fact, it's the oldest restaurant in Europe and is housed in the abbey of the church that supposedly brought Christianity to Austria. Aside from a collection of baroque banquet rooms, there's an inner courtyard with rock-cut vaults, a handful of dignified wood-paneled rooms, and a brick-vaulted cellar. In addition to wine from the abbey's own vineyards, the tavern serves good home-style Austrian cooking, including roast pork in gravy with sauerkraut and bread dumplings, and loin of lamb with asparagus. Vegetarian dishes, such as semolina dumplings on noodles in a parsley sauce, are also featured. They are especially known here for their desserts. Try the apple strudel or sweet curd strudel with vanilla sauce or ice cream, and most definitely the famed Salzburger Nockerln.

St.-Peter-Bezirk 1–4. ☎ **0662/84-12-680.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 10€–23€ ($15–$33); fixed-price menus 20€–38€ ($29–$55). AE, MC, V. Mon–Sat 11am–midnight; Sun 10am–midnight. Closed Dec. Bus: 1, 2, 15, 27, 29, 49, or 95.

Zum Eulenspiegel ★ AUSTRIAN/VIENNESE Opposite Mozart's birthplace, this restaurant sits at one end of a quiet cobblestone square in the Old Town. Inside, guests have a choice of five rooms on three different levels, all rustically but elegantly decorated. Traditional Austrian cuisine is meticulously adhered to here. The menu features such classic dishes as Tafelspitz (boiled beef), the famous Wiener schnitzel, saddle of venison with cherry sauce, and crème brûleé with stewed berries for dessert.

Hagenauerplatz 2. ☎ **0662/84-31-80.** Reservations required. Main courses 9.60€–23€ ($14–$33). AE, MC, V. Mon–Sat 11am–2pm and 6–10:30pm. Tram: 2. Bus: 2.

ON THE RIGHT BANK

Expensive

Restaurant Bristol CONTINENTAL This is the dining counterpart to the upscale restaurant in Salzburg's other top-notch hotel, the Goldener Hirsch. In this case, the venue is a stately, baronial-looking area outfitted in tones of pale orange and accented with large-scale oil paintings. A well-trained staff organizes meals, the best of which include scampi with arugula salad and tomatoes; carpaccio of beef or (in season) venison; Arctic char served with homemade noodles, saffron sauce, and gooseliver; roasted lamb served with a gratin of polenta and spinach; and all-vegetarian casseroles.

In the Hotel Bristol, Makartplatz 4. ☎ **0662/873-5577.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 18€–30€ ($26–$44). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat 11am–2pm and 6–10pm. Bus: 1, 5, 6, 15, 27, 29, 51, or 55.

Inexpensive

BIO Wirtshaus Hirschenwirt ★ *Finds* AUSTRIAN This is a hotel dining room, but a hotel dining room with a difference: All of the ingredients used in its cuisine derive from organically grown ingredients, raised in Austria without chemical fertilizers or insecticides. The setting is a quartet of cozy and traditional-looking dining rooms. Menu items change with the season, but might include a creamy pumpkin soup, carpaccio of Austrian beef, Tafelspitz, several versions of Wiener schnitzel, and about five different vegetarian dishes, the best of which is small spaetzle in a cheese-flavored onion sauce.

In the Hotel zum Hirschen, St. Julien Strasse 23. ☎ **0662/88-13-35.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 7.50€–18€ ($11–$26). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat 11am–2pm and 5pm–midnight. Bus: 3 or 6.

Hotel Stadtkrug Restaurant AUSTRIAN/INTERNATIONAL Across the river from the Altstadt, on the site of a 14th-century farm, this restaurant occupies a structure rebuilt from an older core in 1458. In the 1960s, a modern hotel was added in back. In an antique and artfully rustic setting, you can enjoy hearty, traditional Austrian cuisine, such as cream of potato soup "Old Vienna" style; braised beef with burgundy sauce; or glazed cutlet of pork with caraway seeds, deep-fried potatoes, and French beans with bacon. A dessert specialty is apple strudel.

Linzer Gasse 20. ✆ **0662/87-35-45-0.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 16€–25€ ($23–$36). AE, DC, MC, V. Wed–Mon noon–2pm and 6–10:30pm. Bus: 27 or 29.

Zum Fidelen Affen AUSTRIAN On the eastern edge of the river near the Staatsbrücke, this is the closest thing in Salzburg to a loud, animated, and jovial pub with food service. It's in one of the city's oldest buildings, dating from 1407. Management's policy is to allow only three reserved tables on any particular evening; the remainder are given to whoever happens to show up. It's best to give your name to the maître d'hôtel, and then wait at the bar. Menu items are simple, inexpensive, and based on regional culinary traditions. A house specialty is a gratin of green (spinach) noodles in cream sauce with strips of ham. Also popular are Wiener schnitzels, ham goulash with dumplings, and at least three different kinds of main-course dumplings flavored with meats, cheeses, herbs, and various sauces.

Priesterhausgasse 8. ✆ **0662/87-73-61.** Very limited reservations accepted. Main courses 10€–15€ ($15–$22). DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat 5pm–midnight.

SEEING THE SIGHTS IN THE CITY OF MOZART

The Old Town lies between the left bank of the Salzach River and the ridge known as the **Mönchsberg,** which rises to a height of 500m (1,640 ft.) and is the site of Salzburg's gambling casino. The main street of the Altstadt is **Getreidegasse,** a narrow little thoroughfare lined with five- and six-story burghers' buildings. Most of the houses along the street are from the 17th and 18th centuries. Mozart was born at no. 9 (see below). Many lacy-looking wrought-iron signs are displayed, and a lot of the houses have carved windows.

You might begin your tour at **Mozartplatz,** with its outdoor cafes. From here you can walk to the even more expansive Residenzplatz, where torchlight dancing is staged every year, along with outdoor performances.

SIGHTSEEING SUGGESTIONS FOR FIRST-TIME VISITORS

If You Have 1 Day Start slowly with a cup of coffee at the **Café-Restaurant Glockenspiel** on Mozartplatz. Then, from the Altstadt, take the funicular to the **Hohensalzburg Fortress** for a tour. After lunch in an old tavern, visit **Mozart's birthplace** on Getreidegasse, and stroll along the narrow street, most typical in the city. Later, visit the **Residenz.**

If You Have 2 Days In the morning of your second day, explore the **Dom** and the **cemetery of St. Peter's,** and take a walking tour in the afternoon through the **Altstadt.**

If You Have 3 Days On day 3, visit the many attractions of Salzburg you've missed so far: the **Mönchsberg,** the **Mozart Wohnhaus,** and the **Salzburg Museum** in the morning. In the afternoon, see the **Mirabell Gardens** and **Mirabell Palace** and at least look at the famous **Festspielhaus (Festival Hall),** dating from 1607; tours are sometimes possible.

THE TOP ATTRACTIONS

Dom (Salzburg Cathedral) ★ Located where Residenzplatz flows into Domplatz, this cathedral is world renowned for its 4,000-pipe organ. Hailed by some critics as the "most perfect" northern Renaissance building, the cathedral has a marble facade and twin symmetrical towers. The mighty bronze doors were created in 1959. The themes are Faith, Hope, and Love. The interior has a rich baroque style with elaborate frescoes, the most important of which, along with the altarpieces, were designed by Mascagni of Florence. In the crypt, traces of the old Romanesque cathedral have been unearthed.

The treasure of the cathedral and the "arts and wonders" the archbishops collected in the 17th century are displayed in the **Dom Museum** entered through the cathedral. The **cathedral excavations** around the corner (left of the Dom entrance) show the ruins of the original foundation.

South side of Residenzplatz. ✆ **0662/84-41-89.** Free admission to cathedral; excavations 1.80€ ($2.60) adults, .70€ ($1) children 6–15, free for children 5 and under; museum 4.50€ ($6.60) adults, 1.50€ ($2.20) children. Cathedral daily 8am–7pm (to 6pm in winter); excavations May–Sept Tues–Sun 9am–5pm (closed mid-Oct to Easter); museum Wed–Sun 10am–5pm, Sun 1–6pm. Closed Nov–Apr. Bus: 1, 3, or 5.

Glockenspiel (Carillon) The celebrated Glockenspiel with its 35 bells stands across from the Residenz. You can hear this 18th-century carillon at 7am, 11am, and 6pm. Actual visitation of the interior is not allowed. The ideal way to hear the chimes is from one of the cafes lining the edges of the Mozartplatz while sipping your favorite coffee or drink.

Mozartplatz 1. ✆ **0662/80-42-27-84.** Bus: 1, 5, 6, or 51.

Hohensalzburg Fortress ★★ *Kids* The stronghold of the ruling prince-archbishops before they moved "downtown" to the Residenz, this fortress towers 120m (394 ft.) above the Salzach River on a rocky dolomite ledge. The massive fortress crowns the Festungsberg and literally dominates Salzburg. Work on Hohensalzburg began in 1077 and wasn't finished until 1681. This is the largest completely preserved castle in central Europe. The elegant state apartments, once the courts of the prince-archbishops, are on display. The **Burgmuseum** contains a collection of medieval art. Plans and prints tracing the growth of Salzburg are on exhibit, as well as instruments of torture and many Gothic artifacts. The **Rainermuseum** has displays of arms and armor. The beautiful late-Gothic **St. George's Chapel** (1501) is adorned with marble reliefs of the apostles. If you're athletic you can reach the fortress on foot from Kapitelplatz by way of Festungsgasse or from the Mönchsberg via the Schartentor; otherwise, you can take the funicular.

Visit Hohensalzburg even if you're not interested in the fortress, just for the view from the terrace. From the Reck watchtower you get a panoramic sweep of the Alps. The Kuenberg bastion has a fine view of Salzburg's domes and towers.

You can see the fortress grounds on your own or take a tour of the interior. Conducted 40- to 50-minute tours go through the fortress daily, but hours and departure times depend on the season.

Mönchsberg 34. ✆ **0662/84-24-30-11.** www.salzburg-burgen.at. Admission (combination Fortress Card includes funicular, museums, fortress, and multimedia show) 10€ ($15) adults, 9€ ($13) seniors, 5.60€ ($8.10) children 6–19, free for children 5 and under. Family ticket 23€ ($33). Fortress and museums Jan–Apr 10:30am–6pm; May–June and Sept 10am–6pm; July–Aug 9am–7pm; Oct–Dec 9:30am–5pm.

Petersfriedhof (St. Peter's Cemetery) ★★ This cemetery lies at the stone wall that merges into the Mönchsberg. Many of the aristocratic families of Salzburg lie buried here, as do many other noted persons, including Nannerl Mozart, sister of Wolfgang Amadeus (4 years older than her better-known brother, Nannerl was also an exceptionally gifted musician). You can see the Romanesque Chapel of the Holy Cross and St. Margaret's Chapel, dating from the 15th century. You can also take a self-guided tour through the early Christian catacombs in the rock above the church cemetery.

St.-Peter-Bezirk. ✆ **0662/84-45-78-0.** Free admission to cemetery. Catacombs 1€ ($1.50) adults, .60€ (90¢) children 5–12. May–Sept daily 10:30am–5pm; Oct–Apr Wed–Thurs 10:30am–3:30pm, Fri–Sun 10:30am–4pm. Bus: 1.

Residenz State Rooms/Residenzgalerie Salzburg ★★ This opulent palace, just north of Domplatz in the pedestrian zone, was the seat of the Salzburg prince-archbishops after they no longer needed the protection of the gloomy Hohensalzburg Fortress of Mönchsberg. The Residenz dates from 1120, but work on its series of palaces, which comprised the ecclesiastical complex of the ruling church princes, began in the late 1500s and continued until about 1796. The 17th-century Residenz fountain is one of the largest and most impressive baroque fountains north of the Alps. More than a dozen state rooms, each richly decorated, are open to the public via guided tour. On the second floor you can visit the **Residenzgalerie Salzburg** (✆ **0662/84-04-51,** ext. 24), an art gallery containing European paintings from the 16th century to the 19th century.

Residenzplatz 1. ✆ **0662/80-42-26-90.** www.salzburg-burgen.at. Combined ticket to state rooms and gallery, 8.20€ ($12) adults, 6.20€ ($9) seniors, 2.60€ ($3.80) children 6–15, 19€ ($28) family. Tues–Sun 10am–5pm. Bus: 5 or 6.

Stiftskirche St. Peter ★★ Founded in A.D. 696 by St. Rupert, whose tomb is here, this is the church of St. Peter's Abbey and Benedictine Monastery. Once a Romanesque basilica with three aisles, it was completely overhauled in the 17th and 18th centuries in elegant baroque style. The west door dates from 1240. The church is richly adorned with art treasures that include altar paintings by Kremser Schmidt.

St.-Peter-Bezirk. ✆ **0662/844-578-0.** Free admission. Daily 9am–5pm. Bus: 5, 6, or 55.

MORE ATTRACTIONS

Mirabell-Garten (Mirabell Gardens) ★ Laid out by Fischer von Erlach on the right bank of the river off Makartplatz, these baroque gardens are studded with statuary and reflecting pools, making them a virtual open-air museum. Be sure to visit the bastion with fantastic marble baroque dwarfs and other figures, by the Pegasus Fountains in the lavish garden west of Schloss Mirabell. You'll also find a natural theater. In summer, free brass band concerts are held Wednesday at 8:30pm and Sunday at 10:30am. From the gardens, you have an excellent view of the Hohensalzburg Fortress.

Free admission. Daily 7am–8pm. Bus: 1, 5, 6, or 51.

Mönchsberg ★★ This heavily forested ridge extends for some 2km (1¼ miles) above the Altstadt and has fortifications dating from the 15th century. A panoramic view of Salzburg is possible from Mönchsberg Terrace just in front of the Grand Café Winkler.

West of the Hohensalzburg Fortress. ✆ **0662/448-06-285.** The elevators leave daily 9am–11pm; round-trip fare is 3.60€ ($5.20) adults, 2.30€ ($3.40) children 6–15, free for children 5 and under. Bus: 2, 15, or 29.

Mozart Geburtshaus (Mozart's Birthplace) ★ The house where Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was born on January 27, 1756, contains exhibition rooms and the apartment of the Mozart family. The main treasures are the valuable paintings (such as the well-known *Mozart and the Piano,* by Joseph Lange) and the violin Mozart used as a child; his concert violin; and his viola, fortepiano, and clavichord.

Getreidegasse 9. ✆ **0662/84-43-13.** www.mozarteum.at. Admission 6€ ($8.70) adults, 5€ ($7.30) seniors, 3€ ($4.40) students 15–18, 2.50€ ($3.70) children 6–14, 9€–14€ ($13–$20) family ticket. Daily 9am–6pm (until 7pm July–Aug).

Mozart Wohnhaus (Mozart Residence) ★ In 1773, the Mozart family vacated the cramped quarters of Mozart's birthplace, and the young Mozart lived here with his family until 1780. In the rooms of the former Mozart family apartments, a museum documents the history of the house and the life and work of Wolfgang Amadeus. The original house was destroyed by bombing in 1944, was rebuilt, and reopened on the eve of Mozart's birthday in 1996. A mechanized 30-minute audio tour in six languages with relevant musical samples accompanies the visitor through the museum.

Makartplatz 8. ✆ **0662/87-42-27-40.** www.mozarteum.at. Admission 6€ ($8.70) adults, 5€ ($7.30) seniors, 2€ ($2.90) students 15–18, 1.50€ ($2.20) children 6–14, 9€–14€ ($13–$20) family ticket. Daily 9am–6pm (until 7pm July–Aug).

Salzburg Museum Devoted to the cultural history of Salzburg, this newly reorganized museum, formerly the Carolino Augusteum, has a new home. The first part opened early in 2006, the second floor in 2007. The archaeological collections contain the well-known Dürnberg beaked pitcher, as well as Roman mosaics. Some 15th-century Salzburg art is on view, and there are many paintings from the romantic period, as well as works by Hans Makart, born in Salzburg in 1840. The second floor displays Salzburg's history of music and visual arts. On-site is Mozart's, a cafe with an outdoor terrace.

Mozartplatz 1. ✆ **0662/6208-08-700.** www.vivamozart.at. Admission 8€ ($12) adults, 6€ ($8.70) seniors and adults up to age 26, 3€ ($4.40) chidren 6–15, 16€ ($23) family, free for children 5 and under. Daily 9am–6pm (until 8pm on Thurs). Bus: 5 or 6.

Schloss Mirabell (Mirabell Palace) ★ This palace and its gardens were built as a luxurious private residence called Altenau. Prince-Archbishop Wolf Dietrich had it constructed in 1606 for his mistress and the mother of his children, Salome Alt. Not much remains of the original grand structure. Lukas von Hildebrandt rebuilt the *Schloss* in the first quarter of the 18th century, and it was modified after a great fire in 1818. The palace, which is a smaller version of the Tuileries in Paris, today serves as the official residence of the mayor of Salzburg. The ceremonial marble "angel staircase," with its sculptured cherubs, carved by Raphael Doner in 1726, is a stunning piece of architectural fantasy.

Rainerstrasse. ✆ **0662/8072-0.** Free admission. Staircase daily 9am–6pm. Bus: 1, 5, 6, or 51.

ORGANIZED TOURS

The best-organized tours are offered by **Salzburg Panorama Tours,** Mirabellplatz (✆ **0662/88-32-11-0;** www.panoramatours.at), which is the Gray Line company for Salzburg.

The original **"*Sound of Music* Tour"** combines the Salzburg city tour with an excursion to the lake district and other places where the 1965 film with Julie Andrews was shot. The English-speaking guide shows you not only the highlights from the film, but also historical and architectural landmarks in Salzburg and parts of the Salzkammergut countryside. The 4-hour tour departs daily at 9:30am and 2pm and costs 35€ ($51) for adults, 18€ ($26) children 4 to 12.

You must take your passport along for any of the trips into **Bavaria** in Germany. One of these—called the **"Eagle's Nest Tour"**—takes visitors to Berchtesgaden and on to Obersalzburg, where Hitler and his inner circle had a vacation retreat. The 4½-hour tour departs daily at 9am, May 15 to October 31, and costs 48€ ($70) for adults, 35€ ($51) children 4 to 12. **"The City & Country Highlights"** tour takes in historic castles and the surrounding Land Salzburg landscape. This 5-hour tour departs daily at 2pm, and costs 48€ ($70) adults, 35€ ($51) children 4 to 12. Coffee and pastry at the Castle Fuschl are an added treat.

THE SHOPPING SCENE

Good buys in Salzburg include dirndls, lederhosen, petit point, and all types of sports gear. **Getreidegasse** is a main shopping thoroughfare, but you'll also find some intriguing little shops on **Residenzplatz.**

Opened in 1871, **Gertraud Lackner,** Badergasse 2 (✆ **0662/84-23-85;** bus no. 68 or 81), offers both antique and modern country wood furniture. Among the new items are chests, chessboards, angels, cupboards, crèches, candlesticks, and especially chairs. **Musikhaus Pühringer,** Getreildegasse 13 (✆ **0662/84-32-67;** bus no. 1, 2, 29, or 49), established in 1910, sells all kinds of classical musical instruments, especially those popular in central Europe, as well as a large selection of electronic instruments (including synthesizers and amplifiers). You'll find classical and folk-music CDs and tapes, plus many classical recordings, especially those by Mozart.

Salzburger Heimatwerk, Am Residenzplatz 9 (✆ **0662/84-41-10;** bus no. 5, 6, 49, 51, 55, or 95), is one of the best places in town to buy local Austrian handcrafts and original regional clothing.

Wiener Porzellanmanufaktur Augarten Gesellschaft, Alter Markt 11 (✆ **0662/84-07-14;** bus no. 2), might very well tempt you to begin a porcelain collection. The origins of this world-class manufacturer go back 275 years. Today, its product is legendary and its patterns, such as *Wiener Rose, Maria Theresia,* and the highly distinctive *Biedermeier,* are well known. The company also produces such historical pieces as the black-and-white demitasse set created by architect/designer Josef Hoffman.

SALZBURG AFTER DARK

THE PERFORMING ARTS

It's said there's a musical event—often a Mozart concert—staged virtually every night in Salzburg. To find the venue, visit the **Salzburg tourist office,** Auerspergstrasse 6 (✆ **0662/88987-0**). Here you'll be given a free copy of ***Offizieller Wochenspiegel,*** a monthly pamphlet listing all major and many minor local cultural events. The annual Mozart Week is in January.

The major ticket agency affiliated with the city of Salzburg is located adjacent to Salzburg's main tourist office, at Mozartplatz 5. The **Salzburger Ticket Office** (✆ **0662/84-03-10**) is open Monday to Friday 9am to 6pm (to 7pm in midsummer) and Saturday 9am to noon.

If you don't want to pay a ticket agent's commission, you can go directly to the box office of a theater or concert hall. However, many of the best seats may have already been sold, especially those at the Salzburg Festival.

CONCERTS & OTHER ENTERTAINMENT

The rich collection of concerts that combine every summer to form the Salzburg Festival's program is presented in several different concert halls scattered throughout

Tips Getting Tickets to the Salzburg Festival

One of the premier music attractions of Europe, the Salzburg Festival celebrated its 87th season in 2007. Details on the festival are available by contacting **Salzburg Festival,** Hofstallgasse 1, A-5010 Salzburg, Austria (☎ **0662/8045-500;** www.salzburgfestival.at).

Salzburg. The largest is the **Festspielhaus,** Hofstallgasse 1 (☎ **0662/8045;** bus no. 1, 5, or 6). Within the Festspielhaus complex you'll find the **Felsenreitschule,** an outdoor auditorium with a makeshift roof. Originally built in 1800 as a riding rink, it's famous as the site where scenes from *The Sound of Music* were filmed. Tickets cost from 15€ to 360€ ($22–$522), with the more expensive representing the higher cost for the best seats at the Salzburg Festival; average but good seats run 35€ to 80€ ($51–$116). Instead of going directly to the Festspielhaus, you can purchase tickets in advance at the box office at Waagplatz 1A (☎ **0662/84-53-46**), close to the tourist office, Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm.

On the right bank of the Salzach River, near the Mirabell Gardens, is the **Mozarteum,** Schwarzstrasse 26 and Mirabellplatz 1 (☎ **0662/87-31-54;** bus no. 1, 5, 6, or 51), the major music and concert hall of Salzburg. All the big orchestra concerts, as well as organ recitals and chamber-music evenings, are offered here. It's also a music school, and you can ask about free events staged by the students. The box office is open Monday to Thursday 9am to 2pm and Friday 9am to 4pm with some exceptions. Performances are usually at 11am or 7:30pm. Tickets cost 8€ to 220€ ($12—$319).

Besides the venues above, you can attend a concert in dramatic surroundings in the Fürstenzimmer (Prince's Chamber) of the **Hohensalzburg Fortress.** You're likely to hear heavy doses of Mozart and, to a lesser degree, works by Schubert, Brahms, and Beethoven. From mid-May to mid-October, performances are generally held at 9am or 8:30pm every night of the week. The rest of the year, they're presented most (but not all) nights, with occasional weeklong breaks, usually at 7:30pm. The box office for the events is at Adlgasser Weg 22 (☎ **0662/82-58-58**). To reach the fortress, take the funicular from Festungsgasse.

BEER GARDENS

Regardless of the season, you'll have one of your most enjoyable and authentic evenings in Salzburg at **Augustiner Bräustübl,** Augustinergasse 4 (☎ **0662/43-12-46-0;** bus no. 27, 49, 60, 80, or 95). This Bierstube and Biergarten has been dispensing oceans of beer since it was established in 1622. Depending on the weather, the city's beer-drinking fraternity gathers either within the cavernous interior, where three separate rooms each hold up to 400 people, or in the chestnut-shaded courtyard. You'll find about a dozen kiosks, where you can buy takeout portions of wursts, sandwiches, and pretzels. Farther on, choose a thick stoneware mug from the racks and carry it to the beer tap, paying the cashier as you go. A full liter begins at 5.50€ ($8); a half liter costs 3.50€ ($5.10) depending on the type of beer. The place is open Monday to Friday 3 to 11pm and Saturday and Sunday 2:30 to 11pm.

Immediately below the Hohensalzburg Fortress and established in the early 1800s is the **Restaurant StieglKeller,** Festungsgasse 10 (☎ **0662/84-26-81;** bus no. 5, 6, or 55), part of which is carved into the rocks of Mönchsberg. To get here, you'll have to negotiate a steep cobblestone street that drops off on one side to reveal a panoramic view of Salzburg. The cavernous interior is open only in summer, when you can join hundreds of others in drinking beer and eating sausages, schnitzels, and other Bierkeller food.

The Sternbrau, 34 Getreidegasse, in the heart of historic Salzburg has a Biergarten atmosphere and serves traditional Austrian cuisine. The Sternbrau is also home to the **Sound of Salzburg Dinner Show** (www.soundofsalzburgshow.com; ✆ **0662/82-66-17**), featuring the music of Mozart, traditional Salzburg folk music, and, of course, songs from *The Sound of Music*. The show takes place from May 15 until October 15, daily at 7:30pm. A three-course meal, including your choice of chicken and noodles or roast pork, and the show cost 46€ ($67). If you want to skip the meal, you can arrive at 8:15pm to see the show for 32€ ($46).

No one in Salzburg is really sure whether to classify **Salzburger Altstadtkeller,** Rudolfskai 27 (✆ **0662/849688**), as a restaurant, an inn, a pub, or a nightclub, since it combines so gracefully elements of all of them. The result is fun and convivial. The setting is a medieval cellar beneath the Altstadt Radisson Hotel, immediately adjacent to the banks of the river. Don't come here expecting fine dining: What you'll get is a short list of Austrian-style platters, and a reverberating roster of musical acts that include swing, Latino, jazz, and blues. Every Thursday, the acts get more nostalgic and folkloric, as the stage is turned over to bands specializing in Austrian or Bavarian "evergreen" music. Music plays from around 9:15pm to 1am, with guests then lingering over their drinks for at least another hour. There's no cover charge, but a half-liter mug of beer costs 4€ ($5.80). Main courses cost from 9€ to 15€ ($13–$22). Service is Tuesday to Saturday from 7pm to 2:30am.

3 Innsbruck ✪ & Tyrol

Land of ice and mountains, dark forests and alpine meadows full of spring wildflowers, summer holidays, and winter sports—that's Tyrol. Those intrepid tourists, the British, discovered its vacation delights and made it a fashionable destination in the last century. Tyrol is now the most frequented winter playground in Austria, and in summer, the extensive network of mountain paths lures visitors.

Skiers flock here in winter for a ski season that runs from mid-December to the end of March. Many prefer its ski slopes to those of Switzerland. It's been a long time since the eyes of the world focused on Innsbruck at the Winter Olympics in 1964 and 1976, but the legacy lives on in the ski conditions and facilities on some of the world's choicest slopes.

INNSBRUCK

Innsbruck has a particularly lovely medieval town center, and town planners have protected this historic Altstadt. Visitors can take countless excursions in the environs; at Innsbruck's doorstep lie some of the most beautiful drives in Europe. Just take your pick: Head in any direction, up any valley, and you'll be treated to mountains and alpine beauty almost unmatched anywhere else, including Switzerland.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **By Plane** Innsbruck's airport, **Flughafen Innsbruck-Kranebitten,** Fürstenweg 180 (✆ **0512/22525-0;** www.Innsbruck-airport.com), is 3km (1¾ miles) west of the city. It offers regularly scheduled air service from the major airports of Austria and of Europe's major cities.

By Train Innsbruck is connected with all parts of Europe by international railway links. Trains arrive at the main railway station, the **Hauptbahnhof,** Südtiroler Platz (✆ **05/1717** for all rail information). There are at least five daily trains from Munich (trip time: 3 hr.) and eight daily trains from Salzburg (1 hr.).

By Car If you're **driving** down from Salzburg in the northeast, take Autobahn A8 west, which joins Autobahn A93 (later it becomes the A12), heading southwest to Innsbruck. This latter Autobahn (A93/A12) is the main artery from Munich. From the south, you can take the Brenner toll motorway.

VISITOR INFORMATION The **tourist office,** Burggraben 3 (✆ **0512/59-850;** www.innsbruck-tourismus.com), is open Monday to Saturday 8am to 6pm and Sunday 9am to 6pm. It will supply you with a wealth of information, as well as a list of inexpensive private rooms for rent in Innsbruck. The office can also book bus or walking tours of the city.

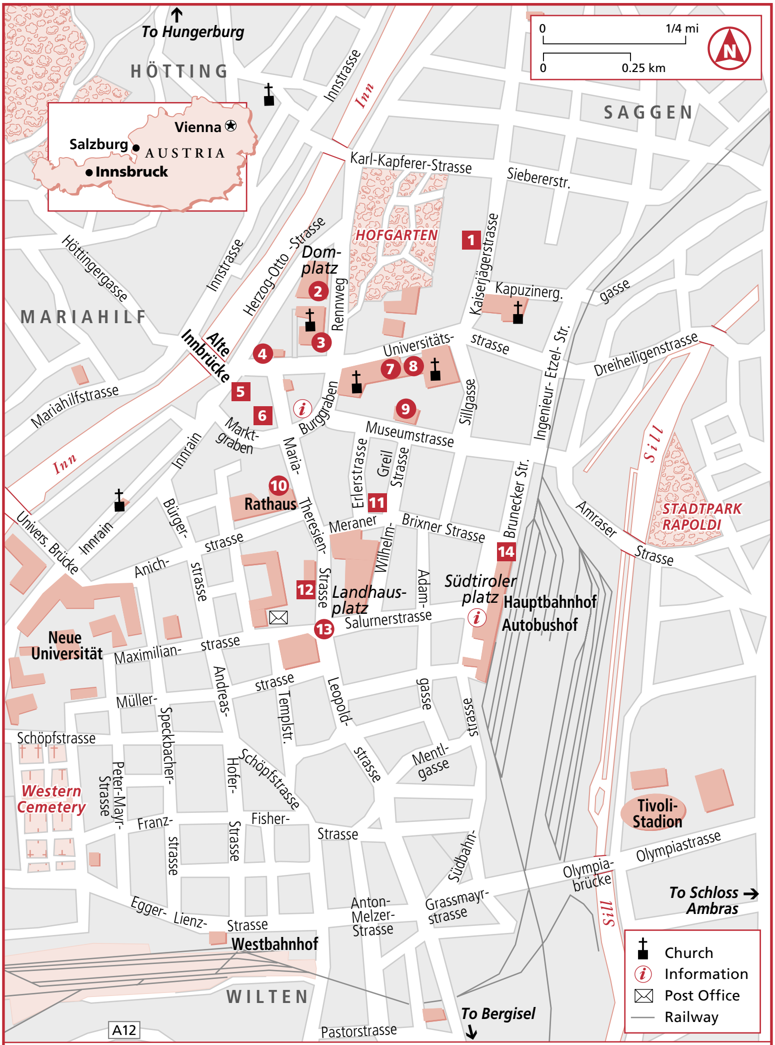
CITY LAYOUT This historic city is divided by the Inn River into left- and right-bank districts. Two major bridges cross the Inn, the **Universittssbrücke** and the **Alte Innsbrücke (Old Inn Bridge).** Many of the attractions, including the Hofkirche and the Goldenes Dachl, are on the right bank. If you arrive at the Hauptbahnhof, take Salurner Strasse and Brixener Strasse to Maria-Theresien-Strasse, which will put you into the very heart of Innsbruck.

The **Altstadt** is bounded on the north by the Inn River and on the south by Burggraben and Marktgraben. The main street of this historic district is **Herzog-Friedrich-Strasse,** which becomes **Maria-Theresien-Strasse,** the axis of the post-medieval new part of town. The Altstadt becomes a pedestrian zone after 10:30am (wear good shoes on the cobblestone streets).

GETTING AROUND A network of 3 **tram** and 25 **bus lines** covers all of Innsbruck and its close environs, and buses and trams use the same tickets. Single tickets in the central area cost 1.70€ ($2.50), and a booklet of four tickets goes for 5.70€ ($8.30). The tram is called either *Strassenbahn* or *Trambahn.* On the left bank of the Inn River, the main tram and bus arteries are Museumstrasse and Mariahilfstrasse. On the right bank, trams and buses aren't routed into the pedestrian zone but to their main stop in Marktgraben. For information about various routes, call the **Innsbrucker Verkehrsbetriebe** (✆ **0512/530-70**). Most tickets can be purchased at the Innsbruck tourist office, tobacco shops, and automated vending machines. A ***Tageskarte*** **(day pass),** costing 3.80€ ($5.50) for 24 hours, is available only from the tourist information office, tobacco shops, and cafes. It allows you to ride on all trains and buses. If you plan to move about the Innsbruck area extensively, ask about the **Innsbruck Card,** which offers unlimited transportation and other advantages. A 24-hour pass sells for 24€ ($35), a 48-hour pass for 29€ ($42), and a 72-hour pass for 34€ ($49).

Austria Postal Service buses (one of two different bus networks maintained by the Austrian government) leave from the Autobushof (Central Bus Station), adjacent to the Hauptbahnhof on Sterzinger Strasse. Here buses head for all parts of Tyrol. The station is open Monday to Friday 7:30am to 6pm and Saturday 7am to 1pm. For information about bus schedules, call ✆ **0512/500-53-07.**

Taxi stands are scattered at strategic points throughout the city, or you can call a radio car (✆ **0512/5311** or 1718). For a nostalgic ride, you can hire a horse-drawn carriage *(Fiaker)* from a spot adjacent to the **Tiroler Landestheater,** Rennweg.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Höttingergasse
Innstrasse
Herzog-Otto -Strasse
Dom-platz
Rennweg
MARIAHILF
Alte Innbrücke
Universitäts-strasse
Dreiheiligenstrasse
Ingenieur- Etzel- Str.
Mariahilfstrasse
Burggraben
Sillgasse
Markt-graben
Museumstrasse
Sill
Inn
Innrain
Maria-Theresien-Strasse
Erlerstrasse
Greil Strasse
Brunecker Str.
Rathaus
STADTPARK RAPOLDI
Univers. Brücke
Innrain
Bürger-strasse
Meraner
Brixner Strasse
Amraser Strasse
Anich-strasse
Wilhelm-
Südtiroler platz
Landhaus-platz
Adam-
Hauptbahnhof
Salurnerstrasse
Autobushof
Neue Universität
Maximilian-strasse
Andreas-
strasse
Leopold-
gasse
strasse
Müller-
Speckbacher-
Templstr.
Schöpfstrasse
strasse
Mentl-gasse
Western Cemetery
Peter-Mayr-Strasse
Hofer-Strasse
Schöpfstrasse
Tivoli-Stadion
Franz-strasse
Fisher-
Strasse
Südbahn-
Olympiastrasse
Olympia-brücke
To Schloss Ambras
Egger- Lienz-Strasse
Anton-Melzer-Strasse
Grassmayr-strasse
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Westbahnhof
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To Bergisel
A12
Pastorstrasse
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Church
Information
Post Office
Railway

ATTRACTIONS ●

Annasäule (St. Anna's Column)	**10**
Dom zu St. Jakob (Cathedral of St. James)	**2**
Goldenes Dachl (Golden Roof) & Maximilianeum	**4**
Hofburg	**3**
Hofkirche	**7**
Tiroler Landesmuseum Ferdinandeum (Ferdinandeum Tyrol Museum)	**9**
Tiroler Volkskunst-Museum (Tyrol Museum of Folk Art)	**8**
Triumphforte (Triumphal Arch)	**13**

ACCOMMODATIONS ■

Europa Tyrol	**14**
Gasthof-Hotel Weisses Kreuz	**5**
Goldene Krone	**12**
Hotel Central	**11**
Hotel Goldener Adler	**6**
Romantik Hotel Schwarzer Adler	**1**

If neither the tram nor the carriage option appeals to you, consider renting a **bike** at the Hauptbahnhof. Rentals cost 22€ ($32) per day or 18€ ($26) for 5 hours. You can return these bikes to any rail station in Austria if you don't plan to return to Innsbruck. Rentals are available April to early November only. For more information, call **Sport Neuner** (☎ **0512/561-501**).

Although you can make a better deal renting a car before you leave North America, it's possible to rent cars in Innsbruck. You might try **Avis,** Salurner Strasse 15 (☎ **0512/57-17-54**); or **Hertz,** Südtirolerplatz 1 (☎ **0512/58-09-01**), across from the Hauptbahnhof. Although paperwork and billing errors are harder to resolve whenever you rent from a non-U.S.-based car-rental outfit, you might also check the rates at a local car outfitter, **Ajax,** Amrasserstrasse 6 (☎ **0512/583-232**).

FAST FACTS: Innsbruck

Currency Exchange Banks are usually open Monday to Thursday 7:45am to 12:30pm and 2:30 to 4pm, and Friday 7:45am to 3pm. There are also exchange facilities at Innsbruck's tourist office (see above). The automated currency exchange facilities at the Hauptbahnhof are available 24 hours a day.

Dentists & Doctors Check with the tourist office for a list of private English-speaking dentists and doctors; or contact the **University Clinic,** Anichstrasse 35 (☎ **0512/504**).

Drugstores In the heart of Innsbruck, **St.-Anna Apotheke,** Maria-Theresien-Strasse 4 (☎ **0512/58-58-47**), is open Monday to Saturday 8am to 6pm. The pharmacy posts addresses of other pharmacies open on weekends or at night.

Emergencies In case of trouble, call ☎ **133** for the police, ☎ **122** for a fire, or ☎ **144** for an ambulance.

Internet Access You can check e-mail or access the Internet for free with your own laptop at the **Picasso Internet Café,** Maria-Theresien-Strasse 16 (☎ **0512/58-48-48;** tram: 3). It's open Monday to Saturday from 6:30am to 1am.

Post Office The **Hauptpostamt (Central Post Office),** Maximilianstrasse 2 (☎ **0512/5000**), is open daily from 8am to 9pm. The post office at the **Hauptbahnhof,** Bruneckstrasse 1–3 (☎ **0512/5000**), is open Monday to Saturday 6:30am to 9pm.

Telephone The **country code** for Austria is **43.** The **city code** for Innsbruck is **512;** use this code when you're calling from outside Austria. If you're within Austria, use **0512.**

WHERE TO STAY

Expensive

Europa Tyrol ★★ The town's finest and most elegant hotel stands opposite the rail station, inviting you inside its formal lobby. The spacious rooms and suites are handsomely furnished, with all the modern conveniences and Tyrolean or Biedermeier-style decorations. Each tasteful unit offers a bathroom equipped with a tub/shower combo. The restaurant, **Europastüberl,** is the finest in Tyrol.

Südtirolerplatz 2, A-6020 Innsbruck. ☎ **0512/5931-102.** Fax 0512/58-78-00. www.grandhoteleuropa.at. 122 units. 140€–234€ ($203–$339) double; 230€–346€ ($334–$502) suite. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 15€ ($22). **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; sauna; room service; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service; 1 nonsmoking room; solarium; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, trouser press (in some), safe.

Romantik Hotel-Restaurant Schwarzer Adler ★★ This is it for those who like authentic Austrian charm. The hotel's owners, the Ultsch family, have furnished the charming interior with hand-painted regional furniture, antiques, and lots of homey clutter, making for a cozy and inviting ambience. The midsize rooms are virtually one of a kind, each with its special character. Beds are exceedingly comfortable, with some of the thickest mattresses in town and well-stuffed duvets. Bathrooms have dual basins and tub/shower combos with powerful shower heads. We prefer the older accommodations, which are more spacious and have more Tyrolean character.

Kaiserjägerstrasse 2, A-6020 Innsbruck. ☎ **0512/58-71-09.** Fax 0512/56-16-97. www.deradler.com. 39 units. 145€–270€ ($210–$392) double; 310€–480€ ($450–$696) suite. Additional person 46€–50€ ($67–$73). Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 10€ ($15). Tram: 1 or 3. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; fitness center; health spa; room service; massage; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Moderate

Hotel Central One of the most unusual hotels in Innsbruck, Hotel Central was originally built in the 1860s, but from its very modern exterior you might not realize it. The comfortable rooms have an Art Deco design that evokes an almost Japanese simplicity. Most rooms are quite spacious with excellent beds. Bathrooms are small, with shower units. In total contrast to the simplicity of the rest of the hotel, the ground floor contains a grand Viennese cafe with marble columns, sculpted ceilings, and large gilt-and-crystal chandeliers.

Gilmstrasse 5, A-6020 Innsbruck. ☎ **0512/59-20.** Fax 0512/58-03-10. www.central.co.at. 85 units. 130€–160€ ($189–$232) double. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 12€ ($17). Tram: 1 or 3. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; fitness center; sauna; room service; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer.

Hotel Goldener Adler ★★ Even the phone booth near the reception desk of this 600-year-old family-run hotel is outfitted in antique style. Famous guests have included Goethe, Mozart, and the violinist Paganini, who cut his name into the windowpane of his room. Rooms are handsomely furnished, and vary in size and decor. Some have decorative Tyrolean architectural features such as beamed ceilings. Others are furnished in a more modern style. The bathroom's size depends on your room assignment; bathrooms can be everything from spacious combination models to cramped rooms with shower stalls. This is now a Best Western–affiliated property.

Herzog-Friedrich-Strasse 6, A-6020 Innsbruck. ☎ **800/780-7234** in the U.S. and Canada, or 0512/57-11-11. Fax 0512/58-44-09. www.goldeneradler.com. 35 units. 160€–190€ ($232–$276) double; from 250€ ($363) suite. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 11€ ($16). Tram: 1 or 3. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; room service; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms; 1 room for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Inexpensive

Gasthof-Hotel Weisses Kreuz ★ *Value* This atmospheric inn, located in the center of Innsbruck, has not changed much during its lifetime. Rooms are cozy and atmospheric, either small or medium size, with comfortable furnishings. Double rooms have private bathrooms with neatly kept shower units. Hallway bathrooms for single rooms are adequate and well maintained. In 1769, 13-year-old Wolfgang Mozart and his father, Leopold, stayed here.

Herzog-Friedrich-Strasse 31, A-6020 Innsbruck. ✆ **0512/594790.** Fax 0512/59-47-990. www.weisseskreuz.at. 40 units, 31 with bathroom. 88€ ($128) double without bathroom; 110€ ($160) double with bathroom. Rates include breakfast. AE, MC, V. Parking 9€ ($13). Tram: 3. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; limited room service; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV.

Goldene Krone *Value* Near the Triumphal Arch on Innsbruck's main street, this baroque house is one of the city's best budget bets. All rooms are modern, comfortable, well maintained, and, for the most part, spacious with plenty of light. The duvet-covered beds are comfortable, and bathrooms are small but spotless, with shower stalls. The hotel offers a Viennese-inspired coffeehouse/restaurant, the **Art Gallery-Café.**

Maria-Theresien-Strasse 46, A-6020. Innsbruck. ✆ **0512/58-61-60.** Fax 0512/580-18-96. www.goldene-krone.at. 36 units. 76€–106€ ($110–$154) double; 110€–144€ ($160–$209) suite. Rates include breakfast. AE, MC, V. Parking 8€ ($12). Tram: 1. Bus: A, H, K, or N. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; cafe; lounge; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* TV.

WHERE TO DINE

Expensive

Europastüberl ★★ AUSTRIAN/INTERNATIONAL This distinguished restaurant, with a delightful Tyrolean ambience, is in a hotel that's the finest address in Innsbruck. The chef succeeds beautifully in fashioning creative takes on traditional regional cooking. Diners can choose from both warm and cold appetizers, ranging from iced anglerfish with Chinese tree morels to a small ragout of crayfish in a spicy biscuit with kohlrabi. Some dishes are served only for two people, such as Bresse guinea hen roasted and presented with an herb sauce. Fresh Tyrolean trout almost always appears on the menu, or you may prefer one of the many meat dishes, including red deer ragout and saddle of venison.

In the Hotel Europa Tyrol, Brixnerstrasse 6. ✆ **0512/5931.** Reservations required. Main courses 18€–26€ ($26–$38); fixed-price 3-course menu 45€ ($65); fixed-price 4-course menu 75€ ($109). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily noon–2pm and 6:30–10pm.

Restaurant Goldener Adler ★ AUSTRIAN/TYROLEAN/INTERNATIONAL Richly Teutonic and steeped in the decorative traditions of alpine Tyrol, this beautifully decorated restaurant has a deeply entrenched reputation and a loyal following among local residents. The menu includes good, hearty fare inspired by cold-weather outdoor life—the chefs aren't into delicate subtleties. Examples of the cuisine are Tyrolean bacon served with horseradish and farmer's bread; cream of cheese soup with croutons; and Tyroler *Zopfebraten,* a flavorful age-old specialty consisting of strips of veal steak served with herb-enriched cream sauce and spinach dumplings. A well-regarded specialty is a platter known as *Adler Tres.* It contains spinach dumplings, stuffed noodles, and cheese dumplings, all flavorfully tied together with a brown butter sauce and a gratin of mountain cheese.

Herzog-Friedrich-Strasse 6. ✆ **0512/57-11-11.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 15€–25€ ($22–$36); set menus 18€–45€ ($26–$65). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 11:30am–10:30pm. Tram: 1 or 3.

Restaurant Schwarzer Adler ★★ AUSTRIAN Even if you're not a guest at the richly atmospheric Romantik Hotel, you might appreciate a meal within its historic premises. Among the finest examples of the elaborate cuisine is a salad of wild quail served with lentils, strips of braised gooseliver, and a sauce that's enhanced with apple liqueur. The wine list is long, broad, and impressive, with lots of wines from relatively obscure regions of Austria.

In the Romantik Hotel, Kaiserjägerstrasse 2. ✆ **0512/587-109.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 20€–30€ ($29–$44). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat 11:30am–2pm and 6–10:30pm. Tram: 1 or 3.

Moderate

Hirschenstuben INTERNATIONAL Beneath a vaulted ceiling in a house built in 1631, this well-established restaurant is charming and welcoming. By its own admission, the establishment is at its best in spring, autumn, and winter, since it lacks a garden or an outdoor terrace for alfresco summer dining. Menu items include steaming platters of pasta, fish soup, trout meunière, sliced veal in cream sauce Zurich-style, beef stroganoff, pepper steak, stewed deer with vegetables, and filet of flounder with parsley and potatoes. The kitchen staff is equally familiar with the cuisines of both Austria and Italy.

Kiebachgasse 5. ✆ **0512/58-29-79.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 9€–21€ ($13–$30). DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat 6–11pm; Tues–Sat noon–2pm and 6–11pm. Tram: 1 or 3.

Inexpensive

Restaurant Ottoburg ★ AUSTRIAN/INTERNATIONAL This historic restaurant, established around 1745, occupies a 13th-century building that some historians say is the oldest in Innsbruck. Inside, four intimate and atmospheric dining rooms—with a decor that is best described as "19th-century neo-Gothic"—lie scattered over two different floors. Hearty dishes include venison stew, "grandmother's mixed grill," and fried trout. In summer, a beer garden operates in the rear, open April to October, Tuesday to Sunday from 11am to midnight.

Herzog-Friedrich-Strasse 1. ✆ **0512/58-43-38.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 10€–25€ ($15–$36). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 11am–2:30pm and 6pm–midnight. Closed 3 weeks in Jan and 2 weeks in late May and early June. Tram: 1 or 3.

Weisses Rössl ★ AUSTRIAN/TYROLEAN You'll enter this time-honored place through a stone archway set on one of the Old Town's most famous streets. At the end of a flight of stairs, marked with a very old crucifix, you'll find a trio of dining rooms with red-tile floors and a history of welcoming guests since 1590. The menu has simple "down-home" cooking, listing such dishes as a Tyroler *Grüstl* (a kind of hash composed of sautéed onions, sliced beef, alpine herbs, and potatoes cooked and served in a frying pan), *Saftgoulash* with polenta, several kinds of schnitzels, and a grilled platter *(Alt Insprugg)* for two diners.

Kiebachgasse 8. ✆ **0512/58-30-57.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 8€–18€ ($12–$26); 3-course lunch 8€–12€ ($12–$17); 3-course dinner 18€–22€ ($26–$32). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 8am–2:30pm and 5pm–midnight. Closed in Nov. Tram: 1 or 3.

EXPLORING THE TOWN

The Altstadt and the surrounding alpine countryside are Innsbruck's main attractions. Often it's fascinating just to watch the passersby, who are occasionally attired in Tyrolean regional dress.

Maria-Theresien-Strasse ★, which cuts through the heart of the city from north to south, is the main street and a good place to begin exploring the city. Many 17th- and 18th-century houses line this wide street. On the south end of the street, there's a **Triumphpforte (Triumphal Arch),** modeled after those in Rome. Maria Theresa ordered it built in 1765 to honor her son's marriage and to commemorate the death of her beloved husband, Emperor Franz I. From this arch southward the street is called Leopoldstrasse.

Going north from the arch along Maria-Theresien-Strasse, you'll see **Annasäule (St. Anna's Column)** in front of the 19th-century Rathaus (town hall). The column was erected in 1706 to celebrate the withdrawal in 1703 of invading Bavarian armies during the War of the Spanish Succession. Not far north of the Annasäule, the wide street narrows and becomes **Herzog-Friedrich-Strasse,** running through the heart of the medieval quarter. This street is arcaded and flanked by a number of well-maintained burghers' houses with their jumble of turrets and gables; look for the multitude of dormer windows and oriels.

Dom zu St. Jakob (Cathedral of St. James) Designed and rebuilt from 1717 to 1724 by Johann Jakob Herkommer, the Dom has a lavishly embellished baroque interior. A chief treasure is Lucas Cranach the Elder's *Maria Hilf (St. Mary of Succor).*

Domplatz 6. ✆ **0512/58-39-02.** Free admission. Winter daily 6:30am–6pm; summer daily 7am–7pm. Closed Fri noon–3pm. Tram: 1 or 3.

Hofburg ★ The 15th-century imperial palace of Emperor Maximilian I, flanked by a set of domed towers, was rebuilt in the baroque style (with rococo detailing) during the 18th century on orders of Maria Theresa. It's a fine example of baroque secular architecture, with four wings and a two-story *Riesensaal* (Giant's Hall), painted in white and gold and filled with portraits of the Hapsburgs. Also of compelling interest are the State Rooms, the chapel, and a scattering of private apartments. You can wander at will through the rooms, but if you want to participate in a guided tour, management conducts two a day, at 11am and 2pm, in a multilingual format that includes English. Each tour lasts 30 to 45 minutes and costs 2.20€ ($3.20).

Rennweg 1. ✆ **0512/58-71-86-12.** www.hofburg-innsbruck.at. Admission 5.50€ ($8) adults, 4€ ($5.80) seniors and students 19–27, 2.50€ ($3.70) students 15–18, 1.10€ ($1.60) children 6–14. Daily 9am–5pm. Tram: 1 or 3.

Hofkirche The most important treasure in the Hofkirche is the cenotaph of Maximilian I, a great example of German Renaissance style. It has 28 bronze 16th-century statues of Maximilian's real and legendary ancestors surrounding the kneeling emperor.

Universitätsstrasse 2. ✆ **0512/58-43-02.** www.hofkirche.at. Admission 3€ ($4.40) adults, 2€ ($2.90) students, 1.50€ ($2.20) under 17, free for children 5 and under. Mon–Sat 9am–5pm. Tram: 1 or 3.

Goldenes Dachl (Golden Roof) & Maximilianeum ★ "The Golden Roof," Innsbruck's greatest tourist attraction and its most characteristic landmark, is a three-story balcony on a house in the Altstadt; the late-Gothic oriels are capped with 2,657 gold-plated tiles. It was constructed for Emperor Maximilian I in the beginning of the 16th century to serve as a royal box where he could sit in luxury and enjoy tournaments in the square below.

A small museum, the **Maximilianeum,** is on the second floor of the municipal building attached to the Goldenes Dachl. Inside are exhibits celebrating the life and accomplishments of the Innsbruck-based Hapsburg emperor, Maximilian I, who bridged the gap between the Middle Ages and the German Renaissance.

Herzog-Friedrich-Strasse 15. ✆ **0512/581-111.** Admission to the Maximilianeum 3.60€ ($5.20) adults; 2.70€ ($3.90) seniors, students, and children 17 and under. No charge for views of the Goldenes Dachl, and no restrictions as to when it can be viewed. Maximilianeum May–Oct daily 10am–6pm; Nov–Apr Tues–Sun 10am–5pm. Tram: 1 or 3.

Swarovski Kristallwelten (Crystal Worlds) ★★★ **Kids** Designed by the Viennese multimedia artist Andrew Heller, this attraction some 15km (9⅓ miles) from Innsbruck is dedicated to the vision of Daniel Swarovski, founder of the world's leading producer of full crystal.

After entering the giant head with its glittering eyes and waterfall, you'll immediately see a long wall of crystal with 12 tons of the finest cut stones in the world. In other chambers you can wander into the "Planet of the Crystals," with a 3-D light show. Crystalline works of art on display were designed by everybody from Andy Warhol to Salvador Dalí. In the Crystal Dome you get an idea of what it's like being inside a giant crystal, and in the Crystal Theater a fairy-tale world of color, mystery, and graceful movement unfolds. You can easily spend 2 hours here.

Kristallweltenstrasse 1. ☎ **05224/51080.** www.swarovski.com/kristallwelten. Admission 9.50€ ($14), free for children 11 and under. Daily 9am–6:30pm (last entrance 5:30pm). Take the Wattens motorway exit (A12) and follow signs to Kristallwelten, or take the Wattens bus from the Busbahnhof, next to the Hauptbahnhof.

Tiroler Landesmuseum Ferdinandeum (Ferdinandeum Tyrol Museum) ★ This celebrated gallery of Flemish and Dutch masters also traces the development of popular art in Tyrol, with highlights from the Gothic period. You'll see the original bas-reliefs used in designing the Goldenes Dachl.

Museumstrasse 15. ☎ **0512/59-489-110.** www.tiroler-landesmuseum.at. Admission 8€ ($12) adults, 4€ ($5.80) students, 1.50€ ($2.20) children 17 and under. June–Sept daily 10am–6pm; Oct–May Tues–Sat 10am–5pm, Sun 10am–1pm. Tram: 1 or 3.

Tiroler Volkskunst-Museum (Tyrol Museum of Folk Art) ★★ This popular art museum is in the Neues Stift (New Abbey) adjoining the Hofkirche on its eastern side. It contains one of the largest and most impressive collections of Tyrolean artifacts, ranging from handcrafts, furniture, Christmas cribs, and national costumes to religious and secular popular art. You'll also find a collection of models of typical Tyrolean houses.

Universitätsstrasse 2. ☎ **0512/58-43-02.** www.tiroler-volkskunstmuseum.at. Admission 5€ ($7.30) adults, 4.50€ ($6.60) seniors, 1.50€ ($2.20) children. Mon–Sat 9am–5pm; Sun 10am–5pm. Tram: 1 or 3.

ENJOYING THE GREAT OUTDOORS

Five sunny, snow-covered, avalanche-free **ski areas** around the Tyrol are served by five cableways, 44 chairlifts, and ski hoists. The area is also known for bobsled and toboggan runs and ice-skating rinks.

In summer you can play tennis at a number of courts, and golf on either a 9- or an 18-hole course; or you can go horseback riding, mountaineering, gliding, swimming, hiking, or shooting.

The **Hofgarten,** a public park containing lakes and many shade trees, lies north of Rennweg. Concerts are often presented in the garden during the summer.

THE SHOPPING SCENE

You'll find a large selection of Tyrolean specialties and all sorts of skiing and mountain-climbing equipment for sale in Innsbruck. Stroll around **Maria-Theresien-Strasse, Herzog-Friedrich-Strasse,** and **Museumstrasse,** ducking in and making discoveries of your own. Here are some suggestions.

Lodenbaur, Brixner Strasse 4 (☎ **0512/58-09-11**), is devoted to regional Tyrolean dress, most of which is made in Austria. There's a full array for men, women, and children. **Tiroler Heimatwerk,** Meraner Strasse 2 (✆ **0512/58-23-20**), is one of the best stores in Innsbruck for handcrafted sculpture and pewter, carved chests, furniture, and lace. Do-it-yourselfers can buy regionally inspired fabrics and dress patterns, and whip up a dirndl (or whatever).

Using old molds discovered in abandoned Tyrolean factories, **Zinnreproduktionen U,** Kiebachgasse 8 (✆ **0512/58-92-24**), offers fine reproductions of century-old regional pewter at reasonable prices. The owner also reproduces rare pewter objects acquired from auctions throughout Europe. Look for a copy of the 18th-century pewter barometer emblazoned with representations of the sun and the four winds.

INNSBRUCK AFTER DARK

THE PERFORMING ARTS The major venue for the performing arts is the 150-year-old **Landestheater,** Rennweg 2 (✆ **0512/52-074-4**). The box office is open daily from 9:30am to 7pm, and performances usually begin at 7:30 or 8pm. Ticket prices are 4€ to 37€ ($5.80–$54) for most operas or operettas, 5€ to 52€ ($7.30–$75) for theater seats. It's also the showcase for musicals and light operetta. For tickets, call ✆ **0512/52-074-4.** Concerts are presented in the Hofgarten in summer.

BARS, CLUBS & FOLK MUSIC One of Innsbruck's most whimsical discos is **Blue Chip,** Wilhelm-Greil-Strasse 17 (✆ **0512/56-50-50**), situated in a modern building in the center of town. The busy dance floor attracts a clientele in the 25-to-40 age range, and music includes an appealing mixture of funk, soul, and "black beat" (their term). Entrance is free, and hours are Tuesday to Saturday from 11pm to 4am. One flight up in the same building is **Jimmy's Bar** (✆ **0512/570-473**). There's no dance floor and no live music, but it's something of an Innsbruck cliché that you should begin your evening at Jimmy's with a drink or two before proceeding downstairs to Blue Chip. Jimmy's is open daily 11am to 2am.

If you're looking for the biggest and the best in Innsbruck, head for the **Hofgartencafé,** Rennweg 6 (✆ **0512/58-88-71**), where a lively crowd of young people, mostly in their twenties and thirties, grace the largest beer garden in town. With three massive outdoor bars and a modern indoor decor, this hot spot is the place to be seen. You'll find live music here during the summer. It's open daily 11am to 3am.

Young people hang out at **Treibhaus,** Angerzellgasse 8 (✆ **0512/57-20-00**), a combination cafe, bar, and social club. Within its battered walls, you can attend a changing roster of art exhibitions, cabaret shows, and protest rallies, Monday to Saturday 10am to 1am, with live music presented at erratic intervals. Cover for live performances is 10€ to 20€ ($15–$29).

Limerick Bill's Irish Pub, Maria-Theresia-Strasse 9 (✆ **0512/5820111**), is dark and cavelike because of its location in a building without windows, a short walk north of Old Town. It's a genuine Irish pub for Celtic wannabes, and the cellar attracts a dancing crowd on Friday and Saturday nights, especially between December and March, when there's live music from 9pm to midnight. It's open daily from 3:30pm to 2am.

Fischerhausel Bar, Herrengasse 8 (✆ **0512/58-35-35**), is a rustic second-floor restaurant and street-level bar open Monday to Saturday from 10am to 2am, Sunday from 6pm to 2am. In the Tyrolean style, it's a good, friendly joint for quaffing schnapps or suds. In warm weather, drinkers move out to the garden in back.

ST. ANTON AM ARLBERG ★★★

A modern resort has grown out of this old village on the Arlberg Pass, 99km (62 miles) west of Innsbruck. At St. Anton (1,288m/4,226 ft.), Hannes Schneider developed modern skiing techniques and began teaching tourists how to ski in 1907. Before his death in 1955, Schneider saw his ski school rated as the world's finest. Today the school is still one of the world's largest and best, with about 300 instructors (most of whom speak English). St. Anton am Arlberg in winter is popular with the wealthy and occasional royalty—a more conservative segment of the rich and famous than you'll see at other posh ski resorts.

There's so much emphasis on skiing here that few seem to talk of the summertime attractions. In warm weather, St. Anton is tranquil and bucolic, surrounded by meadowland. A riot of wildflowers blooming in the fields announces the beginning of spring.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **By Train** Because of St. Anton's good rail connections to eastern and western Austria, most visitors arrive by train. St. Anton is an express stop on the main lines crossing the Arlberg Pass between Innsbruck and Bregenz. About one train per hour arrives in St. Anton from each direction. Trip time from Innsbruck is 75 to 85 minutes; from Bregenz, around 85 minutes. For rail information, call ✆ **05/1717.**

By Car Motorists should take Rte. 171 west from Innsbruck.

VISITOR INFORMATION The **tourist office** in the **Arlberghaus** in the town center (✆ **05446/22-690;** www.stantonamarlberg.com) is open Monday to Friday 8:30am to noon and 2 to 6:30pm, Saturday 9am to noon and 2 to 6pm, and Sunday 10am to noon.

WHERE TO STAY

Hotel Schwarzer Adler ★★ Owned and operated by the Tschol family since 1885, this is our preferred stopover at the resort. The beautiful building in the center of St. Anton was constructed as an inn in 1570 and became known for its hospitality to pilgrims crossing the treacherous Arlberg Pass. The interior is rustic yet elegant, with blazing fireplaces, painted Tyrolean baroque armoires, and Oriental rugs. There are handsomely furnished and well-equipped guest rooms in the main hotel, plus 13 slightly less well-furnished (but less expensive) rooms in the annex, which is across the street above the **Café Aquila.** Nearly all bathrooms have big bathtubs, although a few singles offer only showers.

A-6580 St. Anton am Arlberg. ✆ **05446/22-440.** Fax 05446/22-44-0-62. www.schwarzeradler.com. 72 units. Winter 184€–268€ ($267–$389) double; summer 89€–230€ ($129–$334) double. Rates include half-board. MC, V. Closed May–June and Sept–Dec 5. **Amenities:** Restaurant (see below); bar; indoor pool; fitness center; sauna; room service; massage; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service. *In room:* TV, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

WHERE TO DINE

If you're not able to secure a reservation at Raffl-Stube (see below), don't despair. You can get classic Austrian dishes at the historic **Hotel Alte Post Restaurant,** A-6580 St. Anton am Arlberg (✆ **05446/25530**); and at the first-rate **Hotel Kertess Restaurant,** A-6580 St. Anton am Arlberg (✆ **05446/2005**), located high on a slope in the suburb of Oberdorf. For superb international cuisine, head to the medieval **Hotel Schwarzer Adler Restaurant,** A-6580 St. Anton am Arlberg (✆ **05446/22440**).

Raffl-Stube ★ AUSTRIAN This place contains only eight tables, and in the peak of the season, reservations are imperative, especially if you're not staying here. Overflow diners are offered a seat in a spacious but less special dining room across the hall.

Quality ingredients are always used, and the kitchen prepares such tempting specialties as roast gooseliver with salad, cream of parsley soup with sautéed quail eggs, filet of salmon with wild rice, trout "as you like it," and roast filet of pork, along with the ever-popular fondue bourguignon.

In the Hotel St. Antoner Hof, St. Anton am Arlberg. ✆ **05446/29-10.** Reservations required. Main courses 11€–35€ ($16–$51). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 11:30am–2pm and 7–9:30pm. Closed May–Nov.

HITTING THE SLOPES IN ST. ANTON

The snow in this area is perfect for skiers, and the total lack of trees on the slopes makes the situation ideal. The ski fields of St. Anton stretch over some 16 sq. km (6¼ sq. miles). Beginners stick to the slopes down below, and more experienced skiers head to the runs from the **Galzig** and **Valluga** peaks. A cableway will take you to Galzig (2,092m/6,864 ft.), where there's a self-service restaurant. You go from here to Vallugagrat (2,649m/8,691 ft.). The peak of the Valluga (2,812m/9,226 ft.), which commands a panoramic view, is also reached by cableway.

Other major ski areas include the **Gampen/Kapall,** an advanced-intermediate network of slopes, whose lifts start just behind St. Anton's railway station; and the **Rendl,** a relatively new labyrinth of runs to the south of St. Anton that offers many novice and intermediate slopes.

You'll find many other cold-weather pursuits in St. Anton, including ski jumping, mountain tours, curling, skating, tobogganing, and sleigh rides, plus après-ski relaxing.

THE KITZBÜHEL ALPS ★★★

Hard-core skiers and the rich and famous are attracted to this ski region. The Kitzbühel Alps are covered with such a dense network of lifts that they now form the largest skiing complex in the country, with a series of superlative runs. The action centers on the town of Kitzbühel, but there are many satellite resorts that are much less expensive, including St. Johann in Tyrol. Kitzbühel is, in a sense, a neighbor of Munich, which lies 130km (81 miles) to the northeast: Most visitors to the Kitzbühel Alps use Munich's international airport.

ESSENTIALS

ARRIVING **By Train** Two and three **trains** per hour (many express) arrive in Kitzbühel from Innsbruck (trip time: 60 min.) and Salzburg (2½ hr.), respectively.

By Bus The most useful of these bus lines runs every 30 to 60 minutes between Kitzbühel and St. Johann in Tyrol (25 min.). In addition, about half a dozen buses travel every day from Salzburg's main railway station to Kitzbühel (2¼ hr.). For regional bus information, call ✆ **05356/627-15.**

By Car Kitzbühel is 449km (279 miles) southwest of Vienna and 100km (62 miles) east of Innsbruck. If you're driving from Innsbruck, take Autobahn A12 east to the junction with Rte. 312 heading to Ellmau. After bypassing Ellmau, continue east to the junction with Rte. 342, which you take south to Kitzbühel.

VISITOR INFORMATION The **tourist office,** Hinterstadt 18 (✆ **05356/777**), www.kitzbuehel.com), is open Monday to Friday 8:30am to 6pm, Saturday 9am to 6pm, and Sunday 10am to noon and 4 to 6pm.

WHERE TO STAY

Hotel Bruggerhof ★ Finds About 1.6km (1 mile) west of the town center, near the Schwarzsee, is this countryside chalet with a sun terrace. Originally built as a farmhouse in the 1920s, it later gained local fame as a restaurant. The interior has massive ceiling beams and a corner fireplace. Rooms are comfortable and cozy and decorated in an alpine style. All have a well-lived-in look, although housekeeping is attentive. Firm beds are most inviting. Bathrooms, which contain tub/shower combinations, can be a bit cramped.

Reitherstrasse 24, A-6370 Kitzbühel. ✆ **05356/628-06.** Fax 05356/64-47-930. 25 units. Winter 160€–230€ ($232–$334) double; summer 120€–160€ ($174–$232) double. Rates include half board. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. Closed Apr and Oct 15–Dec 15. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; indoor pool; minigolf; tennis court; fitness center; Jacuzzi; sauna; limited room service; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms; solarium. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Hotel Zur Tenne ★ This hotel combines Tyrolean congeniality with urban style and panache, and the staff shows genuine concern for its clientele. The hotel was created in the 1950s by joining a trio of 700-year-old houses. Rooms are as glamorous as anything in Kitzbühel: wood trim, comfortable beds, eiderdowns, and copies of Tyrolean antiques. Many have working fireplaces and canopied beds for a romantic touch. Bathrooms are generally large, with vanity mirrors and tub/shower combinations. In addition to intimate lounges, niches, and nooks, the hotel sports the most luxurious health complex in town, complete with a tropical fountain, two hot tubs, and a hot-and-cold foot bath.

Vorderstadt 8–10, A-6370 Kitzbühel. ✆ **05356/64-44-40.** Fax 05356/648-03-56. 51 units. 165€–381€ ($239–$552) double; from 340€ ($493) suite for 3. Rates include breakfast. Half board 38€ ($55) per person. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking outdoors; 12€ ($17) in covered garage nearby. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; bar; lounge; fitness center; 2 Jacuzzis; sauna; room service; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service; solarium. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

WHERE TO DINE

The Dining Rooms in the Schloss Lebenberg ★ AUSTRIAN/INTERNATIONAL Although the Schloss Lebenberg hotel offers comfortable rooms, we actually prefer it for its well-managed restaurant and its sense of history. Originally built in 1548, it was transformed in 1885 into Kitzbühel's first family-run hotel. Always-reliable specialties include cream of tomato soup with gin, Tyrolean-style calf's liver, Wiener schnitzel, roulade of beef, and many desserts.

Lebenbergstrasse 17. ✆ **05356/690-10.** Reservations required. Main courses 15€–28€ ($22–$41). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 7:30–10:30am; noon–2pm; and 6:45–8:45pm.

Restaurant Goldener Greif ★★ TYROLEAN The setting is cozy and warm, and the cuisine is some of the resort's best. The dining room features vaulted ceilings, intricate paneling, and, in some cases, views out over the base of some of Kitzbühel's busy cable cars. Menu items are savory and designed to satisfy appetites heightened by the bracing alpine climate. You might order veal steak with fresh vegetables, pepper steak Madagascar, or venison. Many kinds of grilled steaks are regularly featured. A "Vienna pot" is one of the chef's specials, and fresh Tyrolean trout is offered daily.

Hinterstadt 24. ✆ **05356/643-11.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 8€–30€ ($12–$44); fixed-price menus 20€–35€ ($29–$51). AE, DC, MC, V. June to mid-Oct daily 10am–2pm and 7–10pm; mid-Dec to mid-Apr daily 6–10pm. Closed mid-Apr to late May and mid-Oct to mid-Dec.

SEEING THE SIGHTS IN TOWN

The town has two main streets, both pedestrian walkways: **Vorderstadt** and **Hinterstadt.** Along these streets Kitzbühel has preserved its traditional architectural style.

You'll see three-story stone houses with oriels and scrollwork around the doors and windows, heavy overhanging eaves, and Gothic gables.

The **Pfarrkirche (Parish Church)** was built from 1435 to 1506 and renovated in the baroque style during the 18th century. The lower part of the **Liebfrauenkirche (Church of Our Lady)** dates from the 13th century, the upper part from 1570. Between these two churches stands the **Ölbergkapelle (Ölberg Chapel)** with a 1450 "lantern of the dead" and frescoes from the latter part of the 16th century.

In the **Heimatmuseum,** Hinterstadt 34 (✆ **05356/645-88**), you'll see artifacts from prehistoric European mining eras and the north alpine Bronze Age, a winter-sports section with trophies of Kitzbüheler skiing greats, and exhibits detailing the town's history. The museum is open year-round Monday through Saturday from 10am to 1pm. Admission is 4.50€ ($6.60) adults, 2.25€ ($3.30) persons under 18.

HITTING THE SLOPES & OTHER OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

SKIING In winter the emphasis in Kitzbühel, 702m (2,300 ft.) above sea level, is on skiing, and facilities are offered for everyone from novices to experts. The ski season starts just before Christmas and lasts until late March. With more than 62 lifts, gondolas (cable cars), and mountain railroads on five different mountains, Kitzbühel has two main ski areas, the **Hahnenkamm** (renovated in 1995) and the **Kitzbüheler Horn** ★★. Cable cars (Hahnenkammbahn) are within easy walking distance, even for those in ski boots.

The linking of the lift systems on the Hahnenkamm has created the celebrated **Kitzbühel Ski Circus** ★★★, which makes it possible to ski downhill for more than 80km (50 miles), with runs that suit every stage of proficiency. Numerous championship ski events are held here; the World Cup event each January pits the skills of top-flight skiers against the toughest, fastest downhill course in the world, a stretch of the Hahnenkamm especially designed for maximum speed. Its name, Die Streif, is both feared and respected among skiers.

OTHER WINTER ACTIVITIES There's also curling, ski-bobbing, ski jumping, ice skating, tobogganing, hiking on cleared trails, and hang gliding, as well as indoor activities like tennis, bowling, and swimming. The children's ski school, **Schi-schule Rote Teufel,** Museumkeller, Hinterstadt (✆ **05356/625-00**), provides training for the very young skier. And don't forget the après-ski, with bars, nightclubs, and dance clubs rocking from teatime until the wee hours.

SUMMER ACTIVITIES Kitzbühel has summer pastimes, too, such as walking tours, visits to the **Wild Life Park at Aurach** (about 3km/1¾ miles from Kitzbühel), tennis, horseback riding, golf, squash, brass-band concerts in the town center, cycling, and swimming. For the last, there's an indoor swimming pool, but we recommend going to the **Schwarzsee (Black Lake).** This *See,* about a 15-minute walk northwest of the center of town, is an alpine lake with a peat bottom that keeps the water relatively murky. Covering an area of 6.4 hectares (16 acres), with a depth that doesn't exceed about 8m (26 ft.), it's the site of beaches and **Seiwald Bootsverleih,** Schwartzsee (✆ **05356/623-81**), an outfit that rents rowboats and putt-putt electric-driven engines in case you want to fish or sunbathe from a boat.

One of the region's most exotic collections of alpine flora is clustered into the jagged and rocky confines of the **Alpine Flower Garden Kitzbühel,** where various species of gentian, gorse, heather, and lichens are found on the sunny slopes of the Kitzbüheler

Horn. Set at a height of around 1,830m (6,000 ft.) above sea level, the garden—which is owned and maintained by Kitzbühel as an incentive to midsummer tourism—is open from late May to early September, daily 8:30am to 5:30pm, and is most impressive in June, July, and August. Admission is free. Many visitors see the garden by taking the Seilbahn Kitzbüheler cable car to its uppermost station and then descending on foot via the garden's labyrinth of footpaths to the gondola's middle station. (You can also climb upward within the garden, reversing the order of the gondola stations, although that would require a lot more effort.) The **Seilbahn Kitzbüheler cable car** (**✆ 05356/69-51**), 20€ ($29) round-trip, departs from Kitzbühel at half-hour intervals daily throughout the summer and winter. In spring and autumn, it operates Saturday and Sunday only.

3

Belgium

by George McDonald

Modest little Belgium has never been known to boast of its charms, yet its variety of languages, cultures, history, and cuisines would do credit to a country many times its size. Belgium's diversity stems from its location at a cultural crossroads. The boundary between Europe's Germanic north and Latin south cuts clear across the nation's middle, leaving Belgium divided into two major ethnic regions: Dutch-speaking Flanders and French-speaking Wallonia.

Although international attention is focused on Brussels as the "capital of Europe," another Belgium is waiting in the wings—a place of Gothic cathedrals, medieval castles, cobblestone streets, and tranquil canals. In a country the size of Maryland, the timeless beauty of Bruges and Ghent are accessible even to the most hurried visitor. Both of these Flemish cities are showcases of medieval art and architecture. Some of the northern Renaissance's most outstanding paintings hang in their museums and churches. Yet each has a distinctive character that makes visiting them complementary. You can easily visit both in day trips from Brussels, but for a more thorough inspection you'll want to stay overnight.

1 Brussels ★★★

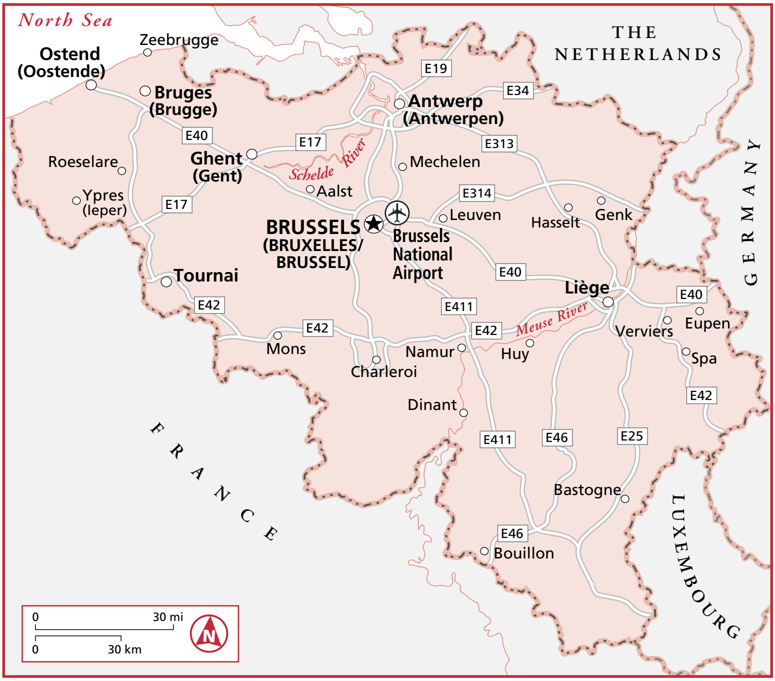
As the headquarters city of the European Union, Brussels both symbolizes the Continent's vision of unity and is a bastion of officialdom, a breeding ground for the regulations that govern and often exasperate the rest of Europe.

Bruxellois have ambivalent feelings about their city's transformation into a power center. At first, the waves of Eurocrats brought a new cosmopolitan air, but as old neighborhoods were leveled to make way for office towers, people wondered whether Brussels was losing its soul. After all, this city is not just about politics and business. It inspired surrealism and Art Nouveau, worships comic strips, prides itself on handmade lace and chocolate, and serves each one of its craft beers in its own unique glass.

Fortunately, not all of Brussels's individuality has been lost. The city's spirit survives in traditional cafes, bars, bistros, and restaurants. Whether elegantly Art Nouveau or eccentrically festooned with posters, curios, and knickknacks, such centuries-old establishments provide a warm, convivial ambience that is peculiarly Belgian.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **By Plane** Modern, efficient **Brussels National Airport** (✆ **0900/70-000** in Belgium, or 02/753-77-53 from abroad; www.brusselsairport.be), 11km (7 miles) northeast of the center city, is Belgium's principal airport and handles virtually all of the country's international flights. In the arrival hall are currency-exchange offices, ATMs, a tourist information office, car-rental desks from the major international rental companies, bars, restaurants, and shops.


North Sea
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Antwerp
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E34
E313
Mechelen
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Leuven
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Genk
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E40
Tournai
E42
E42
Mons
Charleroi
Namur
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E42
Meuse River
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Liège
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A **train** connects the airport with Brussels's three major rail stations (see below) every 20 minutes daily from 5:30am to 11:30pm; a one-way ride is 4.40€ ($6.40) in first class, and 2.90€ ($4.20) in second class; trip time to Gare Centrale is around 18 minutes (other city stops are just minutes away). The **Airport Line bus,** no. 11 or 12, departs from the airport one to five times an hour to multiple stops in the city, and costs 3€ ($4.35); **De Lijn bus** 272 connects the airport hourly with Gare du Nord rail station for 2.70€ ($3.90). A **taxi** from the airport to the center city is around 35€ ($51); be sure to use only licensed cabs from the stand outside the terminal.

By Train High-speed Eurostar trains from London; Thalys trains from Paris, Amsterdam, and Cologne; TGV trains from France (not Paris); and ICE trains from Frankfurt zip into town from all points of the compass, and arrive at Gare du Midi, rue de France, south of the center city. Other international trains also arrive at Gare du Midi, along with Gare Centrale, Carrefour de l'Europe, downtown, a few blocks from the Grand-Place, and Gare du Nord, rue du Progrès, north of the center city. For train information, call ✆ **02/528-28-28** or visit **www.b-rail.be**.

All three stations have currency exchange offices, luggage storage, waiting rooms, fast-food restaurants, bars, cafes, snack kiosks, and stores, with Gare du Midi being the best-outfitted in all these services. Both Gare du Midi and Gare du Nord have stops for tram (streetcar) lines and a bus station; Gare Centrale has an adjacent Métro (subway) station and multiple bus stops outside. All three have taxi stands outside.

Warning: Attracted by rich pickings from international travelers, bag snatchers roam the environs of Gare du Midi, and pickpockets work the interior. Do not travel

Brussels

ATTRACTIONS ●

Atomium **1**

Autoworld **17**

Bois de la Cambre **24**

Cathédrale des Sts-Michel-et-Gudule **6**

Centre Belge de la Bande-Dessinée **5**

Forêt de Soignes **24**

Hôtel de Ville **11**

Manneken-Pis **12**

Mini-Europe **1**

Musée de la Ville de Bruxelles **8**

Musée du Cinquantenaire **17**

Musée du Costume et de la Dentelle **13**

Musée Horta **20**

Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique **18**

Notre-Dame du Sablon **19**

Parc de Bruxelles **16**

Parc du Cinquantenaire **17**

ACCOMMODATIONS ■

Agenda Louise **21**

Amigo **10**

Arlequin **7**

Bristol Stéphanie Brussels **23**

Comfort Art Hotel Siru **2**

De Boeck's **25**

George V **9**

Izán Avenue Louise Boutique Hotel **22**

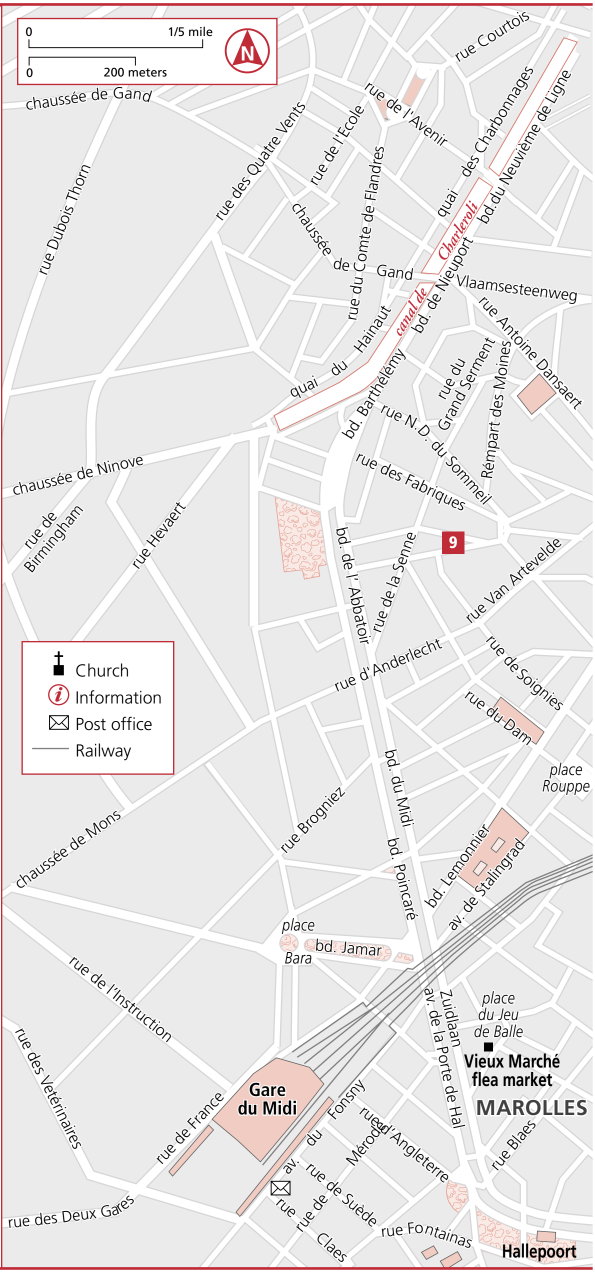
Le Dixseptième **15**

Métropole **4**

Mozart **14**

Welcome **3**

Brussels
BELGIUM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Post office
Railway
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rue de l'Avenir
rue des Quatre Vents
rue de l'Ecole
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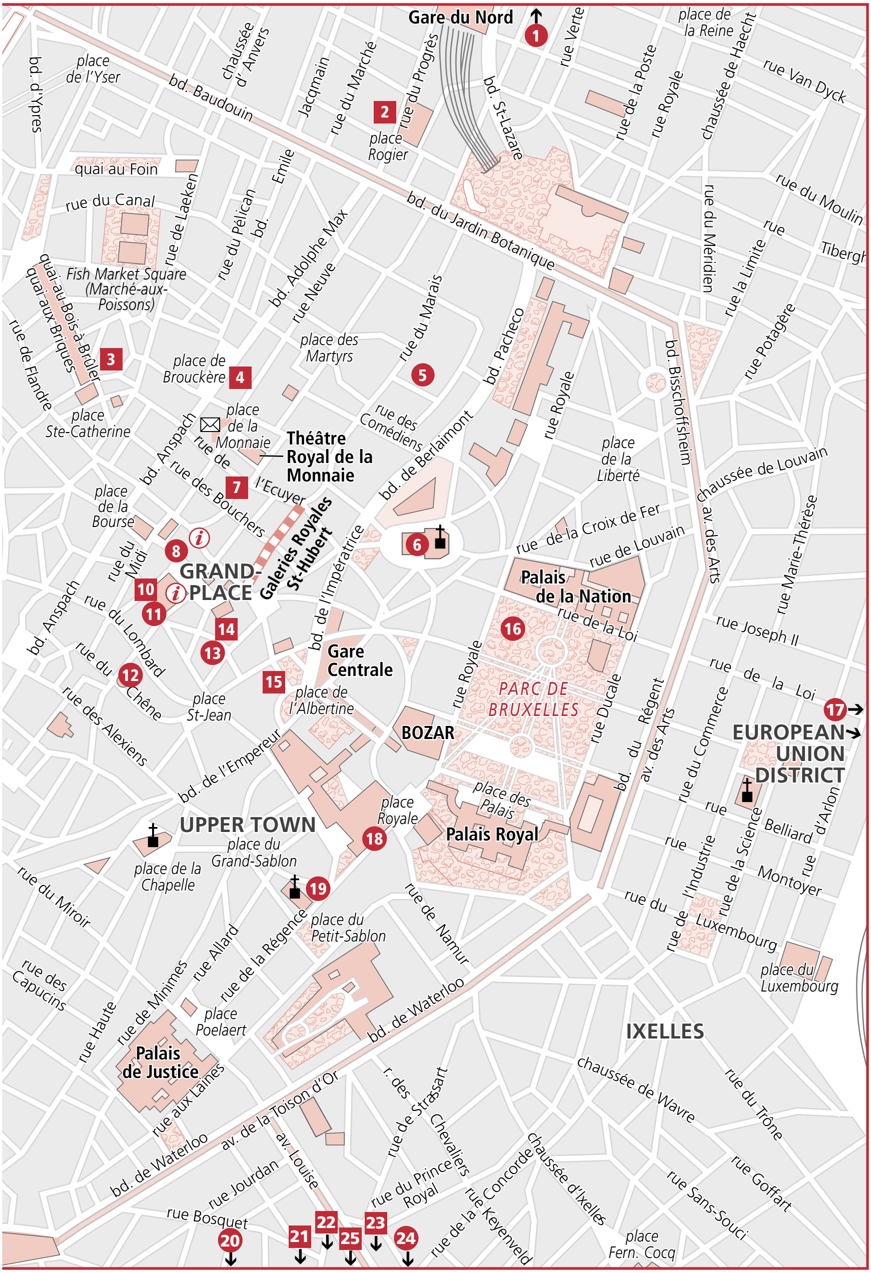
bd. du Neuvième de Ligne
quai
Charleroi
canal de
rue Dubois Thorn
chaussée de Gand
rue du Comte de Flandres
bd. de Nieuport
Vlaamsesteenweg
rue Antoine Dansaert
quai du Hainaut
bd. Barthélémy
rue du Grand Serment
Rempart des Moines
rue N.D. du Sommeil
rue des Fabriques
chaussée de Ninove
rue de Birmingham
rue Hevaert
bd. de l' Abbatoir
rue de la Senne
9
rue Van Artevelde
rue d' Anderlecht
rue de Soignies
rue du Dam
place Rouppe
rue Brogniez
bd. du Midi
chaussée de Mons
bd. Poincaré
bd. Lemonnier
av. de Stalingrad
place Bara
bd. Jamar
rue de l'Instruction
Zuidlaan
av. de la Porte de Hal
place du Jeu de Balle
Vieux Marché flea market
rue des Vétérinaires
Gare du Midi
MAROLLES
rue de France
av. du Fonsny
rue Mérode
rue d'Angleterre
rue Blaes
rue de Suède
rue de Claes
rue des Deux Gares
rue Fontainas
Hallepoort


Gare du Nord
1
place de la Reine
rue Verte
chaussée de Haecht
rue Van Dyck
bd. d'Ypres
place de l'Yser
chaussée d' Anvers
bd. Baudouin
Jacqmain
rue du Marché
rue du Progrès
2
place Rogier
bd. St-Lazare
rue de la Poste
rue Royale
quai au Foin
rue du Canal
rue de Laeken
rue du Pélican
bd. Emile
bd. du Jardin Botanique
rue du Méridien
rue du Moulin
rue Tiberghien
rue la Limite
Fish Market Square (Marché-aux-Poissons)
quai-au-Bois-à-Brûler
quai aux Briques
rue de Flandre
3
bd. Adolphe Max
rue Neuve
place des Martyrs
rue du Marais
bd. Pacheco
rue Potagère
place de Brouckère
4
5
bd. Bisschoffsheim
place Ste-Catherine
place de la Monnaie
Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie
rue des Comédiens
rue Royale
bd. Anspach
rue de l'Ecuyer
bd. de Berlaimont
place de la Liberté
chaussée de Louvain
7
rue des Bouchers
place de la Bourse
Galeries Royales St-Hubert
6
rue de la Croix de Fer
rue de Louvain
av. des Arts
rue Marie-Thérèse
8
rue du Midi
GRAND-PLACE
bd. de l'Impératrice
Palais de la Nation
10
11
bd. Anspach
rue du Lombard
14
13
rue de la Loi
16
rue Joseph II
12
rue du Chêne
rue des Alexiens
Gare Centrale
15
place de l'Albertine
place St-Jean
rue Royale
PARC DE BRUXELLES
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bd. du Régent
av. des Arts
rue de la Loi
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EUROPEAN UNION DISTRICT
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BOZAR
place des Palais
place Royale
rue Belliard
rue d'Arlon
UPPER TOWN
place du Grand-Sablon
18
Palais Royal
rue de l'Industrie
rue de la Science
rue Montoyer
place de la Chapelle
rue du Miroir
19
place du Petit-Sablon
rue de Namur
rue du Luxembourg
place du Luxembourg
rue des Capucins
rue Allard
rue de la Régence
rue de Minimes
place Poelaert
rue Haute
bd. de Waterloo
IXELLES
Palais de Justice
rue aux Laines
av. de la Toison d'Or
r. des Chevaliers
rue de Strassart
chaussée de Wavre
rue du Trône
bd. de Waterloo
av. Louise
rue Jourdan
rue du Prince Royal
rue de la Concorde
rue Keyenveld
chaussée d'Ixelles
rue Goffart
rue Sans-Souci
rue Bosquet
20
21
22
25
23
24
place Fern. Cocq

to or depart from the station on foot if you can avoid it. Take a taxi or use public transportation, and once inside, keep a close eye on your possessions. This seems to be less of a problem than it once was, but why take a chance?

By Bus **Eurolines** (✆ **02/274-13-50;** www.eurolines.com) buses from London, Paris, Amsterdam, and other cities arrive at the bus station below Gare du Nord rail station.

By Car Major expressways to Brussels are E19 from Amsterdam and Paris, and E40 from Bruges and Cologne. Avoid if possible driving the "hell on wheels" R0 Brussels ring road. Then, do yourself a favor: Leave the car at a parking garage.

VISITOR INFORMATION The office of **Brussels International Tourism & Congress,** Hôtel de Ville, Grand-Place, 1000 Bruxelles (✆ **02/513-89-40;** fax 02/513-83-20; www.brusselsinternational.be; Métro: Gare Centrale), is on the ground floor of the Town Hall. It's open April to October, daily from 9am to 6pm; November to December, Monday to Saturday from 9am to 6pm, and Sunday from 10am to 2pm; and January to March, Monday to Saturday from 9am to 6pm.

Press For English-speaking visitors, the most useful publication is the weekly magazine ***The Bulletin,*** published on Thursdays and filled with local news, articles, shopping, and information on cultural events.

Websites A good starting point for exploring Brussels and the Wallonia and Flanders regions of Belgium on the Web is at the official tourist-office websites **www.brussels international.be**, **www.visitbelgium.com**, **www.opt.be**, and **www.visitflanders.com**. You might also want to check out the independent **www.trabel.com**. A website in English that covers Belgian news, weather, tourism, and more is **www.xpats.com**. A good website for hotel research, where you can compare prices and see pictures of the rooms, is **www.hotels-belgium.com**. For dining-out pointers, go to **www.resto.be**.

CITY LAYOUT The center city's small, cobbled streets are clustered around the magnificent **Grand-Place.** Two of the most traveled lanes nearby are restaurant-lined **rue des Bouchers** and **Petite rue des Bouchers,** part of an area known as the **Ilot Sacré.** A block from the Grand-Place is the classical colonnaded Bourse (Stock Exchange). A few blocks north, on **place de la Monnaie,** is the Monnaie opera house and ballet theater, named after the coin mint that once stood here. Brussels's busiest shopping street, pedestrianized **rue Neuve,** starts from place de la Monnaie and runs north for several blocks.

The Upper Town is spread along an escarpment southeast of the center city, where you find the second great square, **place du Grand Sablon,** the Royal Fine Arts Museums, and the Royal Palace. If you head southwest and cross the broad **boulevard de Waterloo,** where you find the most exclusive designer stores, you come to **place Louise.** From here, Brussels's most fashionable thoroughfare, **avenue Louise,** runs south all the way to a large wooded park called the **Bois de la Cambre.** Both main streets are flanked by attractive residential side streets.

Between the Palais de Justice and Gare du Midi, the unpretentious working-class **Marolles** area has cozy cafes, drinking-man's bars, and inexpensive restaurants; its denizens even speak their own dialect.

East of this zone, the **Ixelles** district, near the Free University, has many casual, inexpensive restaurants, bars, and cafes. North of Ixelles, the modern European Union district surrounds **place Schuman.**

Native Behavior

Bruxellois are never happier than when they're setting forks and spoons to work on one of their country's proud regional cuisine specialties, and easing its assimilation with a carefully crafted artisanal Belgian beer—or three. If this can be done over an extended lunch, in the boss's time, and at the boss's expense, so much the better. You can join them in spirit, if not on expenses, by making lunch an important part of the day's proceedings.

Then, to really feel like a local, start grousing about the overpaid, underworked, arrogant, dimwitted, probably corrupt, expense-account-toting, comfortably pensioned "Eurocrats" who run the bureaucracy—and boy, is that some bureaucracy—of the gravy train that goes by the name of the European Union and is ensconced like a bloated alien body in their midst. See, it's easy!

Whom do you kiss and how often? Some rules of thumb: After a first formal handshake, people invariably kiss on meeting again, though the kiss is more like a peck on the cheek, or on each cheek; men don't kiss other men until they know them better, then it's fine; and men should kiss all the women (and not return to the start of the line to kiss the prettiest ones again).

In this bilingual city, called *Bruxelles* in French and *Brussel* in Dutch, street names and places are in both languages. Grand-Place is *Grote Markt* in Dutch; Gare Centrale is *Centraal Station;* Théatre Royal de la Monnaie is *Koninklijke Munttheater.* For convenience and to save space, I use only the French names in this chapter.

GETTING AROUND **By Métro, Tram & Bus** Public transportation begins at around 6am and the regular service ends around midnight. After that, there are infrequent night buses. The Métro (subway) network is good for getting to major destinations around and on the edge of town. Métro stations are indicated by signs showing a large white M on a blue background. Trams (streetcars) and buses are yellow; stop them by extending your arm as they approach. Stops are marked with red-and-white signs. Though not as fast as the Métro, trams are generally faster than buses and are a great way to get around, since you can view the cityscape while you ride—lines 92, 93, and 94 cover a bunch of key sights along rue Royale, rue de la Régence, and as far as avenue Louise.

Tickets for a one-ride JUMP ticket are 2€ ($2.90) when purchased from tram and bus drivers, and 1.50€ ($2.20) when purchased before boarding. It costs 6.70€ ($9.70) for a five-ride JUMP ticket, 11€ ($16) for a 10-ride JUMP ticket, 4€ ($5.80) for a 1-day JUMP ticket, and 9.50€ ($14) for a 3-day ticket. The five-ride, 10-ride, and 1-day tickets cannot be purchased onboard trams or buses of the STIB city transit authority, but only from sales points and automats; they can, however, be purchased onboard buses of the regional transit companies De Lijn and TEC that have stops inside the city limits; the 3-day ticket can only be used with STIB and must be purchased before boarding. Finally, whatever ticket you want, if you plan to use it on Métro trains you must purchase it before boarding.

You validate your ticket by inserting it into the orange electronic machines that stand inside buses and trams and at the access to Métro platforms. Though the ticket must be revalidated each time you board, you are allowed multiple transfers within a 1-hour period of the initial validation, so you can hop on and off Métro trains, trams, and buses during that time and only one journey will be canceled by the electronic scanner. If more than one person is traveling on one ticket, the ticket must be validated each time for each traveler. Up to four children under 6 per paying adult ride free on the STIB transit network.

Free pocket maps of the public transportation network are available from the tourist office, the main Métro stations, and the **STIB** transit authority, Galerie de la Toison d'Or 20 (✆ **0900/10-310;** www.stib.be; Métro: Louise). Maps of the network are posted at all Métro stations and on many bus and tram shelters.

By Taxi The fare starts at 2.40€ ($3.50) from 6am to 10pm, and at 4.40€ ($6.40) between 10pm and 6am, increasing by 1.25€ ($1.80) a kilometer inside the city (tariff 1) and 2.45€ ($3.55) a kilometer outside (tariff 2)—make sure the meter is set to the correct tariff. Taxis cannot be hailed on the street, but there are stands at prominent locations around town. Call **Taxis Bleus** (✆ **02/268-00-00**), **Taxi Orange** (✆ **02/349-49-49**), or **Taxis Verts** (✆ **02/349-49-49**).

By Car Driving in Brussels is akin to life during the Stone Age: nasty and brutish—though it's rarely short. In some cases (but not always), traffic from the right has the right of way, even if it is coming from a minor road onto a more important one. You can imagine how this plays at multiple-road intersections, particularly since Belgians will relinquish their *priorité de droite* under no known circumstances, cost what it might. If you must drive, all the top international firms rent here: **Avis,** rue de France 2 (✆ **02/527-17-05;** Métro: Gare du Midi); **Budget,** av. Louise 91 (✆ **02/646-51-30;** Métro: Louise); **Europcar,** chaussée de Waterloo 538 (✆ **02/345-92-90;** bus no. 136, 137, or 365); and **Hertz,** bd. Maurice Lemmonier 8 (✆ **02/513-28-86;** Métro: Anneessens). All of these firms also have desks at the airport. Rates begin at around 60€ ($87) for a small car with unlimited mileage.

Remember: You get the best deal if you arrange the rental before you leave home.

By Foot There's no better way to explore the historic core of the town than walking, especially around Grand-Place. You'll also enjoy strolling uptown around place du Grand Sablon. Beyond these areas, you'll want to use public transportation. Don't expect cars to stop for you just because you're crossing at a black-and-white "pedestrian crossing."

FAST FACTS: Brussels

American Express The office at bd. du Souverain 100, 1000 Bruxelles (✆ **02/676-26-26;** Métro: Horrmann-Debroux), is open Monday to Friday from 9:30am to 5:30pm. Call ahead before visiting, because it has limited services for visitors—it does not cash traveler's checks, for instance.

Business Hours **Banks** are open Monday to Friday from 9am to 1pm and 2 to 4:30 or 5pm. Open hours for **offices** are Monday to Friday from 9 or 10am to 4 or 5pm. Most **stores** are open Monday to Saturday from 9 or 10am to 6 or 7pm; some stay open on Friday to 8 or 9pm.

Currency Belgium uses the **euro** (€). At press time, US$1 = .68€, or 1€ = US$1.45.

Currency Exchange Banks give the best rates, and currency-exchange offices in rail stations come close. Hotels and *bureaux de change* (currency-exchange offices), open regular hours plus evenings and weekends, charge a low commission (or none at all) but give a low rate. **Travelex Brussels,** Grand-Place 4 (✆ **02/513-28-45;** Métro: Gare Centrale), has fair rates.

You'll find many **ATMs** around town, identified by BANCONTACT and MISTER CASH signs. A convenient bank with ATMs, inside and outside, is **CBC,** Grand-Place 5 (✆ **02/547-12-11;** Métro: Gare Centrale).

Doctors & Dentists For doctors, call **Médi-Garde** at ✆ **02/479-18-18** or **SOS Médecins** at ✆ **02/513-02-02,** and ask for an English-speaking doctor. For emergency dental care, call ✆ **02/426-10-26.**

Drugstores & Pharmacies For both prescription and nonprescription medicines, go to a pharmacy (*pharmacie* in French; *apotheek* in Dutch). Regular pharmacy hours are Monday to Saturday from 9am to 6pm (some close earlier on Sat). Try the centrally located **Grande Pharmacie de Brouckère,** Passage du Nord 10–12 (✆ **02/218-05-07;** Métro: De Brouckère). All pharmacies post locations of nearby all-night and Sunday pharmacies on the door.

Embassies **United States,** bd. du Régent 27 (✆ **02/508-21-11;** www.usembassy.be; Métro: Arts-Loi), open Monday to Friday from 9am to noon for visas and 1:30 to 4:30pm for assistance. **Canada,** avenue de Tervuren 2 (✆ **02/741-06-11;** www.international.gc.ca/brussels; Métro: Mérode), open Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 9am to noon and 2 to 4pm; Tuesday and Thursday from 9am to noon. **United Kingdom,** rue Arlon 85 (✆ **02/287-62-11;** www.britain.be; Métro: Maalbeek), open Monday to Friday from 9:30am to noon. **Ireland,** rue Wiertz 50 (✆ **02/235-66-76;** Métro: Schuman), open Monday to Friday from 10am to 1pm. **Australia,** rue Guimard 6–8 (✆ **02/286-05-00;** www.belgium.embassy.gov.au; Métro: Arts-Loi), open Monday to Friday from 9am to 12:30pm and 2 to 4pm. **New Zealand,** Square de Meeûs 1 (✆ **02/512-10-40;** www.nzembassy.com; Métro: Trone), open Monday to Friday from 9am to 1pm and 2 to 3:30pm.

Emergencies For police assistance, call ✆ **101.** For an ambulance or the fire department, call ✆ **100.**

Hospital **Cliniques Universitaires St-Luc,** avenue Hippocrate 10 (✆ **02/764-11-11;** Métro: Alma), has an emergency department.

Internet Access A short walk uphill from the Grand-Place, **BXL Café-Bar,** place de la Vieille Halle aux Blés 46 (✆ **02/502-99-80;** Métro: Gare Centrale), is open Sunday to Thursday from noon to midnight, and Friday to Saturday from noon to 1am; access is 1.50€ ($2.20) an hour. This also is a gay- and lesbian-friendly cafe.

Mail Most post offices are open Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm. The office at Centre Monnaie, place de la Monnaie (✆ **02/226-39-07;** Métro: De Brouckère), is open Monday to Friday from 9am to 6pm, Saturday from 10am to 4pm.

Police In an emergency, call ✆ **101.** In nonurgent situations, go to the **Brussels Central Police Station,** rue du Marché au Charbon 30 (✆ **02/279-79-79**), just off the Grand-Place.

Safety Brussels is generally safe, but there's a rise in crime, in particular pickpocketing, theft from and of cars, and muggings in places such as Métro station foot tunnels. Don't overestimate the risk, but take sensible precautions, particularly in obvious circumstances such as on crowded Métro trains and when taking cash from an ATM at night.

Taxes There's a **value-added tax (TVA)** of 6% on hotel bills and 21% on restaurant bills and on many purchases. For information on how to recover some of the tax on purchases, see "The Shopping Scene," later in this chapter.

Telephone Belgium's **country code** is **32.** Brussels's **city code** is **2;** use the **32-2** code when calling from the United States or any other country outside Belgium. In Belgium, use the **area code 02.** You need to dial the **02** area code both from inside Brussels and from elsewhere in Belgium; you always need to use the area code in Belgium.

You can use pay phones in booths all around town with a Belgacom *telecard* (phone card), selling for 5€ ($7.25), 10€ ($15), and 25€ ($36), from post offices, train ticket counters, and newsstands. Some pay phones take coins of .10€, .20€, .50€, and 1€. On both card and coin phones, watch the digital reading, which tracks your decreasing deposit so you know when to add another card or more coins. For information inside the country, call ☎ **1207** or **1307;** for international information in English, call ☎ **1405.**

To charge a call to your calling card, dial **AT&T** (☎ 0800/100-10); **MCI** (☎ 0800/100-12); **Sprint** (☎ 0800/100-14); **Canada Direct** (☎ 0800/100-19); **British Telecom** (☎ 0800/100-24); or **Telecom New Zealand** (☎ 0800/756-74).

Tipping The prices on most restaurant menus already include a service charge of 16%, so it's unnecessary to tip. However, if the service is good, it's usual to show appreciation with a tip (5%–10%). Service is included in your hotel bill as well. For taxi drivers, you can round up the fare if you like, but you need not add a tip unless you have received an extra service such as help with luggage.

Toilets Be sure to *pay the person* who sits at the entrance to a *toilette.* He or she has a saucer in which you put your money. If you don't, you might have a visitor in the inner sanctum while you're transacting your business. Even if you have paid, in busy places the attendant may have forgotten your face by the time you emerge and will then pursue you out of the toilet and along the street. It's tiresome, but toilet use is usually only about .50€ (60¢).

WHERE TO STAY

If you arrive in Brussels without a reservation, you should stop by the **Brussels International Tourism & Congress** office on the Grand-Place (see "Visitor Information," earlier in this chapter), which makes same-day reservations, if you go in person, for a small fee (deducted by the hotel from its room rate).

AROUND THE GRAND-PLACE

Very Expensive

Amigo ★★ In Brussels slang, an *amigo* is a prison, and indeed a prison once stood here. But any resemblance to the former accommodations is purely nominal, as the Rocco Forte Collection hotel is among the city's finest lodgings. Its Spanish Renaissance architecture, stately corridors, and flagstone lobby are right at home in this ancient neighborhood. The rooms are spacious and traditionally elegant, but with touches of modern Flemish design to brighten things up—and motifs from the classic comic *Tintin* in the bathrooms to add an element of whimsy. Ask for a room with a view of the Town Hall's Gothic spire.

Rue de l'Amigo 1–3 (off the Grand-Place), 1000 Bruxelles. ☎ **02/547-47-47.** Fax 02/513-52-77. www.hotelamigo.com. 174 units. 640€–780€ ($928–$1,131) double; from 980€ ($1,421) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Valet parking 20€ ($29). Métro: Bourse. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; lounge; exercise room; concierge; 24-hr. business center; 24-hr. room service; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service; executive rooms; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, dataport, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Expensive

Le Dixseptième ★ *Value* This graceful 17th-century house, once the official residence of the Spanish ambassador, stands close to the Grand-Place in a neighborhood of restored dwellings. Guest rooms have wood paneling and marble chimneys, and are as big as the suites in many hotels; some have balconies, and most overlook a tranquil courtyard patio. All are in 18th-century style and are named after Belgian painters from Brueghel to Magritte. Two beautiful lounges are decorated with carved wooden medallions and 18th-century paintings.

Rue de la Madeleine 25 (off place de l'Albertine), 1000 Bruxelles. ☎ **02/517-17-17.** Fax 02/502-64-24. www.ledixseptieme.be. 24 units. 200€ ($290) double; from 270€ ($392) suite. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Limited street parking. Métro: Gare Centrale. **Amenities:** 2 lounges; laundry/dry cleaning service. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Métropole ★★ Even if you're not staying here, the hotel is worth a visit. An ornate, marble-and-gilt interior distinguishes this late-19th-century hotel several blocks from the Grand-Place. Soaring ceilings, potted palms, and lavishly decorated public rooms add to the Belle Epoque allure. Spacious rooms have classic furnishings and some modern luxuries, including heated towel racks, hair dryers, and trouser presses. An elegant French restaurant, **L'Alban Chambon,** caters to the sophisticated diner, and the Belle Epoque **Le 19ième Bar** to the sophisticated cafe hound.

Place de Brouckère 31 (close to Centre Monnaie), 1000 Bruxelles. ☎ **02/217-23-00.** Fax 02/218-02-20. www.metropolehotel.be. 305 units. 329€–429€ ($477–$622) double. Rates include buffet or continental breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 15€ ($22). Métro: De Brouckère. **Amenities:** Restaurant; lounge; sidewalk cafe; health club and spa; concierge; 24-hr. room service; laundry/dry cleaning service. *In room:* TV, dataport, minibar, coffeemaker, hair dryer, safe.

Moderate

Arlequin ★ You can't get closer to the heart of the city than this, with the restaurant-lined rue des Bouchers right outside the hotel's back entrance. Then there are the fine views from some rooms of the Town Hall spire on the neighboring Grand-Place (spectacular when lit at night) and of the Old City's rooftops and narrow medieval streets from the top-floor breakfast room. The guest rooms themselves are not quite as spectacular as the views, but all have modern, comfortable furnishings, and most have plenty of natural light.

Rue de la Fourche 17–19 (off rue des Bouchers), 1000 Bruxelles. ☎ **02/514-16-15.** Fax 02/514-22-02. www.arlequin.be. 92 units. 95€–230€ ($138–$334) double. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. No parking. Métro: Bourse. **Amenities:** Limited room service; laundry/dry cleaning service. *In room:* TV, hair dryer.

Inexpensive

Mozart ★ Go up a flight from the busy, cheap-eats street level, and guess which famous composer's music wafts through the lobby? Salmon-colored walls, plants, and old paintings create a warm, intimate ambience that's carried over into the guest rooms. Furnishings are in Louis XV style, and exposed beams lend each room a cozy originality. Several are duplexes with a sitting room underneath the loft bedroom. Top-floor rooms have a great view.

Rue du Marché aux Fromages 23 (close to the Grand-Place), 1000 Bruxelles. ✆ **02/502-66-61.** Fax 02/502-77-58. www.hotel-mozart.be. 51 units. 100€–150€ ($145–$218) double. AE, DC, MC, V. No parking. Métro: Gare Centrale. **Amenities:** Lounge; laundry service. *In room:* TV, hair dryer.

THE LOWER CITY

Moderate

Welcome ★★ The name of this gem of a hotel, overlooking the Fish Market, couldn't be more accurate, thanks to the untiring efforts of the husband-and-wife proprietors. You can think of it as a country *auberge* (inn) right in the heart of town. Rooms are furnished and styled on individual, unrelated themes, such as Provence, Tibet, Egypt, Africa, Jules Verne, and Laura Ashley, all to a high standard. The hotel provides free airport shuttle to and from Brussels National Airport. Book ahead; the Welcome's regular guests are fiercely loyal.

Quai au Bois à Brûler 23 (at the Marché aux Poissons), 1000 Bruxelles. ✆ **02/219-95-46.** Fax 02/217-18-87. www.hotelwelcome.com. 16 units. 80€–140€ ($116–$203) double; 140€–210€ ($203–$305) suite. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 12€ ($17). Métro: Ste-Catherine. **Amenities:** Lounge; Internet desk. *In room:* A/C (some rooms), TV, dataport, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Inexpensive

George V This agreeable little hotel is tucked away on a corner of the center city that is being reborn as a trendy shopping-and-eating area. Situated in a town house from 1859 within easy walking distance of the Grand-Place, the George provides a free shuttle bus to this square and the main museums, and to Gare du Midi. The rooms are plain but clean and have new furnishings, but some of the fittings are in clear need of replacement.

Rue 't Kint 23 (off place du Jardin aux Fleurs), 1000 Bruxelles. ✆ **02/513-50-93.** Fax 02/513-44-93. www.george5.com. 16 units. 80€ ($116) double. Rates include continental breakfast. AE, MC, V. Parking 8€ ($12). Métro: Bourse. **Amenities:** Bar; limited room service. *In room:* TV.

AROUND AVENUE LOUISE

Expensive

Bristol Stéphanie Brussels ★★ From its lobby fittings to furnishings in the kitchenette suites, every feature of this sleek Norwegian-owned hotel, set on one of the city's toniest shopping streets, is streamlined, functional, and representative of the best in Nordic design. Some rooms have four-poster beds and "antiallergy" hardwood floors; all are quite large, and furnished to a high level of modern style and comfort (though the standard rooms could use a little more Nordic drawer space). Try to get a room in the main building—nothing beats a 24-hour doorman for security. The French restaurant **Le Chalet d'Odin** has a refined Continental menu.

Av. Louise 91–93, 1050 Bruxelles. ✆ **02/543-33-11.** Fax 02/538-03-07. www.bristol.be. 142 units. 350€–400€ ($508–$580) double; from 630€ ($914) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 20€ ($29). Métro: Louise. **Amenities:** Restaurant; lounge; bar; heated indoor pool; exercise room; Jacuzzi; sauna; concierge; business center; 24-hr. room service; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service; executive rooms; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, dataport, minibar, coffeemaker, hair dryer, iron, safe.

Moderate

Agenda Louise This fine, small, middle-of-the-road hotel affords a good balance of advantages for both leisure visitors and business visitors who don't have sheafs of plastic to get by on. The recently renovated, spiffily decorated rooms are in a pleasant though not particularly noteworthy style that encompasses light-colored wood furniture and gold-and-orange curtains and fittings, and have enough room to swing a cat, as long as it's not an overly big one. The bathrooms have tiled walls and floors and just about break out of the shoehorned-in syndrome that afflicts many moderately priced city hotels. Ask for a room that overlooks the inner courtyard for the best view.

Rue de Florence 6–8 (off av. Louise), 1000 Bruxelles. ✆ **02/539-00-31.** Fax 02/539-00-63. www.hotel-agenda.com. 37 units. 116€ ($168) double. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 6€ ($8.70). Métro: Louise. **Amenities:** Lounge; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV, kitchenette, minibar, coffeemaker, hair dryer, trouser press.

De Boeck's *Kids* In a quiet, well-maintained 19th-century town house, this graceful hotel has some unusually spacious rooms and some so small you'll need to shoehorn yourself and your luggage into them. If you need one of the larger rooms, you'll want to check it out first, if possible, or confirm how large it is when you reserve. None of them measure up to the Victorian elegance of the public spaces, but they are adequately furnished, with comfortable beds, soft carpeting, and floral-patterned curtains. Some rooms, good for families and small groups, can be used as quads or even quints.

Rue Veydt 40 (off chaussée de Charleroi), 1050 Bruxelles. ✆ **02/537-40-33.** Fax 02/534-40-37. www.hotel-deboecks.be. 46 units. 140€–170€ ($203–$247) double. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Limited street parking. Métro: Louise. *In room:* TV, hair dryer.

Izán Avenue Louise Boutique Hotel ★ You'll find typically English country-house decor here, down to the fireplace in the lobby. The spacious, attractively furnished guest rooms all have private bathrooms, hair dryers, writing desks, and trouser presses. Some have kitchenettes. An English-style buffet breakfast is served in a pleasant and intimate breakfast room—so if you like your ham 'n' eggs done with a touch of class, this gem of a hotel could be the place for you.

Rue Blanche 4–6 (off av. Louise), 1050 Bruxelles. ✆ **02/535-95-00.** Fax 02/535-96-00. www.izanhoteles.es. 80 units. 130€–260€ ($189–$377) double; 360€ ($522) suite. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Limited street parking. Métro: Louise. **Amenities:** Bar; sauna. *In room:* TV, minibar.

AROUND GARE DU NORD

Moderate

Comfort Art Hotel Siru ★ Set in an area of fancy office towers, this fascinating art-gallery-cum-hotel is not easily forgotten. What sets the Siru apart is that the proprietor persuaded 130 Belgian artists, including some of the country's biggest names, to "decorate" each of the coolly modern, well-equipped rooms and the corridors with a work on the theme of travel. Given the unpredictable nature of reactions to modern art, some clients reserve the same room time after time, while others ask to change in the middle of the night.

Place Rogier 1 (opposite Gare du Nord), 1210 Bruxelles. ✆ **800/228-3323** in the U.S. and Canada, or 02/203-35-80. Fax 02/203-33-03. www.comforthotelsiru.com. 101 units. 75€–250€ ($109–$363) double. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 16€ ($23). Métro: Rogier. **Amenities:** Restaurant; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service; executive rooms; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV, dataport, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

WHERE TO DINE

The city's French- and Dutch-speaking residents may have their differences, but they both value a good meal. Indeed, food is a passion in Brussels, and you can always find somewhere to eat well—it's hard to eat badly here—at a reasonable price.

Tips On Your Guard in the Ilot Sacré

A few restaurants (not reviewed here) in this colorful restaurant district off the Grand-Place take advantage of tourists. If you don't want to get fleeced, be sure to ask the price of everything *before* you order it. Most visitors leave the Ilot Sacré with no more serious complaint than an expanded waistline, but a little caution is in order.

Among the sturdy regional dishes you find on menus around town are *waterzooï,* fish or chicken stew with a parsley-and-cream sauce; *stoemp,* a purée of vegetables and potatoes with sausage, steak, or chops; *paling in 't groen,* eel in a grass-green sauce; *ballekes,* spicy meatballs; *hochepot,* stew; *lapin à la gueuze,* rabbit with a Brussels beer sauce; and *carbonnades à la flamande,* beef stew with a beer sauce. While most of the city's favorite dishes are based on local products, the famous *moules* (mussels)—prepared in countless ingenious variations and served in tureens—come from Zeeland in neighboring Holland. A selection from Belgium's 300 craft cheeses is a good way to finish off.

If you are a nonsmoker you're mostly out of luck—get ready to consume a garnish of secondhand smoke with your meal. Finally, don't fret if the service is slow: People take their time dining out here.

AROUND THE GRAND-PLACE

Very Expensive

La Maison du Cygne ★ CLASSIC FRENCH This grande dame of Brussels's internationally recognized restaurants overlooks the Grand-Place from the former guild house of the Butchers Guild—where Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels cooked up *The Communist Manifesto* during a 3-year sojourn in Brussels. The service, though a tad stuffy, is as elegant as the polished walnut walls, bronze wall sconces, and green velvet. The menu has haute cuisine Belgian and French classics. Because of its location, the restaurant is usually crowded at lunchtime, but dinner reservations are likely to be available.

Grand-Place 9 (entrance at rue Charles Buls 2). ✆ **02/511-82-44.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 36€–82€ ($52–$119); lunch menu 40€ ($58). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri noon–2pm and 7pm–midnight; Sat 7pm–midnight. Métro: Gare Centrale.

Expensive

De l'Ogenblik ★★ FRENCH/BELGIAN In the elegant surrounds of the Galeries Royales St-Hubert, this restaurant supplies good taste in a Parisian bistro–style setting that's popular with off-duty actors and audiences from the nearby Gallery theater, among others. It often gets busy, but the ambience in the split-level, wood-and-brass-outfitted dining room, with a sand-strewn floor, is convivial, though a little too tightly packed when it's full. Look for garlicky meat and seafood menu dishes, and expect to pay a smidgen more for atmosphere than might be strictly justified by results on the plate.

Galerie des Princes 1 (in the Galeries Royales St-Hubert). ✆ **02/511-61-51.** Main courses 22€–29€ ($32–$42); *plat du jour* 11€ ($16). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Thurs noon–2:30pm and 7pm–midnight; Fri–Sat noon–2:30pm and 7pm–12:30am. Métro: Gare Centrale.

Moderate

Brasserie de la Roue d'Or ★ TRADITIONAL BELGIAN This welcoming Art Nouveau brasserie, with lots of dark wood, mirrors, a high frescoed ceiling, Magritte images on the walls, and marble-topped tables, has a loyal local following. An extensive menu, ranging from grilled meats to seafood, and old Belgian favorites like stoemp, caters to just about any appetite. The beer, wine, and spirits list is long.

Rue des Chapeliers 26 (off the Grand-Place). ✆ **02/514-25-54.** Main courses 14€–24€ ($20–$35); *menus de jour* 23€–28€ ($33–$41). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily noon–12:30am. Métro: Gare Centrale.

Inexpensive

L'Auberge des Chapeliers ★ Value TRADITIONAL BELGIAN Behind a beautiful brick facade, in a 17th-century building that was once the headquarters of the hat-makers' guild, these dining rooms are graced with timber beams and paneling and connected by a narrow wooden staircase. Popular with both locals and visitors for its historic charm, fine food, and modest prices, it can get crowded at the height of lunch hour, so a good idea is to come before noon or after 2pm. The food is typical hearty Belgian fare, with an accent on mussels in season and dishes cooked in beer.

Rue des Chapeliers 3 (off the Grand-Place). ✆ **02/513-73-38.** Reservations recommended on weekends. Main courses 10€–18€ ($15–$26); fixed-price menus 15€–22€ ($22–$32). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Thurs noon–2pm and 6–11pm; Fri noon–2pm and 6pm–midnight; Sat noon–3pm and 6pm–midnight; Sun noon–3pm and 6–11pm. Métro: Gare Centrale.

't Kelderke ★★ Finds TRADITIONAL BELGIAN The Little Cellar is one of the Grand-Place's most delightful surprises, even if it does have little in the way of frills. It's hidden beneath an ornate guild house, and the entrance isn't easy to spot. But when you descend the steps, you'll find a crowded, lively restaurant in the 17th-century brick-vaulted room at the bottom. As many Bruxellois as tourists throng the long wooden tables. The menu is replete with Belgian favorites like stoemp, served with a pork chop; Flemish beef stew; rabbit in beer; and Zeeland mussels in season, served from an open kitchen.

Grand-Place 15. ✆ **02/513-73-44.** Main courses 10€–19€ ($15–$28); *plat du jour* 11€ ($16). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily noon–2am. Métro: Gare Centrale.

THE LOWER CITY

Very Expensive

Comme Chez Soi ★★★ CLASSIC FRENCH A visit to the revered, Art Nouveau "Just Like Home," which sports the maximum three Michelin stars, will surely be the culinary highlight of your trip—though the food is a long way from being what most people actually eat at home. Under the influence of associate chef Lionel Rigolet, the dishes have been looking lighter in recent times—even the Burgundian Bruxellois are

Tips A Perfect Brew

Belgian beer is the perfect accompaniment to your meal. The country is renowned for its 450 brands of beer produced by dozens of breweries. Belgium's chefs use beer in their sauces the way French chefs use wine. Beef, chicken, and fish are often bathed in a savory sauce based on the local Brussels *gueuze, faro,* and *kriek* brews.

having to conform to a faster, slimmer world. Ask for a table in the kitchen, where you can watch the masters at work. Book for dinner as far ahead as possible; getting a table at short notice is more likely at lunchtime.

Place Rouppe 23 (at av. de Stalingrad). ✆ **02/512-29-21.** Reservations required. Main courses 68€–125€ ($99–$181); fixed-price menus 78€–206€ ($113–$299). AE, DC, MC, V. Tues–Sat noon–1:30pm and 7–9:30pm. Métro: Anneessens.

Expensive

Aux Armes de Bruxelles ★★ TRADITIONAL BELGIAN In business since 1921, this large, family-run Art Deco restaurant commands universal respect. It has hosted countless celebrities over the years, from Laurel and Hardy to Danny DeVito to Belgian favorites like singer Jacques Brel. The service is gracious and rather formal, but the ambience is totally relaxed. The vast menu—a Belgian cuisine primer in itself—includes local specialties like beef stewed in beer, mussels in a variety of guises, a delicious *waterzooï,* and shrimp croquettes, all at quite reasonable prices.

Rue des Bouchers 13 (a block from Grand-Place). ✆ **02/511-55-98.** Main courses 14€–44€ ($20–$64); fixed-price menus 23€–49€ ($33–$71). AE, DC, MC, V. Tues–Sun noon–11:15pm. Métro: Gare Centrale.

François ★★ SEAFOOD A bright and cheerful ambience complements fine cuisine at this restaurant on the ground floor of a 19th-century *maison de maître* (town house), that has housed a fishmongers since 1922, and the tradition is taken seriously. The presentation is professional yet relaxed. In fine weather, you can dine on a great sidewalk terrace across the street on the old Fish Market square. If you're dining indoors, try to get one of the window tables that have a view on the square.

Quai aux Briques 2 (at the Marché aux Poissons). ✆ **02/511-60-89.** Main courses 24€–58€ ($35–$84); fixed-price menus 25€–44€ ($36–$64). AE, DC, MC, V. Tues–Sat noon–2:30pm and 7–11:30pm. Métro: Ste-Catherine.

Moderate

La Manufacture ★ FRENCH/INTERNATIONAL This was formerly the factory of chic leather-goods maker Delvaux, and even in its former industrial incarnation, style was a primary concern—though the neighborhood is unprepossessing. Fully refurbished, with parquet floors, polished wood, leather banquettes, and stone tables set amid iron pillars and exposed air ducts, it produces trendy world cuisine with a French foundation for a mostly youthful public. It might at first seem disconcerting to find dim sum, sushi, Moroccan couscous, Lyon sausage, and Belgian *waterzooï* on the same menu, but don't worry—everything is tasty. There's piano music some evenings.

Rue Notre-Dame du Sommeil 12–20 (off place du Jardin aux Fleurs). ✆ **02/502-25-25.** Main courses 12€–21€ ($17–$28); *menu du jour* (lunch only) 14€ ($20); fixed-price menus 30€–65€ ($44–$94). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri noon–2pm and 6–11pm; Sat 6pm–midnight. Métro: Bourse.

Inexpensive

In 't Spinnekopke ★ *Finds* TRADITIONAL BELGIAN "In the Spider's Web" occupies a coach inn from 1762, just far enough off the beaten track downtown to be frequented mainly by those in the know. You dine in a tilting, tiled-floor building, at plain tables, and more likely than not squeezed into a tight space. This is one of Brussels's most traditional restaurants—so much so that the menu lists its hardy regional standbys in the old Bruxellois dialect. *Stoemp mi sossisse* is stew with sausage, and *toung ave mei* is sole. The bar stocks a large selection of Belgian beers.

Place du Jardin aux Fleurs 1 (off rue Van Artevelde). ✆ **02/511-86-95.** Main courses 15€–30€ ($22–$44); *plat du jour* 12€ ($17). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri noon–3pm and 6–11pm; Sat 6pm–midnight. Métro: Bourse.

AROUND AVENUE LOUISE

Expensive

La Quincaillerie ★★ MODERN FRENCH/OYSTER BAR In the Ixelles district, where fine restaurants are as common as streetlights, this spot stands out, even though it may be a little too aware of its own modish good looks and is a shade pricey. The setting is a traditional former hardware store from 1903, with a giant rail station clock, wood paneling, and masses of wooden drawers, designed by students of Art Nouveau master Victor Horta. It's busy enough to get the waitstaff harassed and absent-minded, yet they're always friendly. Seafood dishes predominate on the menu.

Rue du Page 45 (at rue Américaine). ✆ **02/533-98-33.** Main courses 15€–29€ ($22–$42); fixed-price menus 13€–29€ ($19–$42). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri noon–2:30pm and 7pm–midnight; Sat–Sun 7pm–midnight. Tram: 81, 82, 91, or 92 to chaussée de Charleroi.

Moderate

Au Vieux Bruxelles ★ BELGIAN/SEAFOOD This convivial, brasserie-style restaurant from 1882 specializes in mussels, which it serves in a wide variety of ways. In Belgium, the personality of the humble but tasty mussel is a staple of conversation as much as of diet, and people assess the quality of each year's crop with the same critical eye that other countries reserve for fine wines. Au Vieux Bruxelles, a kind of temple to the Belgian obsession with mussels, serves the shellfish in 15 different ways. Should you not wish to work on the mussels, you can get great steaks like *steak au poivre flambé* (flamed pepper steak), *escargots* (snails), and crepes.

Rue St-Boniface 35 (close to Porte Namur). ✆ **02/503-31-11.** www.auvieuxbruxelles.com. Reservations not accepted. Main courses 14€–21€ ($20–$30). AE, MC, V. Mon–Thurs 6:30–11:30pm; Fri–Sat 6:30pm–midnight; Sun noon–3pm and 6:30–11:30pm. Métro: Porte de Namur.

SEEING THE SIGHTS

Brussels has such a wide variety of things to see and do. There are more than 75 museums dedicated to just about every special interest under the sun (from cartoons to cars), in addition to impressive public buildings, leafy parks, and interesting squares. History is just around every corner. Fortunately, numerous sidewalk cafes offer respite for weary feet, and there's good public transportation to those attractions beyond walking distance of the compact, heart-shaped center city, which contains many of Brussels's most popular attractions.

SIGHTSEEING SUGGESTIONS FOR FIRST-TIME VISITORS

If You Have 1 Day Beginning on the **Grand-Place,** visit the 15th-century Hôtel de Ville and the Musée de la Ville de Bruxelles, and view the decorated facades of the square's elegant guild houses. Squeeze in a pilgrimage to the nearby ***Manneken-Pis*** statue before returning to the Grand-Place for lunch at the convivial restaurant 't Kelderke. Shop (or window-shop), at the elegant 19th-century **Galeries Royales St-Hubert,** on the way to the **Cathédrale des Sts-Michel-et-Gudule.** End with the adventures of comic-book heroes at the **Centre Belge de la Bande-Dessinée.** After a dinner that should include mussels, in season, spend the evening checking out one or more of the city's famed cafes.

If You Have 2 Days View Belgian art masterpieces by Brueghel and Rubens at the **Musée d'Art Ancien,** and by Magritte and Delvaux at the **Musée d'Art Moderne** next door. After lunch, take a look at the neoclassical harmony of **place Royale,** the elegant **Palais**

Royal, and the adjacent **Parc de Bruxelles.** Buy a bag of handmade chocolates at Wittamer on **place du Grand Sablon,** and then browse the antiques stores around the square. Stroll through the 15th-century church of **Notre-Dame du Sablon** before heading over to tranquil **place du Petit Sablon** for a rest.

If You Have 3 Days Get up early and stop by the **Vieux Marché** flea market on place du Jeu de Balle in the Marolles district. Then, head out to **Bruparck,** an attractions park on the city's northern edge that includes Mini-Europe and the Océade water leisure center. Nearby are the giant spheres of the **Atomium** and a panoramic view of the city from its viewing deck. Return to earth by having dinner in one of the guild hall restaurants, like La Maison du Cygne, that overlook the Grand-Place.

If You Have 4 or 5 Days On day 4, compare the old and the new by spending the morning in the city's most ancient quarter, around place Ste-Catherine, and the afternoon at the ultramodern European District. On day 5, head out of town to critique Napoleon's generalship at the **Waterloo** battlefield, south of Brussels. If military history isn't your thing, explore instead Brussels's Art Nouveau architectural heritage by visiting the **Musée Horta,** and by strolling the side streets off avenue Louise and around square Ambiorix.

THE GRAND-PLACE ★★★

Ornamental gables, medieval banners, gilded facades, sunlight flashing off gold-filigreed rooftop sculptures, a general impression of harmony and timelessness—there's a lot to take in all at once when you first enter the historic **Grand-Place** (Métro: Gare Centrale). The city's central square has always been the very heart of Brussels. Characterized by French playwright Jean Cocteau as "a splendid stage," it's the city's theater of life. Some call it the world's most beautiful square.

The Grand-Place has been the center of the city's commercial life and public celebrations since the 12th century. Most of it was destroyed in 1695 by the army of France's Louis XIV and then rebuilt over the next few years. Thanks to the town's close monitoring of later alterations, each building preserves its baroque splendor. Important guilds owned most of these buildings, and each competed to outdo the others with highly ornate facades of gold leaf and statuary, often with emblems of their guilds. Some now house cafes and restaurants. The illuminated square is even more beautiful at night than during the day.

Top honors go to the Gothic **Hôtel de Ville** and the neo-Gothic **Maison du Roi.** You'll also want to admire no. 9, **Le Cygne,** former headquarters of the butchers' guild and now a tony restaurant of the same name; no. 10, **L'Arbre d'Or,** headquarters of the brewers' guild and location of the Brewing Museum; and nos. 13 to 19, an ensemble of seven mansions known as the **Maison des Ducs de Brabant,** adorned with busts of 19 dukes.

Hôtel de Ville ★★ The facade of the dazzling Town Hall, from 1402, shows off Gothic intricacy at its best, complete with dozens of arched windows and sculptures—some of these, like the drunken monks, a sleeping Moor and his harem, and St. Michael slaying a female devil, displaying a sense of humor. A 66m (217-ft.) tower sprouts from the middle, yet it's not placed directly in the center. A colorful but untrue legend has it that when the architect realized his "error," he jumped from the summit of the tower.

The building is still the seat of the civic government, and its wedding room is a popular place to tie the knot. You can visit the interior on 40-minute tours, which

A Cool Little Guy

Two blocks south of the Grand-Place, at the intersection of rue de l'Etuve and rue du Chêne, is the ***Manneken-Pis*** ★ (Métro: Bourse). A small bronze statue of a urinating child, Brussels's favorite character gleefully does what a little boy's gotta do, generally ogled by a throng of admirers. Children especially enjoy his bravura performance.

No one knows when this child first came into being, but it's clear he dates from quite a few centuries ago—the 8th century, according to one legend. Thieves have made off with the tyke several times in history. One criminal who stole and shattered the statue in 1817 was sentenced to a life of hard labor. The pieces were used to recast another version and that "original" was removed for safekeeping.

King Louis XV of France began the tradition of presenting colorful costumes to "Little Julian," which he wears on special occasions (during Christmas season he dons a Santa suit, complete with white beard), to make amends for Frenchmen having kidnapped the statue in 1747. The vast wardrobe is housed in the Musée de la Ville de Bruxelles on the Grand-Place (see above).

start in a room full of paintings of the past foreign rulers of Brussels, who have included the Spanish, Austrians, French, and Dutch. In the spectacular Gothic Hall, open for visits when the city's aldermen are not in session—and surrounded by mirrors, presumably so each party can see what underhanded maneuvers the others are up to—you can see baroque decoration. In other chambers are 16th- to 18th-century tapestries. One of these depicts the Spanish duke of Alba, whose cruel features reflect the brutal oppression he and his Council of Blood imposed on the Low Countries; others show scenes from the life of Clovis, first king of the Franks.

Grand-Place. ✆ **02/279-43-65.** Admission (guided tours only) 3€ ($4.35) adults, 2.50€ ($3.65) seniors, students; 1.50€ ($2.20) children 6–15, free for children under 5. Guided tours in English: Apr–Sept Tues–Wed 3:15pm, Sun 10:45am and 12:15pm; Oct–Mar Tues–Wed 3:15pm; tours at other times in French and Dutch. Closed Jan 1, May 1, Nov 1 and 11, and Dec 25. Métro: Gare Centrale.

Musée de la Ville de Bruxelles (Museum of the City of Brussels) ★ Housed in the 19th-century neo-Gothic Maison du Roi (King's House)—though no king ever lived here—the museum displays a mixed collection associated with the art and history of Brussels. On the ground floor you can admire detailed tapestries from the 16th and 17th centuries, and porcelain, silver, and stone statuary. After climbing a beautiful wooden staircase, you can trace the history of Brussels in old maps, prints, photos, and models. Among the most fascinating exhibits are old paintings and scaled reconstructions of the historic center city, particularly those showing the riverside ambience along the now-vanished River Senne. On the third floor are more than 780 costumes that have been donated to *Manneken-Pis* (see "A Cool Little Guy" box below), including an Elvis costume.

Grand-Place. ✆ **02/279-43-50.** www.brucity.be. Admission 3€ ($4.35) adults, 2.50€ ($3.65) seniors and students, 1.50€ ($2.20) travelers with limited mobility and children 6–15, free for children under 6. Tues–Fri 10am–5pm; Sat–Sun 11am–5pm. Closed Jan 1, May 1, Nov 1 and 11, and Dec 25. Métro: Gare Centrale.

SOME MEMORABLE MUSEUMS

Centre Belge de la Bande-Dessinée (Belgian Comic-Strip Center) ★★ Kids
As you'll soon find out, Belgians are crazy for cartoons. The unique "CéBéBéDé" focuses on Belgium's own popular cartoon characters, like Lucky Luke, Thorgal, and, of course, Tintin, complete with red-and-white-checkered moon rocket, yet it doesn't neglect the likes of Superman, Batman, and the Green Lantern. The building, the Maisons des Waucquez, designed by Art Nouveau architect Victor Horta, is an attraction in itself.

Rue des Sables 20 (off bd. de Berlaimont). ☎ **02/219-19-80.** www.cbbd.be. Admission 7.50€ ($11) adults, 6€ ($8.70) students and seniors, 3€ ($4.35) children under 12. Tues–Sun 10am–6pm. Closed Jan 1 and Dec 25. Métro: Gare Centrale.

Musée du Costume et de la Dentelle Honoring a once-vital industry—10,000 Bruxellois produced lace in the 18th century—that now operates in a reduced but still notable fashion, this recently expanded museum shows off particularly fine costumes and lace from 1599 to the present, and mounts frequently changing exhibitions.

Rue de la Violette 12 (near Grand-Place). ☎ **02/279-44-50.** Admission 3€ ($4.35) adults, 2€ ($2.90) children 6–16, free for children under 6. Mon–Tues and Thurs–Fri 10am–12:30pm and 1:30–5pm (until 4pm Oct–Mar); Sat–Sun 2–4:30pm. Closed Jan 1, May 1, Nov 1 and 11, and Dec 25. Métro: Gare Centrale.

Musée Horta Finds Brussels owes much of its rich Art Nouveau heritage to Victor Horta (1861–1947), a resident architect who led the development of the style. His home and adjoining studio in St-Gilles, restored to their original condition, showcase his use of flowing, sinuous shapes and colors, in both interior decoration and architecture.

Rue Américaine 25 (off chaussée de Charleroi). ☎ **02/543-04-90.** www.hortamuseum.be. Admission 7€ ($10) adults, 3.50€ ($5.10) seniors and students, 2.50€ ($3.65) children 5–18, free for children under 5. Tues–Sun 2–5:30pm. Closed national holidays. Tram: 81, 82, 91, or 92.

Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique (Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium) ★★★ In a vast museum of several buildings, this complex combines the **Musée d'Art Ancien** and the **Musée d'Art Moderne** under one roof, connected by a passage. The collection displays mostly Belgian works, from the 14th century to the 20th century. Included in the historical collection are Hans Memling's portraits from the late 15th century, which are marked by sharp lifelike details; works by Hieronymus Bosch; and Lucas Cranach's *Adam and Eve.* Be sure to see the works of Pieter Brueghel, including his *Adoration of the Magi.* Don't miss his unusual *Fall of the Rebel Angels,* with grotesque faces and beasts. But don't fear—many of Brueghel's paintings, like those depicting Flemish village life, are of a less fiery nature. Later artists represented include Rubens, Van Dyck, Frans Hals, and Rembrandt.

Next door, in a circular building connected to the main entrance, the modern art section has an emphasis on underground works—if only because the museum's eight floors are all below ground level. The overwhelming collection includes works by van Gogh, Matisse, Dalí, Ernst, Chagall, Miró, and local heroes Magritte, Delvaux, de Braekeleer, and Permeke.

Rue de la Régence 3 (at place Royale). ☎ **02/508-32-11.** www.fine-arts-museum.be. Admission 5€ ($7.25) adults; 3.50€ ($5.10) seniors, 2€ ($2.90) students, children under 13 free; free for everyone 1st Wed afternoon of the month (except during special exhibits). Tues–Sun 10am–5pm. Closed Jan 1, May 1, Nov 1 and 11, and Dec 25. Métro: Parc.

PARC DU CINQUANTENAIRE

Designed to celebrate the half centenary of Belgium's 1830 independence, the Cinquantenaire Park was a work in progress from the 1870s until well into the 20th

Value Passport to Brussels

One of the best discounts is the **Brussels Card,** available from the Brussels International tourist office on the Grand-Place, from hotels, museums, and offices of the STIB city transit authority. Valid for 1, 2, or 3 days, the card costs 20€ ($29), 28€ ($41), and 33€ ($48), respectively. It allows free use of public transportation; free and discounted admission to around 30 of the city's museums and attractions; and discounts at some restaurants and other venues, and on some guided tours.

century. Extensive gardens have at their heart a triumphal arch topped by a bronze four-horse chariot sculpture, representing *Brabant Raising the National Flag,* flanked by several fine museums.

Autoworld Kids Even if you're not a car enthusiast, you'll find this display of 500 historic cars set in the hangar-like Palais Mondial fascinating. The collection starts with early motorized tricycles from 1899 and moves on to a 1911 Model T Ford, a 1924 Renault, a 1938 Cadillac that was the official White House car for FDR and Truman, a 1956 Cadillac used by Kennedy during his June 1963 visit to Berlin, and more.

Parc du Cinquantenaire 11. ☎ **02/736-41-65.** www.autoworld.be. Admission 6€ ($8.70) adults, 4.70€ ($6.80) students and seniors, 3€ ($4.35) children 6–13; free for children under 6. Apr–Sept daily 10am–6pm; Oct–Mar daily 10am–5pm. Closed Jan 1 and Dec 25. Métro: Mérode.

Musée du Cinquantenaire ★ This vast museum shows off an eclectic collection of antiques, decorative arts (tapestries, porcelain, silver, and sculptures), and archaeology. Some highlights are an Assyrian relief from the 9th century B.C., a Greek vase from the 6th century B.C., a tabletop model of imperial Rome in the 4th century A.D., the A.D. 1145 reliquary of Pope Alexander, some exceptional tapestries, and colossal statues from Easter Island.

Parc du Cinquantenaire 10. ☎ **02/741-72-11.** www.kmkg-mrah.be. Admission 5€ ($7.25) adults; 4€ ($5.80) seniors, students, children 13–17; free for children under 13; free for everyone 1st Wed afternoon of the month (except during special exhibits) from 1pm. Tues–Fri 9:30am–5pm; Sat–Sun and holidays 10am–5pm. Closed Jan 1, May 1, Nov 1 and 11, and Dec 25. Métro: Mérode.

BRUPARCK

Built on the site of the 1958 Brussels World's Fair, this park (Métro: Heysel) is home to the **Atomium** and **Mini-Europe** (see below); **The Village,** a collection of restaurants and cafes; **Océade,** an indoor/outdoor watersports pavilion with water slides, pools, and saunas; a **planetarium;** and **Kinepolis,** a 26-screen movie multiplex. Ask for cheaper combination tickets if you plan to visit more than one Bruparck attraction.

Atomium ★ As the Eiffel Tower is the symbol of Paris, the Atomium is the symbol of Brussels, and, like Paris's landmark, it was built for a world's fair, the 1958 Brussels World's Fair. Rising 102m (335 ft.) like a giant plaything of the gods that's fallen to earth, the Atomium is an iron crystal magnified 165 billion times. Its metal-clad spheres, representing individual atoms, are connected by enclosed escalators and elevators. It's the topmost atom that attracts most people: a restaurant/observation deck that provides a sweeping panorama of the metropolitan area.

Bd. du Centenaire, Heysel. ✆ **02/475-47-77.** www.atomium.be. Admission 9€ ($13) adults; 6€ ($8.70) students, seniors, children 12–18; free for children under 12. Daily 10am–6pm. Métro: Heysel.

Mini-Europe ★★ Kids Because Brussels is the "capital of Europe," it's fitting that the city is home to a miniature rendering of all the Continent's most notable architectural sights. Even a few natural wonders and technological developments are represented. Built on a scale of 1/25 of the originals, Big Ben, the Leaning Tower of Pisa, the Seville bullring, the Channel Tunnel, the Brandenburg Gate, and more exhibit remarkable detail. Although children like Mini-Europe the best, adults certainly find it fun.

Bruparck, Heysel. ✆ **02/478-05-50.** www.minieurope.com. Admission 12€ ($18) adults; 9.40€ ($14) children under 13; children under 1.2m (4 ft.) accompanied by parent free. Late Mar to June and Sept daily 9:30am–6pm; July–Aug daily 9:30am–8pm (except Aug Sat–Sun 9:30am–midnight); Oct–Dec and 1st week Jan 10am–6pm. Closed rest of Jan to late Mar. Métro: Heysel.

HISTORIC CHURCHES

Cathédrale des Sts-Michel-et-Gudule ★ Victor Hugo considered this magnificent church, dedicated to the city's patron St. Michael and to St. Gudula, to be the "purest flowering of the Gothic style." Begun in 1226, it was officially consecrated as a cathedral only in 1961. The 16th-century Habsburg Emperor Charles V donated the superb stained-glass windows. Apart from these, the spare interior decoration focuses attention on its soaring columns and arches. The bright exterior stonework makes a fine sight. On Sunday at 10am, the Eucharist is celebrated with a Gregorian choir. In July, August, and September, polyphonic Masses are sung by local and international choirs at 10am. From August to October, chamber music and organ concerts are occasionally performed on weekdays at 8pm. In spring and autumn at 12:30pm, Mass is sung accompanied by instrumental soloists and readings by actors (in French). In the crypt and an associated archaeological zone are foundations and other construction elements from an earlier church dating from the 11th century. The Trésor (Treasury) is also worth visiting, for its religious vessels in gold, silver and precious stones, and ecclesiastical vestments.

Parvis Ste-Gudule (off bd. de l'Impératrice 2 blocks west of Gare Centrale). ✆ **02/217-83-45.** www.cathedralestmichel.be Admission: Cathedral free; crypt 1€ ($1.45); treasury 1€ ($1.45); archaeological zone 2.50€ ($3.60). Mon–Fri 7am–7pm (Oct–Mar 6pm); Sat–Sun 8:30am–7pm (Oct–Mar 6pm); tourist visits not permitted during services Sat from 3:30pm, Sun until 2pm. Métro: Gare Centrale.

Notre-Dame du Sablon This late-Gothic 15th-century to 16th-century structure is noted for its four-fold gallery with brightly colored stained-glass windows, illuminated from the inside at night, in striking contrast with the gray-white Gothic arches and walls. Also worth seeing are the two baroque chapels, which are decorated with funeral symbols in white marble.

Rue Bodenbroeck 6 (at place du Grand Sablon). ✆ **02/511-57-41.** Free admission. Mon–Fri 9am–5pm; Sat–Sun 10am–6:30pm. Tram: 92, 93, or 94.

OTHER HISTORIC SQUARES

Considered classier than the Grand-Place (see above) by the locals, though busy traffic diminishes your enjoyment of its cafe-terraces, **place du Grand Sablon** ★★ (tram no. 92, 93, or 94) is lined with gabled mansions. This is antiques territory, and many of those mansions house antiques stores or private art galleries, with pricey merchandise on display. On Saturday and Sunday an excellent antiques market sets up its stalls in front of Notre-Dame du Sablon Church (see above).

Across rue de la Régence, the Grand Sablon's little cousin, **place du Petit Sablon** ★ (tram no. 92, 93, or 94), has a small sculptured garden with a fountain and pool at its center. This magical little retreat from the city bustle is surrounded by wrought-iron railings, atop which stand 48 small statues of medieval guildsmen.

At the meeting point of rue de la Régence and rue Royale (streets on which stand many of the city's premier attractions), **place Royale** ★ (tram no. 92, 93, or 94) is graced by an equestrian statue of Duke Godefroid de Bouillon, leader of the First Crusade. Also on place Royale is the neoclassical St-Jacques-sur-Coudenberg Church.

PARKS

The most attractive park in town is the **Parc de Bruxelles** ★★ (Métro: Parc), extending in front of the Palais Royal. Once the property of the dukes of Brabant, this well-designed park with geometrically divided paths running through it—which form the outline of Masonic symbols—became public in 1776. The many benches make it a fine place to stop for a picnic. It's also historic: The first shots in Belgium's 1830 war of independence were fired here. The park has been restored as close as possible to its 18th-century look, and the refurbished 1840s bandstand hosts regular summer concerts.

The large public park called the **Bois de la Cambre** ★ begins at the top of avenue Louise in the southern section of Brussels (tram no. 23, 90, 93, or 94). This is the city's lung, and it gets busy on sunny weekends. Its centerpiece is a small lake with an island in its center that you can reach via an electrically operated pontoon. ***Note:*** Some busy roads run through the park and traffic moves fast on them, so be careful with children at these points.

Continuing south from the Bois, the **Forêt de Soignes** ★ is no longer a park with playing areas and regularly mown grass, but a forest stretching almost to Waterloo; this is a great place for getting away from it all, particularly in the fall, when the colors are dazzling.

ORGANIZED TOURS

A guided 2¾-hour "Brussels City Tour" by bus is available from **Brussels City Tours,** rue de la Colline 8, off Grand-Place (✆ **02/513-77-44;** www.brussels-city-tours.com; Métro: Gare Centrale). Tours cost 27€ ($39) for adults, 24€ ($35) for students and seniors, and 14€ ($20) for children. You can book tours at most hotels, and arrangements can be made for hotel pickup.

From June 15 to September 15, **Le Bus Bavard,** rue des Thuyas 12 (✆ **02/673-18-35;** www.busbavard.be), operates a variety of fascinating city walking and bus tours through the historic center city, and parts of the city that the average visitor never sees. You hear about life in Brussels and get a real feel for the city. Most tours cost around 8€ ($12).

ARAU, bd. Adolphe Max 55 (✆ **02/219-33-45;** www.arau.org; Métro: De Brouckère), organizes tours that help you discover not only Brussels's countless treasures but also problems the city faces. It runs 3-hour themed coach tours: "Grand-Place and Its Surroundings," "Brussels 1900—Art Nouveau," "Brussels 1930—Art Deco," "Surprising Parks and Squares," and "Alternative Brussels." You are advised to book ahead. Tours by bus are 15€ ($22), and 12€ ($17) for those under 26; tours by foot are 10€ ($15). Tours take place on Saturday mornings from March to November; private group tours can be arranged year-round.

THE SHOPPING SCENE

Lace is the overwhelming favorite purchase, followed by crystal, jewelry, antiques, and pewter. Chocolate, beer, and other foods are more economical. And in souvenir stores you find replicas of *Manneken-Pis,* so you can bring the little guy home with you.

Don't look for many bargains. As a general rule, Upper Town around avenue Louise and Porte de Namur is more expensive than Lower Town around rue Neuve. You can enjoy a stroll along modern shopping promenades, the busiest of which is the pedestrians-only rue Neuve, starting at place de la Monnaie and running north to place Rogier; it's home to boutiques; big department stores like Inno and H&M; and several malls.

Some of the trendiest boutiques are on rue Antoine Dansaert, across from the Bourse. An interesting street for window-shopping, rue des Eperonniers, near the Grand-Place, hosts many small stores selling antiques, toys, old books, and clothing.

STORES WORTH A VISIT

The **Galeries Royales St-Hubert** (Métro: Gare Centrale) is an airy arcade hosting expensive boutiques, cafes with outdoor terraces, and buskers playing classical music. Opened in 1847, architect Pierre Cluysenaer's Italian neo-Renaissance gallery has a touch of class and is well worth a stroll through, even if you have no intention of shopping. The elegant gallery is near the Grand-Place, between rue du Marché aux Herbes and rue de l'Ecuyer, and is split by rue des Bouchers.

In a former guild house, **Maison Antoine,** Grand-Place 26 (✆ **02/512-48-59;** Métro: Gare Centrale), is one of the best places in town to buy lace. The quality is superb, the service is friendly, and the prices aren't unreasonable.

Visit **De Boe,** rue de Flandre 36 (✆ **02/511-13-73;** Métro: Ste-Catherine), a small store near the Marché aux Poissons, for the heavenly aromas of roasted and blended coffee, a superb selection of wines in all price categories, and an array of specialty teas, spices, and epicurean snacks. **Dandoy,** rue au Beurre 31 (✆ **02/511-03-26;** Métro: Bourse), is where cookie and cake fans can try traditional Belgian specialties like spicy *speculoos* (traditional Belgian cookies made with brown sugar and cinnamon and baked in wooden molds) and *pain à la grecque* (caramelized, sugary flaky pastries).

If you have a sweet tooth, you'll feel you're in heaven when you see Brussels's famous chocolate stores, filled with sumptuous soft-centered pralines, from around 12€ ($17) a kilogram (2¼ lb.). You find some of the best confections at **Chocolatier Mary,** rue Royale 73 (✆ **02/217-45-00;** Métro: Parc), supplier to the royal court; **Neuhaus,** Galerie de la Reine 25 (✆ **02/502-59-14;** Métro: Gare Centrale); **Wittamer,** place du Grand Sablon 12 (✆ **02/512-37-42;** tram no. 92, 93, or 94); and **Léonidas,** bd. Anspach 46 (✆ **02/218-03-63;** Métro: Bourse).

For kids, pick up some Tintin mementos from **Boutique de Tintin,** rue de la Colline 13 (✆ **02/514-45-50;** Métro: Gare Centrale). **Waterstone's,** boulevard Adolphe Max 71–75 (✆ **02/219-27-08;** Métro: Rogier), has English-language books, newspapers, and magazines.

OUTDOOR MARKETS

The city's favorite *marché aux puces* (flea market) is the **Vieux Marché** (**Old Market;** Métro: Porte de Hal), on place du Jeu de Balle, a large cobblestone square in the Marolles district, open daily from 7am to 2pm. Every Sunday from 7am to 2pm, hundreds of merchants assemble their wares in a **street market** outside Gare du Midi (Métro: Gare du Midi), and because many of the merchants are of Arab origin, the

Tips Tax Saver

If you spend over 125€ ($181) in some stores, and you are not a resident of the European Union, you can get a tax refund when you leave the E.U. Stores that display a TAX-FREE SHOPPING sign provide visitors who are not resident in the European Union the form they need for recovering some of the 21% value-added tax (TVA) on purchases. At the airport, show the Customs officials your purchase and receipt and they'll stamp the form. Mail this form back to the Belgian Tax Bureau (the address is on the form) or bring it in directly to the Best Change office at the airport, which charges a small commission but gives you an on-the-spot refund.

scene resembles a casbah. It has many excellent food bargains, making it a perfect place to gather provisions for a few days. You can also find household items and odds and ends at low cost. Hold on to your wallet, however: The market attracts pickpockets.

BRUSSELS AFTER DARK

Although the city isn't as noted for its nightlife as some other European capitals, it has a full array of things to do. And if the range is narrower than in bigger cities like London and Paris, the quality is not. A listing of upcoming events—opera, classical music, dance, theater, live music, film, and other events—is in the *What's On* guide in the weekly English-language magazine ***The Bulletin.***

THE PERFORMING ARTS

An opera house in the grand style, the **Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie** ★★, place de la Monnaie (✆ **070/23-39-39;** www.lamonnaie.be; Métro: De Brouckère), is home to the Opéra Royal de la Monnaie, which has been called the best in the French-speaking world, and to the Orchestre Symphonique de la Monnaie. The resident modern dance company, Anne Theresa de Keersmaeker's Group Rosas, is noted for its original moves. The box office is open Tuesday to Saturday from 11am to 6pm. Tickets run 10€ to 150€ ($15–$218); for those age under 28, they're 10€ ($15) and available 5 minutes before a show.

The **BOZAR,** rue Ravenstein 23 (✆ **02/507-82-00;** www.bozar.be; Métro: Gare Centrale)—formerly the Palais des Beaux-Arts—is home to the Belgian National Orchestra. The box office is open Monday to Saturday from 11am to 6pm, with tickets running 10€ to 75€ ($15–$109). The **Cirque Royal,** rue de l'Enseignement 81 (✆ **02/218-20-15;** www.botanique.be; Métro: Parc), formerly a real circus, now hosts music, opera, and ballet. The box office is open Tuesday to Saturday from 11am to 6pm, with tickets for 10€ to 65€ ($15–$94).

LIVE-MUSIC CLUBS

Jazz is a popular but ever-changing scene. **L'Archiduc,** rue Antoine Dansaert 6 (✆ **02/512-06-52**), puts on jazz concerts on Saturday and Sunday. **Le Sounds,** rue de la Tulipe 28 (✆ **02/512-92-50**), has daily jazz concerts, and a workshop on Mondays at 7:30pm. For those who like their licks a tad restrained, there's a jazz brunch at the **Airport Sheraton Hotel,** facing the terminal building (✆ **02/725-10-00**), every Sunday from noon to 3pm.

Moments Puppet Theater

Traditional Brussels marionette theater is performed at **Théâtre Royal de Toone,** impasse Schuddeveld 6, Petite rue des Bouchers 21 (✆ **02/217-27-23;** www.toone.be; Métro: Gare Centrale). In a tiny theater in the old **Toone VII** cafe, puppet master José Géal presents adaptations of classic tales like *Faust* and *The Three Musketeers.* Some performances are in English, others are in French, Dutch, German, or the local patois, Bruxellois, with plots and characters so familiar that even if you don't understand a word, you'll be able to follow the action. Performances are Tuesday to Saturday at 8:30pm; tickets are 10€ ($15) for adults, and (except Fri–Sat) 7€ ($10) for seniors, students, and children.

DANCE CLUBS

Top clubs include the always popular **Le Sparrow,** rue Duquesnoy 16 (✆ **02/512-66-22;** Métro: Gare Centrale); **Le Fuse,** rue Blaes 208 (✆ **02/511-97-89;** bus no. 20 or 48), for techno; and **Duke's Night Club,** in the Royal Windsor Hotel, rue Duquesnoy 5 (✆ **02/505-55-55;** Métro: Gare Centrale), fashionable for older hoofers.

GAY & LESBIAN CLUBS

Rue des Riches-Claires and **rue du Marché au Charbon** host gay and lesbian bars. **Macho 2,** rue du Marché au Charbon 108 (✆ **02/512-45-87;** Métro: Bourse), a block from rue des Riches-Claires, has a gay men's sauna, pool, steam room, and cafe. **Le Fuse** and **Le Sparrow** (see above) have gay nights. Cover varies.

For more information about clubs and gay life in Brussels, stop by the gay and lesbian community center, **Tels Quels,** rue du Marché au Charbon 81 (✆ **02/512-45-87;** Métro: Bourse), open Saturday to Thursday 5pm to 2am, Friday 5pm to 4am.

CAFES & BARS

The city's many watering holes run the gamut from Art Nouveau palaces to plain and convivial. You should linger a few hours in one, preferably savoring one of the incredible beers for which Belgium is famous. It's always satisfying to sit at a sidewalk cafe on the Grand-Place and drink in the beauty of the floodlit golden buildings ringing the square. Drinks on a Grand-Place terrace are more expensive than those in ordinary cafes, but once you've ordered one you can nurse it for hours—or until the waiter's patience wears out and he grabs the glass from you, empty or not.

The city's oldest cafe, in a 1690 building, **Le Roy d'Espagne,** Grand-Place 1 (✆ **02/513-08-07;** Métro: Gare Centrale), accommodates patrons in several areas. In addition to the outdoor tables, you can drink in a room preserving a 17th-century Flemish interior—a masterpiece of wooden architecture with a wooden walkway, wooden beams above, and a fireplace covered by a black metal hood. The fourth-floor view of the Grand-Place is spectacular. It's open daily from 10am to 1am.

Although its name means "Sudden Death," you'll likely survive **A la Mort Subite,** rue Montagne aux Herbes Potagères 7 (✆ **02/513-13-18;** Métro: Gare Centrale), a 1911 cafe with stained-glass mirrors, old photographs, paintings, and prints. A good place to enjoy an afternoon coffee or an evening beer, it's open daily from 10am to 1am. A block from the Grand-Place, in a 1642 house, **A l'Imaige de Nostre-Dame,** rue du Marché aux Herbes 6–8 (✆ **02/219-42-49;** Métro: Gare Centrale), is often filled with people of all ages enjoying reasonably priced beer amid wooden ceiling beams and old wooden tables. It's open daily from noon to midnight.

You can still enjoy a drink in the stunning setting of legendary Art Nouveau tavern **Le Falstaff,** rue Henri Maus 17–25 (✆ **02/511-98-77;** Métro: Bourse), though its cool image has suffered under new owners. It's open daily from 8am to around 3am (4am on weekends). Across the way, at **Le Cirio,** rue de la Bourse 18 (✆ **02/512-13-95;** Métro: Bourse), you sip your drink in quiet, refined surroundings that make the exercise seem worthwhile. It's open daily from 10am to 1am.

In a 17th-century building, **Le Fleur en Papier Doré,** rue des Alexiens 53, off place de la Chapelle (✆ **02/511-16-59;** Métro: Bourse), calls itself a "temple of surrealism" because Magritte used to relax here. Despite the grandmotherly decor, the cafe attracts a wide assortment of arty types. On Friday and Saturday from 9 or 10pm, an accordion player pumps out some tunes, and there are occasional poetry readings upstairs. The cafe is open daily from 11am to 11pm.

Gargoyles, devils, and other assorted creatures from the darker recesses of the human mind—the decor at **Halloween,** rue des Grands-Carmes 10 (✆ **02/514-12-56;** Métro: Bourse)—are enough to give you the creeps. The young and the hip take in the memorable ambience at this bar, which is open Tuesday to Sunday from 7pm to 1am.

In an early 1900s town house on the edge of the center city, **De Ultieme Hallucinatie,** rue Royale 316 (✆ **02/217-06-14;** Métro: Botanique), has rocky walls and plants along one side, a long marble-top bar along the other, and a small outdoor cafe area in back. You can choose from beers and wines (a wide selection), coffee, and a few snacks. Downstairs, a futuristic dance club has abstract outer-space art. The bar is open Monday to Friday from 11am to 3am, Saturday and Sunday from 4pm to 3am.

A SIDE TRIP TO WATERLOO ★

Europe's Gettysburg, the battle that ended Napoleon's empire was fought on rolling farmland near **Waterloo,** just south of Brussels. On June 18, 1815, 72,000 British, Dutch, Belgian, and German troops, aided before the day's end by around 40,000 Prussians, defeated the mighty Napoleon Bonaparte and his 76,000 French, leaving 40,000 dead and wounded on the field. Napoleon survived, but his attempt to rebuild his empire was crushed; he was exiled to the island of St. Helena, where he died 6 years later.

Tips Belgian Brews Pack a Punch

Be warned: Belgian beers are stronger than their American counterparts—alcohol content can be as high as 12%. Try a rich, dark Trappist ale brewed by monks from Chimay, Orval, Rochefort, Sint-Benedictus, Westmalle, and Westvleteren monasteries. Brussels is well known for its *lambic* beers, which use naturally occurring yeast for fermentation, are often flavored with fruit, and come in bottles with champagne-type corks. Unlike any other beer, they're more akin to a sweet sparkling wine. *Gueuze,* a blend of young and aged lambic beers, is one of the least sweet. If you prefer something sweeter, try raspberry-flavored *framboise* or cherry-flavored *kriek. Faro* is a low-alcohol beer, sometimes sweetened or lightly spiced.

From Brussels, the TEC bus W departs twice hourly for Waterloo from Gare du Midi (Métro: Gare du Midi). The 18km (11-mile) ride takes 55 minutes and costs 3.25€ ($4.70). The bus stops at both the Wellington Museum in Waterloo itself and the battlefield visitor center, south of the town. By **car** from Brussels, take the ring road (R0) to exit 27 for Waterloo, and N5 south to the battlefield.

The battlefield remains much as it was on that fateful day. Before touring it, you should study a 360-degree **Panoramic Mural** and see a short audiovisual presentation of the battle, including scenes from Sergei Bondarchuk's epic movie *Waterloo,* at the **Centre du Visiteur,** route du Lion 252–254, Braine l'Alleud (✆ **02/385-19-12;** www.waterloo1815.be). To survey the battlefield, climb the nearby **Butte du Lion (Lion Mound),** a conical hill surmounted by a bronze lion, behind the visitor center. Across the road from the visitor center is the **Musée des Cires (Waxworks Museum),** where Napoleon, Wellington, Blücher, and other key participants appear as rather tatty wax figures.

These four sites are open daily April to October from 9:30am to 6:30pm and November to March from 10am to 5pm; closed January 1 and December 25. Admission to the visitor center is free. Admission to its audiovisual presentation and the four on-site attractions is 8.70€ ($13) for adults, 6.50€ ($9.45) for seniors and students, 5.50€ ($8) for children ages 6 to 17, and free for children under 6.

In Waterloo itself, you can fill in details of the battle at the **Musée Wellington,** chaussée de Bruxelles 147 (✆ **02/354-78-06;** www.museewellington.com), a former inn that served as Wellington's headquarters. It's open daily, April to September from 9:30am to 6:30pm and October to March from 10:30am to 5pm. Admission, which includes an audio guide (except for children under 6), is 5€ ($7.25) for adults, 4€ ($5.80) for seniors and students, 2€ ($2.90) for children ages 6 to 12, and free for children under 6.

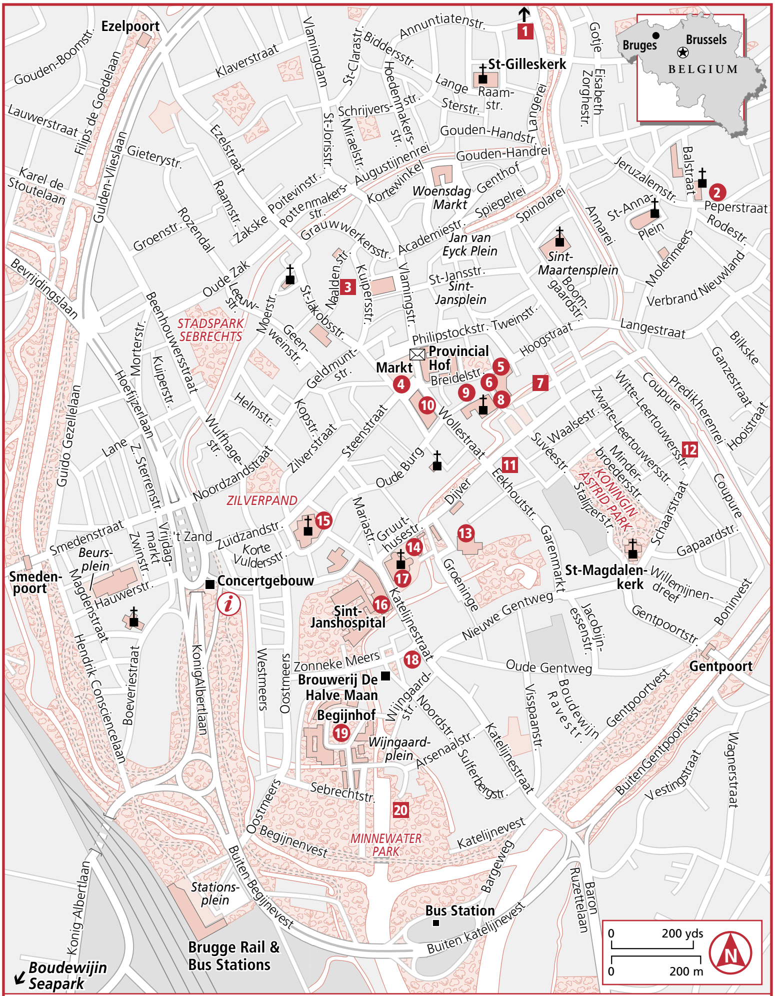
2 Bruges ★★★

Walking around the almost perfectly preserved city of Bruges is like taking a step back in time. From its 13th-century origins as a cloth-manufacturing town to its current incarnation as a tourism mecca, Bruges seems to have changed little. As in a fairy tale, swans glide down the winding canals and the stone houses look like they're made of gingerbread. Even though glass-fronted stores have taken over the ground floors of ancient buildings, and the swans scatter before tour boats chugging along the canals, Bruges has made the transition from medieval to modern with remarkable grace. The town seems revitalized rather than crushed by the tremendous influx of tourists.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **By Train** Bruges is 55 minutes from Brussels, and trains depart every hour. Bruges has good connections to Ghent, Antwerp, and the North Sea ferry ports of Oostende (Ostend) and Zeebrugge. Bruges station (look out for BRUGGE, the town's Dutch name, on the destination boards) is on Stationsplein, 1.5km (1 mile) from the center city. To get to the heart of town, take a 20-minute walk or a short bus ride—choose any bus for CENTRUM and get out at the Markt. For schedule and fare information, call ✆ **02/528-28-28.**

By Bus **Eurolines** (✆ **02/274-13-50;** www.eurolines.com) buses from Brussels, London, Paris, Amsterdam, and other cities arrive at the bus station adjoining Bruges rail station.


Bruges
Brussels
BELGIUM
Ezelpoort
Gouden-Boomstr.
Lauwerstraat
Filips de Goedelaan
Karel de Stoutelaan
Gulden-Vlieslaan
Gieterystr.
Klaverstraat
Vlamingdam
St-Clarastr.
Biddersstr.
Annuntiatenstr.
1
St-Gilleskerk
Lange Raam-str.
Sterstr.
Gotje
Eisabeth Zorghestr.
Hoedenmakers-str.
Schrijvers-str.
St-Jorisstr.
Miraelstr.
Ezelstraat
Gouden-Handstr.
Langerei
Gouden-Handrei
Augustijnenrei
Kortewinkel
Woensdag Markt
Genthof
Spiegelrei
Spinolarei
Jeruzalemstr.
Balstraat
2
Peperstraat
Rodestr.
St-Anna-Plein
Annarei
Groenstr.
Rozendal
Raamstr.
Zakske
Potteninstr.
Pottenmakers-str.
Grauwwerkersstr.
Academiestr.
Jan van Eyck Plein
Sint-Maartensplein
Molenmeers
Verbrand Nieuwland
Bevrijdingslaan
Oude Zak
Leeuw-str.
Moerstr.
St-Jakobsstr.
Naaldenstr.
3
Kuipersstr.
Vlamingstr.
St-Jansstr.
Sint-Jansplein
Boom-gaardstr.
STADSPARK SEBRECHTS
Geen-weinstr.
Beenhouwersstraat
Mortierstr.
Kuiperstr.
Hoefijzerlaan
Philipstockstr.
Tweinstr.
Provincial Hof
Hoogstraat
Langestraat
Bilkske
Ganzestraat
Markt
4
Breidelstr.
5
6
7
8
9
10
Geldmuntstr.
Helmstr.
Kopstr.
Wollestraat
Waalsestr.
Suveestr.
Zwarte-Leertouwersstr.
Witte-Leertouwersstr.
Coupure
Predikherenrei
Hooistraat
12
Guido Gezellelaan
Lane
Z. Sterrenstr.
Wulfhage-str.
Noordzandstraat
Zilverstraat
Steenstraat
Oude Burg
11
Eekhoutstr.
Minderbroedersstr.
KONINGIN ASTRID PARK
Stalijzerstr.
Schaarstraat
Gapaardstr.
ZILVERPAND
Dijver
Smedenstraat
Beursplein
Zwinstr.
Vrijdagmarkt
't Zand
Zuidzandstr.
Korte Vuldersstr.
15
Mariastr.
Gruuthusestr.
14
13
Groeninge
Garenmarkt
St-Magdalenakerk
Willemijnendreef
Boninvest
Smedenpoort
Magdenstraat
Hauwerstr.
Concertgebouw
17
16
Sint-Janshospital
Katelijnestraat
Nieuwe Gentweg
Jacobijnessenstr.
Gentpoortstr.
Hendrik Consciencelaan
Boeveriestraat
Konig Albertlaan
Westmeers
Oostmeers
Zonneke Meers
18
Brouwerij De Halve Maan
Oude Gentweg
Gentpoort
Begijnhof
19
Wijngaardstr.
Noordstr.
Wijngaardplein
Arsenaalstr.
Visspaanstr.
Boudewijn Ravestr.
Gentpoortvest
BuitenGentpoortvest
Vestingstraat
Wagnerstraat
Sulferbergstr.
Katelijnestraat
Sebrechtstr.
20
Oostmeers
Begijnenvest
MINNEWATER PARK
Katelijnevest
Bargeweg
Baron Ruzettelaan
Buiten Begijnevest
Stationsplein
Bus Station
Buiten katelijnevest
Konig-Albertlaan
Brugge Rail & Bus Stations
Boudewijn Seapark
0 200 yds
0 200 m
N

ATTRACTIONS ●

Basiliek van het Heilig-Bloed **9**

Begijnhof **19**

Belfort en Hallen **10**

Brouwerij De Halve Maan **18**

Burg **5**

Groeninge Museum **13**

Gruuthuse Museum **14**

Kantcentrum (Lace Center) **2**

Landhuis van het Brugse Vrije **6**

Markt **4**

Memling Museum **16**

Onze-Lieve-Vrouwekerk **17**

Sint-Salvatorskathedraal **15**

Stadhuis **8**

ACCOMMODATIONS ■

Rosenburg **12**

Die Swaene **7**

Egmond **20**

Lucca **3**

Romantik Pandhotel **11**

Ter Duinen **1**

✝ Church

✉ Post office

ⓘ Information

— Railway

By Car If you're driving from Brussels or Ghent, take A10/E40. Drop off your car at a parking lot or garage (see "Getting Around," below). The network of one-way streets in the center city makes driving a trial.

VISITOR INFORMATION The tourist information office, **In & Uit Brugge,** Concertgebouw, 't Zand 34, 8000 Brugge (✆ **050/44-86-86;** fax 050/44-86-00; www.brugge.be), is open daily from 10am to 6pm (Thurs until 8pm). This friendly, efficient office has brochures that outline walking, coach, canal, and horse-drawn carriage tours, as well as detailed information on many sightseeing attractions. Ask for the complimentary annual ***events@brugge*** brochure and monthly ***Exit*** newsletter, both of them excellent directories of current goings-on.

CITY LAYOUT Narrow streets fan out from two central squares, the **Markt** and the **Burg.** A network of canals threads its way to every section of the small city, and the center city is almost encircled by a canal that opens at its southern end to become a swan-filled lake, the **Minnewater**—this translates as Lake of Love, though the name actually comes from the Dutch *Binnen Water,* meaning Inner Water, or Harbor—bordered by the Begijnhof and a fine park.

GETTING AROUND Walking is by far the best way to see Bruges, since much of the center city is traffic free (but wear good walking shoes, as those charming cobblestones can be hard going).

By Bicycle Biking is a terrific way to get around town. You can rent a bike from the rail station for 9.50€ ($14) a day, plus a deposit. Some hotels and stores rent bikes, for 7€ to 10€ ($10–$15) a day.

By Bus **De Lijn** city buses (✆ **070/22-02-00;** www.delijn.be) depart from the bus station outside the rail station, and from the big square called 't Zand, west of the Markt. Several bus routes pass through the Markt.

By Taxi There's a taxi stand outside the rail station (✆ **050/38-46-60**), and another at the Markt (✆ **050/33-44-44**).

By Car Movement by car through the center city is tightly restricted. Leave your car in your hotel's parking garage, if it has one. You can use one of the large, prominently signposted underground parking garages around the center city—these get expensive for long stays—or the inexpensive parking lot at the rail station, from where you can take a bus or walk into the heart of the city.

WHERE TO STAY

Bruges's hotels fill up fast. Don't arrive without a reservation, particularly in summer.

EXPENSIVE

Die Swaene ★★★ This small hotel on the beautiful center-city Groenerei canal has been called one of the most romantic in Europe, thanks in part to the care lavished on

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Tips Avoid the Tourist Crush

If you don't care much for crowds, avoid the tourist crush by staying away from Bruges in summertime, when the place is something of a madhouse. You could visit Ghent instead. Go to Bruges in spring or fall, or even in winter. (But you'll miss out on a lot of animation, too.)

it by the Hessels family. The comfortable rooms are elegantly and individually furnished, and the lounge, from 1779, was once the Guild Hall of the Tailors. You might be expected to lodge in an annex across the canal, where the rooms are luxurious enough but not so convenient—you have to recross the canal to take advantage of the main building's amenities, for instance. The in-house **Pergola Kaffee** restaurant has earned rave reviews from guests and critics alike.

Steenhouwersdijk 1 (across the canal from the Burg), 8000 Brugge. ☎ **050/34-27-98.** Fax 050/33-66-74. www.dieswaene-hotel.com. 32 units. 195€–295€ ($283–$428) double; 360€–460€ ($522–$667) suite. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 15€ ($22). Bus: 1 or 6. **Amenities:** Restaurant; lounge; bar; heated indoor pool; exercise room; sauna; concierge; secretarial services; limited room service; babysitting; laundry service. *In room:* A/C (some units), TV, minibar, hair dryer.

Romantik Pandhotel ★★ On a side-street just off of Bruges's handsome central canal, this hotel in a restored 18th-century mansion surrounded by plane trees is an oasis of tranquillity. Although it provides modern conveniences, its exquisite, old-fashioned furnishings lend special grace to comfortable rooms that (except for the suites) may be a little small for some tastes, though that's not unusual for old buildings in Bruges. Guests praise Mrs. Chris Vanhaecke-Dewaele for her hospitality and attention to detail.

Pandreitje 16 (off Rozenhoedkaai), 8000 Brugge. ☎ **050/34-06-66.** Fax 050/34-05-56. www.pandhotel.com. 24 units. 180€–325€ ($261–$471) double; 250€–465€ ($363–$674) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 22€ ($32). Bus: 1 or 6. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; concierge; 24-hr. room service; in-room massage; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, dataport, minibar, hair dryer.

Rosenburg ★ This ultramodern brick hotel is set alongside a lovely canal, a short walk west from the center of Bruges. The hotel is an artful marriage of old Bruges style and modern amenities and fittings. Its spacious guest rooms are restfully decorated in warm colors like peach and furnished with bamboo and rattan beds. Most have a view of the canal at Coupure.

Coupure 30 (close to Gentpoort), 8000 Brugge. ☎ **050/34-01-94.** Fax 050/34-35-39. www.rosenburg.be. 27 units. 140€–195€ ($203–$283) double; 280€–330€ ($406–$479) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Limited street parking. Bus: 6. **Amenities:** Restaurant; game room; limited room service; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer.

MODERATE

Egmond ★★ In a rambling mansion next to Minnewater Park, the Egmond has just eight rooms, but the lucky few who stay here will find ample space, plenty of family ambience, abundant local color, and lots of peace and tranquillity. All guest rooms are furnished in an individual style with views of the garden and Minnewater Park. Every afternoon, free coffee and tea are served in the new garden terrace or in the lounge, which has an 18th-century fireplace. At the "honesty bar" you can help yourself to a drink and leave the payment.

Minnewater 15 (at Minnewater Park), 8000 Brugge. ☎ **050/34-14-45.** Fax 050/34-29-40. www.egmond.be. 8 units. 140€ ($203) double. Rates include buffet breakfast. No credit cards. Parking 10€ ($15); maximum 25€ ($36) per stay. Bus: 1 or 11. **Amenities:** Nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C (some units), TV, dataport, hair dryer, safe.

Ter Duinen ★ This charming hotel is an ideal blend of classical style and modern conveniences. Guest rooms are ample in size and brightly decorated, and have modern furnishings. Some rooms have wooden ceiling beams, and some have a great view overlooking the tranquil Langerei canal, just north of the center city and within easy walking distance. Proprietors Marc and Lieve Bossu-Van Den Heuvel take a justified pride in their hotel and extend a friendly welcome to guests.

Langerei 52 (at Kleine Nieuwstraat), 8000 Brugge. ✆ **050/33-04-37.** Fax 050/34-42-16. www.terduinenhotel.be. 20 units. 105€–149€ ($152–$216) double; suite 165€ ($239). Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Limited street parking. Bus: 4 or 8. **Amenities:** Lounge; limited room service; dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer, safe.

INEXPENSIVE

Lucca ★ *Value* This mansion right in the heart of romantic Bruges was built in the 14th century by a wealthy merchant from Lucca, Italy, and the high ceilings and wide halls convey a sense of luxury—not that this is entirely backed up in reality. The welcome is warm, and the guest rooms are in reasonable condition and sport pine furnishings. Units with bathrooms also have TVs. Breakfast is served in a cozy medieval cellar decorated with antiques.

Naaldenstraat 30 (off Sint-Jakobsstraat), 8000 Brugge. ✆ **050/34-20-67.** Fax 050/33-34-64. www.hotellucca.be. 19 units, 14 with bathroom. 50€ ($73) double without bathroom; 65€–85€ ($94–$123) double with bathroom. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Limited street parking. Bus: 3 or 13. *In room:* TV (some units).

WHERE TO DINE

VERY EXPENSIVE

De Karmeliet ★★★ BELGIAN/FRENCH In 1996, chef Geert Van Hecke became the first Flemish chef to be awarded three Michelin stars. He has described his award-winning menu as "international cuisine made with local products" that aims to merge French quality with Flemish quantity. Menu items might include lamb shoulder with local vegetables, or sea bass with a hazelnut, pistachio, and parmesan crust. The result is outstanding, and the decor in the 1833 town house is as elegant as the cuisine deserves.

Langestraat 19 (off Hoogstraat). ✆ **050/33-82-59.** www.dekarmeliet.be. Reservations required. Main courses 50€–95€ ($73–$138); fixed-price menus 60€–170€ ($87–$247). AE, DC, MC, V. Tues–Sat noon–2pm and 7–9:30pm; Sun 7–9:30pm (except June–Sept). Bus: 6 or 16.

EXPENSIVE

't Pandreitje ★★ FRENCH/BELGIAN This restaurant is one of the nicest spots in town. It's in the shade of the medieval Market Hall's bell tower, just off Rozenhoedkaai, one of the most beautiful canal sides in Bruges. The interior of this Renaissance-era private home has been turned into an elegant Louis XVI setting from 1740 for a menu of classic dishes, such as roasted squab and grilled lamb ribs.

Pandreitje 6 (off Rozenhoedkaai). ✆ **050/33-11-90.** www.pandreitje.be. Reservations required. Main courses 35€–60€ ($51–$87); fixed-price menus 45€–90€ ($65–$131). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Tues and Thurs–Sat noon–2pm and 7–9:30pm. Bus: 1, 6, 11, or 16.

MODERATE

Brasserie Erasmus ★ FLEMISH Small but popular, this is a great stop after viewing the cathedral and nearby museums. It serves a large variety of dishes, including a very good *waterzooï* with fish and rabbit in a beer sauce, and has around 150 different brands of beer.

In the Hotel Erasmus, Wollestraat 35 (close to the Markt). ✆ **050/33-57-81.** Main courses 15€–25€ ($22–$36); fixed-price menus 20€–38€ ($29–$55). MC, V. Tues–Sun noon–4pm (summer also Mon) and 6–11pm.

De Stove ★★ FLEMISH/SEAFOOD This small, family-owned restaurant combines a rustic atmosphere with a more modern style than is the norm in Bruges. The seafood specialties are well worth a try, particularly the Flemish fish stew.

Kleine Sint-Amandsstraat 4 (close to the Markt). ✆ **050/33-78-35.** Reservations recommended on weekends. Main courses 17€–30€ ($25–$44); fixed-price menu 45€ ($65). AE, MC, V. Fri 6:30–9:30pm; Sat–Tues noon–1:45pm and 6:30–9:30pm. Bus: All buses to Markt.

Kasteel Minnewater ★★ FRENCH/BELGIAN Old paintings on the walls, chandeliers, and fine table linens complement this château/restaurant's location close to the Begijnhof, with a garden terrace on the Minnewater (Lake of Love). It exudes an unstuffy charm, and though its prices have been edging up, it still provides a good deal considering the setting. Specialties include sole Ostendaise, North Sea shrimp, and lamb cutlet with potatoes gratiné.

Minnewater 4 (at Minnewater Park). ✆ **050/33-42-54.** Main courses 14€–23€ ($20–$33); *Markt-menu* 27€ ($39). V. Summer daily 11am–11pm (food at lunch and dinner only); winter Mon–Fri noon–2:30pm and 6:30–11pm, Sat–Sun 11am–11pm (food at lunch and dinner times only). Bus: 1.

INEXPENSIVE

Lotus ★ VEGETARIAN Even nonvegetarians will likely enjoy the delicious lunch here. There are just two menu options—but you can choose from small, medium, or large servings—each with a hearty assortment of imaginatively prepared vegetables, served in a tranquil but cheery Scandinavian-style dining room.

Wapenmakersstraat 5 (off the Burg). ✆ **050/33-10-78.** Fixed-price lunch menus 9€–12€ ($13–$17). No credit cards. Mon–Sat 11:30am–2pm. Bus: All buses to Markt.

EXPLORING HISTORIC BRUGES

THE MARKT ★★

Begin at this historic market square, where a **sculpture group** in the middle depicts two Flemish heroes, butcher Jan Breydel and weaver Pieter de Coninck. They led a bloody 1302 uprising against pro-French merchants and nobles who dominated the city, and then went on to an against-all-odds victory over French knights later the same year at the Battle of the Golden Spurs. The large neo-Gothic **Provinciaal Hof,** which was constructed in 1887, houses the government of West Flanders province.

Belfort en Hallen (Belfry and Market Halls) ★★ The 13th-to-16th-century belfry's octagonal tower soars 84m (276 ft.) and has a magnificent 47-bell carillon. If you have enough energy, climb the 366 steps to the summit for a panoramic view of the old town—you can pause for breath at the second-floor Treasury, where the town seal and charters were kept behind multiple wrought-iron grilles. Much of the city's cloth trade and other commerce was conducted in the Hallen in centuries past. Local art dealers now use the building for exhibits.

Markt. ✆ **050/44-87-11.** Admission 5€ ($7.25) adults, 4€ ($5.80) seniors and ages 13–26, free for children under 13. Daily 9:30am–5pm. Closed Jan 1, Ascension Day afternoon, and Dec 25. Bus: All buses to Markt.

THE BURG ★★★

An array of beautiful buildings, which adds up to a trip through the history of Bruges architecture, stands on this beautiful square just steps away from the Markt. During the 9th century, Count Baldwin "Iron Arm" of Flanders built a castle here at a then-tiny riverside settlement that would grow into Bruges.

Basiliek van het Heilig Bloed (Basilica of the Holy Blood) ★★ Since 1150, this basilica next to the Town Hall has been the repository of a fragment of cloth stained with what's said to be Christ's holy blood, brought to Bruges after the Second Crusade by the count of Flanders. On the ground floor is the original Romanesque St. Basil's Chapel. The relic is housed upstairs, in the basilica museum next door to the later, richly decorated Gothic Relic Chapel. It's kept inside a rock-crystal vial that's stored in a magnificent gold-and-silver reliquary, and is exposed frequently for the faithful to kiss. Every Ascension Day, in the Procession of the Holy Blood, the relic is carried through the streets, accompanied by costumed residents acting out biblical scenes.

Burg 10. ✆ **050/33-67-92.** www.holyblood.org. Basilica, free admission; museum, 1.50€ ($2.20) adults, .50€ (75¢) children 5–18, free for children under 5. Apr–Sept daily 9:30am–noon and 2–6pm; Oct–Mar Thurs–Tues 10am–noon and 2–4pm, Wed 10am–noon. Closed Jan 1, Nov 1, and Dec 25. Bus: All buses to Markt.

Landhuis van het Brugse Vrije (Palace of the Liberty of Bruges) This palace dates mostly from 1722 to 1727, when it replaced a 16th-century building as the seat of the Liberty of Bruges—the Liberty being the district around Bruges in the Middle Ages. The palace later became a courthouse and now houses the city council's administration. Inside, at no. 11A, is the **Renaissancezaal Brugse Vrije (Renaissance Hall of the Liberty of Bruges)** ★★, the Liberty's council chamber, which has been restored to its original 16th-century condition. The hall has a superb black-marble fireplace decorated with an alabaster frieze and topped by an oak chimney piece carved with statues of Emperor Charles V, who visited Bruges in 1515, and his grandparents: Emperor Maximilian of Austria, Duchess Mary of Burgundy, King Ferdinand II of Aragon, and Queen Isabella I of Castile.

Burg 11. ✆ **050/44-87-11.** Courtyard free admission; Renaissance Hall (includes admission to Town Hall's Gothic Room; see below) 2.50€ ($3.65) adults, 2€ ($2.90) seniors and ages 13–26, free for children under 13. Daily 9:30am–12:30pm and 1:30–5pm. Closed Jan 1, Ascension Day afternoon, and Dec 25. Bus: All buses to Markt.

Stadhuis (Town Hall) ★ This beautiful Gothic building, from the late 1300s, is Belgium's oldest. Don't miss the upstairs **Gotische Zaal (Gothic Room)** ★★, with ornate, oak-carved vaulted ceiling and murals depicting biblical scenes and highlights of the town's history. The statues in the niches on the Town Hall facade are 1980s replacements for the originals, which had been painted by Jan van Eyck and were destroyed by the French in the 1790s.

Burg 12. ✆ **050/44-87-11.** Admission (includes admission to Renaissance Hall in the Palace of the Liberty of Bruges; see above) 2.50€ ($3.65) adults, 2€ ($2.90) seniors and ages 13–26, free for children under 13. Daily 9:30am–5pm. Closed Jan 1, Ascension Day afternoon, and Dec 25. Bus: All buses to Markt.

TOP MUSEUMS & ATTRACTIONS

Groeninge Museum ★★★ This is one of Belgium's leading traditional museums of fine arts, with a collection that covers Low Countries painting from the 15th century to the 20th century. The Flemish Primitives Gallery has 30 works—which seem far from primitive—by such painters as Jan van Eyck (portrait of his wife, Margareta van Eyck), Rogier van der Weyden, Hieronymus Bosch *(The Last Judgment),* and Hans Memling. Works by Magritte and Delvaux are also on display.

Dijver 12. ✆ **050/44-87-11.** Admission (combined ticket with neighboring Arentshuis) 8€ ($12) adults, 6€ ($8.70) seniors and ages 13–26, free for children under 13. Tues–Sun 9:30am–5pm (also Easter Monday, Pentecost Monday). Closed Jan 1, Ascension Day afternoon, and Dec 25. Bus: 1 or 11.

Gruuthuse Museum ★ In a courtyard next to the Groeninge Museum is the ornate mansion where Flemish nobleman Lodewijk van Gruuthuse lived in the 1400s. It contains thousands of antiques and antiquities, including paintings, sculptures, tapestries, lace, weapons, glassware, and richly carved furniture.

Dijver 17 (in a courtyard next to the Groeninge Museum). ✆ **050/44-87-11.** Admission (combined ticket with nearby Archaeological Museum) 6€ ($8.70) adults, 5€ ($7.25) seniors and ages 13–26, free for children under 13. Tues–Sun 9:30am–5pm (also Easter Monday, Pentecost Monday). Closed Jan 1, Ascension Day afternoon, and Dec 25. Bus: 1.

Kantcentrum (Lace Center) ★ Bruges lace is famous the world over, and there's no lack of stores to tempt you with the opportunity to take some home. The Lace Center, in the 15th-century Jerusalem Almshouse founded by the Adornes family of Genoese merchants, is where the ancient art of lace making is passed on to the next generation. In the afternoon, you get a firsthand look at craftspeople making items for future sale in all the town's lace stores (handmade lace is the best, but it's more expensive than machine made).

Peperstraat 3A. ✆ **050/33-00-72.** www.kantcentrum.com. Admission 2.50€ ($3.65) adults, 1.50€ ($2.20) seniors and children 7–18, free for children under 7. Mon–Fri 10am–noon and 2–6pm; Sat 10am–noon and 2–5pm. Closed holidays. Bus: 6 or 16.

Memling Museum ★★ The former Sint-Janshospitaal (Hospital of St. John), where the earliest wards date from the 13th century, houses a magnificent collection of paintings by the German-born artist Hans Memling (ca. 1440–94), who moved to Bruges in 1465. You can view masterpieces like his triptych altarpiece of St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist, which consists of the paintings *The Mystic Marriage of St. Catherine,* the *Shrine of St. Ursula,* and the *Virgin with Child and Apple.* A 17th-century apothecary in the cloisters near the hospital entrance is furnished as it was when the building's main function was to care for the sick.

Mariastraat. ✆ **050/44-87-11.** Admission 8€ ($12) adults, 6€ ($8.70) seniors and ages 13–26, free for children under 13. Tues–Sun 9:30am–5pm (also Easter Monday, Pentecost Monday). Closed Jan 1, Ascension Day afternoon, and Dec 25. Bus: 1.

SIGHTS OF RELIGIOUS INTEREST

One of the most tranquil spots in Bruges is the **Begijnhof** ★★, Wijngaardstraat (✆ **050/33-00-11;** bus no. 1). Begijns were religious women, similar to nuns, who accepted vows of chastity and obedience but drew the line at poverty. Today, the begijns are no more, and the Begijnhof is occupied by Benedictine nuns who try to keep the begijn traditions alive. Little whitewashed houses surrounding a lawn with trees make a marvelous place of escape. One of the begijns' houses has been set up as a museum. The house is open March and October to November, daily 10:30am to noon and 1:45 to 5pm; April to September, daily 10am to noon and 1:45 to 5:30pm (6pm Sun); December to February, Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday, Sunday 2:45 to 4:15pm, and Friday 1:45 to 6pm. Admission is 2€ ($2.90) adults, 1€ ($1.45) children ages 5 to 18, and free for children 4 and under. The Begijnhof itself is permanently open, and admission is free.

Onze-Lieve-Vrouwekerk (Church of Our Lady) ★★ It took 2 centuries (13th–15th) to build the magnificent Church of Our Lady, and its soaring spire, 122m (400 ft.) high, is visible from a wide area around Bruges. Among its many art treasures are a marvelous marble ***Madonna and Child*** ★★★ by Michelangelo (one of his few works outside Italy); the *Crucifixion,* a painting by Anthony Van Dyck; and inside the church sanctuary the impressive side-by-side bronze **tomb sculptures** ★ of Charles the Bold of Burgundy (d. 1477), and his daughter Mary of Burgundy (d. 1482).

Onze-Lieve-Vrouwekerkhof-Zuid (at Mariastraat). ✆ **050/34-53-14.** Church and *Madonna and Child* altar, free admission; sanctuary of Charles and Mary and museum 2.50€ ($3.65) adults, 1.50€ ($2.20) seniors and ages 13–26, free for children under 13. Mon–Fri 9:30am–12:30pm and 1:30–5pm; Sat 9:30am–12:30pm and 1:30–4pm; Sun 2–5pm. Bus: 1.

Sint-Salvatorskathedraal (Holy Savior's Cathedral) This mainly Gothic church with a 100m (325-ft.) belfry has been Bruges's cathedral since 1834. The 15th-century wooden choir stalls flanking the altar bear a complete set of escutcheons of the Knights of the Golden Fleece, who held a chapter meeting here in 1478. In the Cathedral Museum (Mon–Fri 2–5pm; Sun 3–5pm) is the *Martyrdom of St. Hippolytus* altarpiece by Dirk Bouts with a side panel by Hugo van der Goes, and the Cathedral Treasury of gold and silver religious vessels, reliquaries, and Episcopal vestments.

Sint-Salvatorskerkhof (off Steenstraat). ✆ **050/33-68-41.** Admission: Cathedral free; Treasury 2.50€ ($3.65) adults, 1.50€ ($2.20) seniors/students, children under 13 free. Museum: Mon 2–5:45pm, Tues–Fri 8:30–11:45am and 2–5:45pm, Sat 8:30–11:45am and 2–3:30pm, Sun 9–10:15am and 2–5:45pm; closed to casual visitors during services. Treasury: Sun–Fri 2–5pm. Bus: most center-city buses.

A BRUGES BREWERY

Brouwerij De Halve Maan (Half-Moon Brewery) ★ The brewery here was turning out ale at least as long ago as 1546. Today it produces Bruges's famous Straffe Hendrik beer, a strapping blond ale that can be sampled in the brewery's own brasserie, after a perusal of the facility.

Walplein 26. ✆ **050/33-26-97.** www.halvemaan.be. Admission 5€ ($7.25). Guided visits Apr–Oct Mon–Fri on the hour 11am–4pm, Sat–Sun on the hour 11am–5pm; Nov–Mar Mon–Fri on the hour 11am–3pm, Sat–Sun on the hour 11am–4pm. Bus: 1.

ESPECIALLY FOR KIDS

The **Boudewijn Seapark** ★, De Baeckestraat 12 (✆ **050/38-38-38;** www.boudewijnpark.be; bus no. 7 or 17), in the southern suburb of Sint-Michiels, is a big favorite with children. For some unfathomable reason, they seem to prefer its rides, paddle boats, and dolphins over Bruges's many historic treasures. Strange but true! The park is open Easter holidays, daily from 11am to 5pm; May to June, daily from 10:30am to 5pm (6pm Sun and holidays); July to August, daily from 10am to 6pm; September, Wednesday and Saturday from 10:30am to 5pm, and Sunday from 10:30am to 6pm. Admission is 22€ ($32) for adults; 18€ ($26) for seniors, people of reduced mobility, and children over 1m (39 in.) and up to age 12; and free for children under 1m (39 in.).

BOAT TRIPS & OTHER ORGANIZED TOURS

Be sure to take a **boat trip** ★★★ on the canals, onboard one of the open-top tour boats that cruise year-round from five departure points around the center city, all marked with an anchor icon on maps available from the tourist office. The boats operate March to November, daily from 10am to 6pm; and December to February, Saturday, Sunday, and school holidays from 10am to 6pm (except if the canals are frozen). A half-hour cruise is 6.50€ ($9.45) for adults, 3€ ($4.35) for children ages 4 to 11 accompanied by an adult, and free for children under 4.

Another lovely way to tour Bruges is by **horse-drawn carriage.** From March to November, carriages are stationed on the Burg (Wed on the Markt); a 30-minute ride is 34€ ($49).

Minivan tours by **Sightseeing Line** (✆ **050/35-50-24;** www.citytour.be) last 50 minutes and depart hourly every day from the Markt. The first tour departs at 10am; the last tour departs at 8pm July to September, at 7pm April to June, at 6pm October, at 5pm March, and at 4pm November to February. Fares are 11.50€ ($17) for adults, 6€ ($8.70) children ages 6 to 11, free for children under 6, and 30€ ($44) for a family of two adults and two children.

If you'd like a qualified guide to accompany you, the tourist office can provide one for 50€ ($73) for the first 2 hours, and 25€ ($36) for each additional hour. In July and August, join a daily guided **walking tour** at 3pm from the tourist office for 6€ ($8.70), and free for children under 12.

You can ride through Bruges, and get out of town into the West Flanders countryside, on a bicycling tour with **QuasiMundo Biketours Brugge** (✆ **050/33-07-75;** www.quasimundo.eu). Call ahead to book; meeting and departure point is the Burg. Tours cost 24€ ($35), 22€ ($32) for ages 8 to 26, and free for children under 8.

BRUGES AFTER DARK

For information on what's on and where, pick up a copy of the free monthly ***Exit*** brochure from the tourist office.

THE PERFORMING ARTS Classical music, opera, and ballet are performed at the ultramodern **Concertgebouw,** 't Zand 34 (✆ **050/47-69-99;** www.concertgebouw.be), which opened in 2002. The **Koninklijke Stadsschouwburg,** Vlamingstraat 29 (✆ **050/44-30-60;** www.cultuurcentrumbrugge.be), from 1869, continues to feature theater (mainly in Dutch) and dance.

PERIOD THEATER Step back in time to medieval Bruges, at Brugge Anno 1468, Vlamingstraat 84–86 (✆ **050/34-75-72;** www.celebrations-entertainment.be), in a former Jesuit church. Players re-create the wedding of Duke Charles the Bold of Burgundy to Duchess Margaret of York while the audience piles into a period banquet. Performances take place April to October, Friday and Saturday from 7:30 to 10:30pm; and November to March, Saturday from 7:30 to 10:30pm. Tickets are 57€ to 74€ ($83–$107) for adults, 50% of the adult price for children ages 11 to 14, 13€ ($19) for children ages 6 to 10, and free for children 5 and under.

BARS & TAVERNS Traditional cafe **'t Brugs Beertje,** Kemelstraat 5 (✆ **050/33-96-16**), serves more than 300 kinds of beer. **'t Dreupelhuisje,** Kemelstraat 9 (✆ **050/34-24-21**), does something similar with *jenever* (a ginlike spirit), serving dozens of craft-produced examples of this deadly art. **Gran Kaffee De Passage,** Dweersstraat 26 (✆ **050/34-02-32**), is a quiet and elegant spot to sip a drink.

3 Ghent ★★

Austere but more authentic than Bruges, Ghent has been spruced up and has never looked so good. This historical seat of the powerful counts of Flanders, at the confluence of the Scheldt and Leie rivers, has plenty of cobblestone streets, meandering canals, and antique Flemish architecture.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **By Train** Ghent is just 32 minutes from Brussels, and trains depart every half-hour or so. The main rail station, **Gent-Sint-Pieters,** on Maria Hendrikaplein, is 1.5km (1 mile) south of the center city. To get quickly and easily to the heart of town, take tram no. 1 from the first platform under the bridge to your left as you exit the station, and get out at Korenmarkt. For schedule and fare information, call ✆ **02/528-28-28.**

By Car Take A10/E40 from both Brussels and Bruges.

VISITOR INFORMATION The excellent **Toerisme Gent Infokantoor (Ghent Tourist Information Office),** Raadskelder (Council Cellar), Botermarkt 17A, 9000

Gent (✆ **09/266-56-60;** fax 09/266-56-73; www.visitgent.be), in the Belfort (Belfry), is open April to October daily from 9:30am to 6:30pm; and November to March daily from 9:30am to 4:30pm.

GETTING AROUND Ghent has a fine public transportation network (✆ **09/210-94-91**) of **trams** and **buses**—and a single **trolleybus** line, no. 3. Many lines converge at central Korenmarkt and at Gent-Sint-Pieters rail station in the south of the city. Walking is the best way to view the heart of town and experience its combination of history and modernity at a human pace. Beyond the center city, use public transportation. For a **taxi,** call **V-Tax** (✆ **09/222-22-22**).

WHERE TO STAY

Erasmus ★ Each room is different in this converted 16th-century house, and all are plush, furnished with antiques and knickknacks. Rooms have high oak-beam ceilings, and bathrooms are modern. Some rooms have leaded-glass windows, some overlook a carefully manicured inner garden, and some have elaborate marble fireplaces. Breakfast is served in an impressive room that would have pleased the counts of Flanders.

Poel 25 (off Sint-Michielsstraat), 9000 Gent. ✆ **09/224-21-95.** Fax 09/233-42-41. www.proximedia.com/web/hotel-erasmus.html. 11 units. 99€–150€ ($144–$218) double. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, MC, V. Limited street parking. **Amenities:** Bar. *In room:* TV, coffeemaker, hair dryer.

Gravensteen ★★ You enter this lovely mansion, built in 1865 as the home of a Ghent textile baron, through the old carriageway (made up of ornamented pillars and an impressive wall niche occupied by a marble statue), which sets the tone for what you find inside. The elegant, high-ceilinged parlor is a sophisticated blend of pastels, gracious modern furnishings, and antiques, with a small bar tucked into one corner. The rooms are attractive and comfortably furnished.

Jan Breydelstraat 35 (close to the Castle of the Counts), 9000 Gent. ✆ **09/225-11-50.** Fax 09/225-18-50. www.gravensteen.be. 45 units. 124€–200€ ($180–$290) double. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 10€ ($15). Tram: 1 or 4 to Sint-Veerleplein. **Amenities:** Bar; exercise room; laundry service. *In room:* A/C (some units), TV, minibar, hair dryer.

WHERE TO DINE

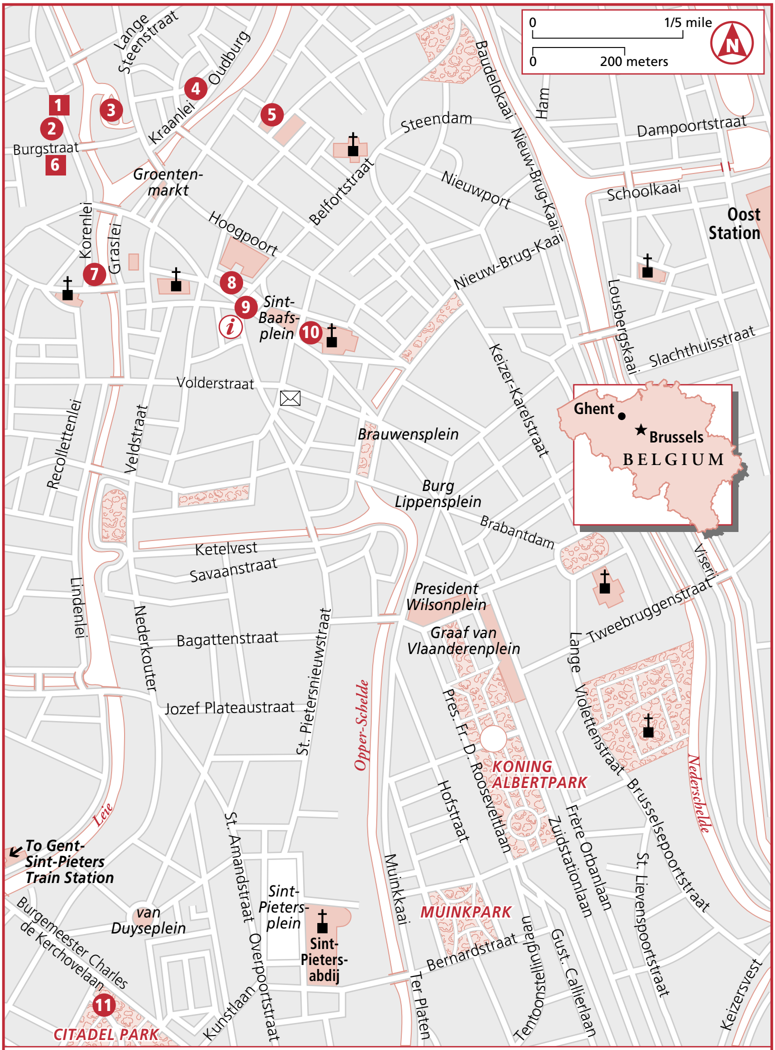
Brasserie Pakhuis ★ FLEMISH/CONTINENTAL In a town where the Middle Ages are *big,* this brasserie is almost modern and certainly hip. In fact, Pakhuis (which means "warehouse" in Dutch) may be a little too conscious of its own sense of style. The oyster and seafood platters are notable, and you won't go wrong with meat-based offerings like baked ham in a mustard sauce, or Flemish favorites like *waterzooï* and *garnaalkroketten* (shrimp croquettes).

Schuurkenstraat 4 (off Veldstraat). ✆ **09/223-55-55.** Main courses 11€–21€ ($16–$30); fixed-price menus 24€–40€ ($35–$58). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Thurs 11:30am–1am; Fri–Sat 11:30am–2am (full meals at lunch and dinner only).

Jan Breydel ★★ SEAFOOD/FLEMISH High honors go to this exquisite restaurant on a quaint street near the Castle of the Counts. Its interior is a garden delight of greenery, white napery, and light woods. Proprietors Louis and Pat Hellebaut see to it that dishes issued from their kitchen are as light as the setting, with delicate sauces and seasonings enhancing fresh ingredients. Seafood and regional specialties like the traditional Ghent fish stew, *waterzooï,* are all superb.

Jan Breydelstraat 10 (opposite Design museum Gent). ✆ **09/225-62-87.** Main courses 18€–32€ ($26–$46); fixed-price menus 31€–48€ ($45–$70). AE, DC, MC, V. Tues–Sat noon–2pm and 7–10pm; Mon 7–10pm. Tram: 1 or 4 to Sint-Veerleplein.

Ghent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Nieuw-Brug-Kaai
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Oost Station
Sint-Baafs-plein
Lousbergskaai
Slachthuisstraat
Volderstraat
Keizer-Karelstraat
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Brussels
BELGIUM
Brauwensplein
Recollettenlei
Veldstraat
Burg Lippensplein
Brabantdam
Ketelvest
Savaanstraat
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Lindenlei
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Bagattenstraat
St. Pietersnieuwstraat
Graaf van Vlaanderenplein
Lange Violettenstraat
Jozef Plateaustraat
Opper-Schelde
Pres. Fr. D. Rooseveltlaan
KONING ALBERTPARK
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Belfort en Lakenhalle (Belfry and Cloth Hall) **9**

Design museum Gent **2**

Museum voor Schone Kunsten **11**

Graslei and Korenlei guild houses **7**

Het Gravensteen (Castle of the Counts) **3**

Het Huis van Alijn **4**

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Stadhuis **8**

Vrijdagmarkt **5**

ACCOMMODATIONS ■

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Gravensteen **1**

✝ Church

ⓘ Information

✉ Post office

EXPLORING HISTORIC GHENT

Belfort en Lakenhalle (Belfry and Cloth Hall) ★★ These form a glorious medieval ensemble. From the 14th-century Belfry, great bells have rung out Ghent's civic pride down through the centuries, and a 54-bell carillon does so today. You can get high in the belfry with a guide and the aid of an elevator. The Cloth Hall of 1425 was the gathering place of medieval wool and cloth merchants.

Emile Braunplein. ✆ **09/223-99-22.** Admission 3€ ($4.35) adults, 2.50€ ($3.65) seniors and students, free for children under 13. Mid-Mar to mid-Nov daily 10am–12:30pm and 2–6pm. Free guided tours of Belfry May–Sept 2:10, 3:10, and 4:10pm. Tram: 1 or 4 to Sint-Baafsplein.

Design museum Gent ★ Something of a split personality, this worthwhile museum is housed in the Hotel de Coninck, an elegant baroque mansion dating from 1755 that's been joined by an ultramodern extension at the rear. Its collection ranges through a series of period rooms furnished and decorated in 18th- and 19th-century style, in the old place, and modern design in the new. Tapestries and a collection of Chinese porcelain are among the stellar items in the former setting. The new wing is strong on Art Nouveau—from Belgian masters of the genre Victor Horta, Henry van de Velde, and Paul Hankar, among others—and Art Deco design.

Jan Breydelstraat 5 (off Korenlei). ✆ **09/267-99-99.** http://design.museum.gent.be. Admission 2.50€ ($3.65) adults, students 1.20€ ($1.75), free for children 11 and under 12. Tues–Sun 10am–6pm. Closed Jan 1 and Dec 25–26 and 31. Tram: 1 or 4 to Sint-Veerleplein.

Het Gravensteen (Castle of the Counts) ★ Formidable and forbidding, the castle was designed by the counts of Flanders to send a clear message to rebellion-inclined Gentenaars. Surrounded by the waters of the Leie River, the castle begun by Count Philip of Alsace in 1180 has walls 2m (6½ ft.) thick, and battlements and turrets. If these failed to intimidate the populace, the counts could always turn to a well-equipped torture chamber; some of its accouterments are on display in a small museum.

Sint-Veerleplein. ✆ **09/225-93-06.** www.gent.be/gravensteen. Admission 6€ ($8.70) adults, 1.20€ ($1.75) seniors and ages 13–25, free for children under 13. Apr–Sept daily 9am–6pm; Oct–Mar daily 9am–5pm. Closed Jan 1 and Dec 24–25 and 31. Tram: 1 or 4 to Sint-Veerleplein.

Museum voor Schone Kunsten (Museum of Fine Arts) ★ In a park close to Sint-Pieters rail station, this newly refurbished museum is home to old and new masterpieces, including works by Van der Weyden, Brueghel, Rubens, Van Dyck, and Bosch, along with moderns like James Ensor and Constant Permeke.

Citadelpark. ✆ **09/240-07-00.** www.mskgent.be. Admission 2.50€ ($3.65) adults, 1.20€ ($1.75) seniors and ages 13–25, free for children under 13. Tues–Sun 10am–6pm. Closed Jan 1 and Dec 25–26.

Sint-Baafskathedraal (St. Bavo's Cathedral) ★★★ The 14th-century cathedral's plain Gothic exterior belies a splendid baroque interior and some priceless art. A 24-panel altarpiece, *The Adoration of the Mystic Lamb,* completed by Jan van Eyck in 1432, is St. Bavo's showpiece. Other treasures include Rubens's *The Conversion of St. Bavo* (1624), in the Rubens Chapel off the semicircular ambulatory behind the high altar.

Sint-Baafsplein. ✆ **09/269-20-45.** Cathedral: Free admission. Apr–Oct Mon–Sat 8:30am–6pm, Sun 1–6pm; Nov–Mar Mon–Sat 8:30am–5pm, Sun 1–5pm. *Mystic Lamb* chapel and crypt: 2.50€ ($3.65) adults (includes audio guide in English), 1.50€ ($2.20) children 6–12, free for children 5 and under. Apr–Oct Mon–Sat 9:30am–5pm, Sun 1–5pm; Nov–Mar Mon–Sat 10:30am–4pm, Sun 1–4pm. Tram: 1, 4 to Sint-Baafsplein.

MORE PLACES OF INTEREST

A row of gabled **guild houses** ★ built along **Graslei** between the 1200s and 1600s, when the waterway was Ghent's harbor, forms an ensemble of colored facades reflected on the Leie River. To view them as a whole, cross the bridge over the Leie to **Korenlei,** and stroll along the bank. These buildings were once the headquarters of the craftsmen, tradespeople, and merchants who formed the city's commercial core.

In the **Vrijdagmarkt,** a statue of Jacob Van Arteveld pays tribute to a rebel hero of the 1300s. This large, lively square hosts a street market every Friday.

The mixed Renaissance and Gothic style of the **Stadhuis (Town Hall),** Botermarkt 1, reflects a construction period that ran from 1518 until the 18th century. In an upstairs chamber called the **Pacificatiezaal** was signed the 1567 Pacification of Ghent, by which the Low Countries repudiated Spanish rule and declared religious freedom. The building can only be visited by guided tour from the tourist office (see above).

BOAT TRIPS & OTHER ORGANIZED TOURS

A **boat trip** ★ on the canals with **Rederij Dewaele** (✆ **09/223-88-53;** www.debootjesvangent.be) is a good way to view the city's highlights. Tour boats sail from Graslei and Korenlei April to October, daily from 10am to 6pm; November to March, on weekends from 11am to 4pm. Forty-minute cruises cost 5.50€ ($8) for adults, 5€ ($7.25) for seniors and students, 3€ ($4.35) for children ages 3 to 12, and free for children under 3; longer tours are available.

If you'd like a qualified guide to accompany you, the tourist office can provide one for 60€ ($87) for 2 hours, and 75€ ($109) for 3 hours. May to November, you can join a daily guided **walking tour** at 2:30pm (Apr, weekends only) from the tourist office for 6€ ($8.70), and free for children under 12.

Easter to October, tours by **horse-drawn carriage** (✆ **09/227-62-46**) depart from Sint-Baafsplein daily from 10am to 6pm. A half-hour ride is 25€ ($36) for a four- or five-seat carriage.

GHENT AFTER DARK

THE PERFORMING ARTS Opera is performed at the 19th-century **Vlaamse Opera,** Schouwburgstraat 3 (✆ **09/225-24-25;** www.vlaamseopera.be).

BARS & TAVERNS You should have a memorable evening in any one of Ghent's atmospheric cafes. **De Witte Leeuw,** Graslei 6 (✆ **09/233-37-33**), has a 17th-century setting and more than 300 varieties of beer. At **Dulle Griet,** Vrijdagmarkt 50 (✆ **09/224-24-55**), also known as Bier Academie, you'll be asked to deposit one of your shoes before being given a potent Kwak beer in a too-collectible glass with a wood frame that allows the glass to stand up.

Het Waterhuis aan de Bierkant, Groentenmarkt 9 (✆ **09/225-06-80**), has more than 100 different Belgian beers, including locally made Stopken. A couple of doors along, **'t Dreupelkot,** Groentenmarkt 12 (✆ **09/224-21-20**), specializes in deadly little glasses of *jenever* (a stiff spirit similar to gin), of which it has 100 varieties. Across the tramlines, the tiny **'t Galgenhuisje,** Groentenmarkt 5 (✆ **09/233-42-51**), is popular with students.

4

The Czech Republic

by Hana Mastrini

The Czech Republic, comprising the ancient kingdoms of Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia, is the westernmost of the former Soviet satellite countries and probably the best place to explore what used to be the other side of the Iron Curtain.

It's certainly one of the most progressive. In May 2004, nearly 15 years after 1989's bloodless "Velvet Revolution" over Communism and over a decade after the peaceful split with the Slovak part of the former Czechoslovakia, the Czechs topped the head of the list of new states admitted to the European Union.

If you have time to visit only one eastern European city, it should be Prague—widely regarded as one of the most beautiful cities in Europe, if not the world. The quirky and compact heart of Bohemia is a jumble of architecture. Gothic bestrides baroque, Renaissance adjoins cubist, with a splash of socialist realism and postmodern kitsch thrown in for good measure. On the hills and plains fronting the River Vltava you will glimpse the triumphs and tragedies of the past 10 centuries spiked with the peculiarity of the post-Communist reconstruction.

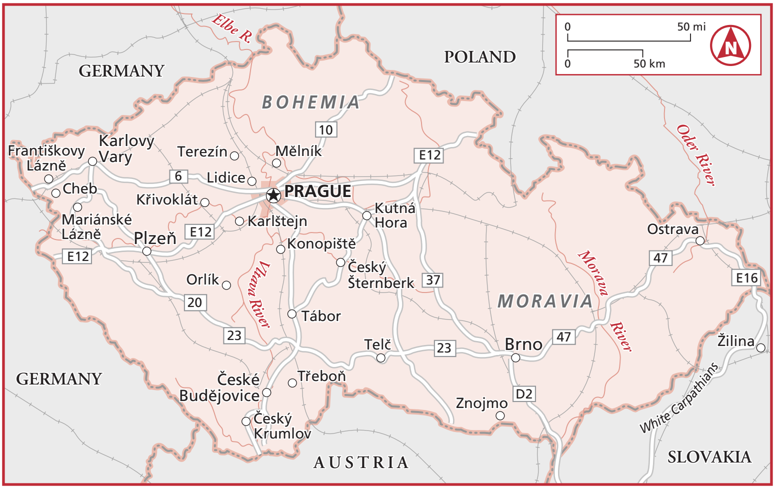
But Prague isn't the Czech Republic's only draw. Visitors are flocking to west Bohemia's world-renowned spas, which have been restored to their Victorian-era splendor, and to its many historic castles.

1 Prague ★★★

Prague has stood the test of time, but the floods of 2002 threatened to ruin centuries of culture and history forever. Happily, the waters were no match for the robust landmarks and iron will of the people of this ancient kingdom, and the city is back, and better than ever.

Here, the last 1,000 years of triumphs in art and architecture have collided, often violently, with power politics and religious conflicts. While Prague's rich collection of Gothic, baroque, and Renaissance buildings has stood stoically through all the strife, the streets and squares fronting the grand halls have often been the stages for tragedy. The well-worn cobblestones have felt the hooves of kings' horses, the jackboots of Hitler's armies, the heaving wheels of Soviet tanks, and the shuffling feet of students in passive revolt. Today spaghetti-strand alleys winding through Old Town are jammed with armies of visitors jostling for space to experience an aura of "Golden Prague" only to be bombarded with peddlers.

But while Prague's rebirth and its embrace of capitalism have come with labor pains of inflation, traffic jams (with new Western cars), and the ever-present pounding of construction crews, the stately spires of this living baroque and medieval museum rise above it all. Despite the furious development and reconstruction popping up all over, the classical monuments remain the city's bedrock. Prague Castle's reflection in the



The Czech Republic

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Vltava River
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MORAVIA
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Tábor
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47
Žilina
23
Telč
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Brno
GERMANY
České Budějovice
Třeboň
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White Carpathians
Znojmo
Český Krumlov
SLOVAKIA
AUSTRIA

Vltava or the mellow nighttime glow of the lanterns around the 18th-century Stavovské Divadlo (Estates Theater) gives the city a Mozart-really-was-here feel.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **By Plane** Prague's **Ruzyně Airport** (✆ **220-111-111;** www.csl.cz) is located 19km (12 miles) west of the city center. There's a bank for changing money (usually open daily 7am–9pm), car-rental offices (see "Getting Around," later in this chapter), and information stands that can help you find accommodations if you've arrived without reservations.

Official airport taxis are plentiful and line up in front of the arrivals terminal. Negotiate the fare in advance and have it written down. Expect to pay about 700Kč to 800Kč ($33–$38/£17–£19) for the 20 or so minutes to the city center, depending on the whims of the syndicate. If you want to save money, find other travelers to share the expense.

CEDAZ (✆ **220-114-296;** www.cedaz.cz) operates an **airport shuttle bus** from the airport to náměstí Republiky in central Prague. It leaves the airport daily every 30 minutes from 6am to 9pm and stops near the náměstí Republiky metro station. The shuttle costs 120Kč ($5.70/£2.85) for the 30-minute trip.

Even cheaper is **city bus no. 119,** which takes passengers from the bus stop at the right of the airport exit to the Dejvická metro station (and back). The bus/metro combo costs only 20Kč (95¢/50p), but the bus makes many stops. Travel time is about 40 minutes.

By Train Of the two central rail stations, **Hlavní nádraží,** Wilsonova třída, Praha 2 (✆ **224-224-200**), is the larger and more popular station, but it's also seedier. From the train platform, you'll walk down a flight of stairs and through a tunnel before arriving in the ground-level main hall, which contains ticket windows, a useful **Prague Information Service** office that sells city maps and dispenses information, and restrooms. Also useful is the **ČD center** (✆ **840-112-113;** www.cd.cz) run by the Czech Railways. It provides domestic and international train information as well as currency

Prague

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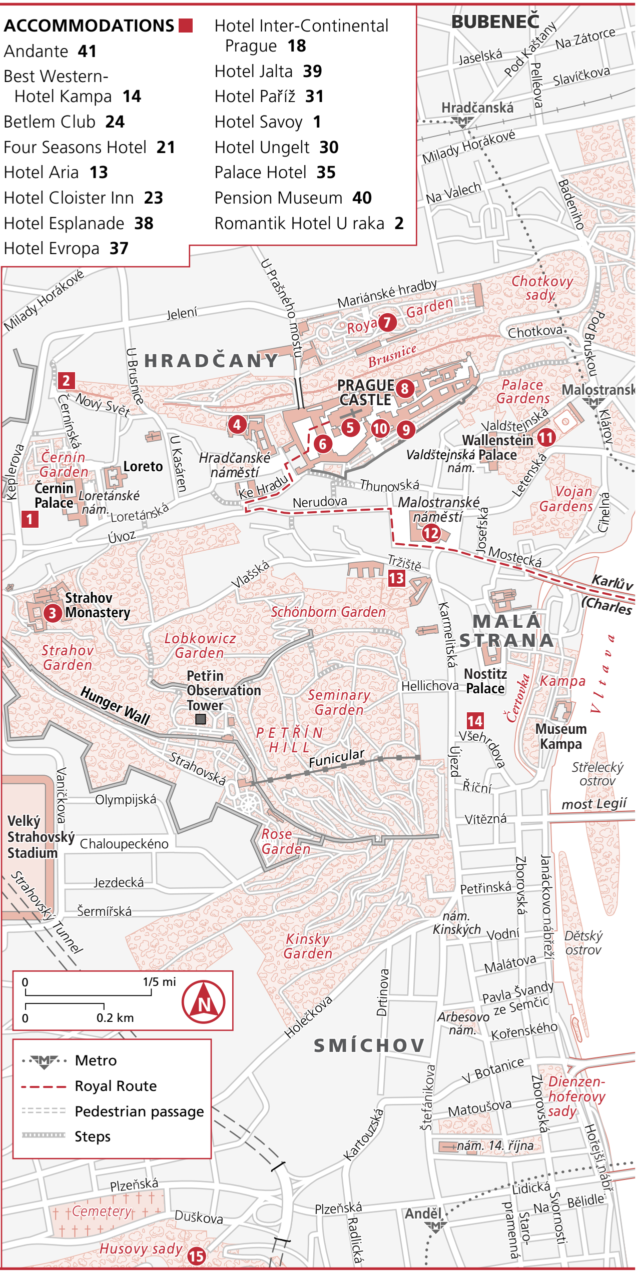
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Chotkovy sady
Chotkova
Pod Bruskou
Malostranská
Klárov
Mariánské hradby
Royal Garden
Brusnice
U Prašného mostu
Jelení
HRADČANY
U Brusnice
Nový Svět
Černínská
Keplerova
Černín Garden
Černín Palace
Loreto
Loretánské nám.
Loretánská
U Kasáren
Hradčanské náměstí
Ke Hradu
PRAGUE CASTLE
Palace Gardens
Valdštejnská
Wallenstein
Valdštejnská nám.
Palace
Letenská
Vojan Gardens
Cihelná
Thunovská
Nerudova
Malostranské náměstí
Josefská
Mostecká
Karlův (Charles
Úvoz
Tržiště
Vlašská
Strahov Monastery
Strahov Garden
Lobkowicz Garden
Schönborn Garden
Karmelitská
MALÁ STRANA
Petřín Observation Tower
Hunger Wall
Seminary Garden
PETŘÍN HILL
Hellichova
Nostitz Palace
Čertovka
Kampa
Vltava
Museum Kampa
Všehrdova
Funicular
Strahovská
Újezd
Říční
Střelecký ostrov
most Legií
Vaníčkova
Olympijská
Velký Strahovský Stadium
Chaloupeckého
Rose Garden
Vítězná
Jezdecká
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Strahovský Tunnel
Petřínská
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Zborovská
Janáčkovo nábřeží
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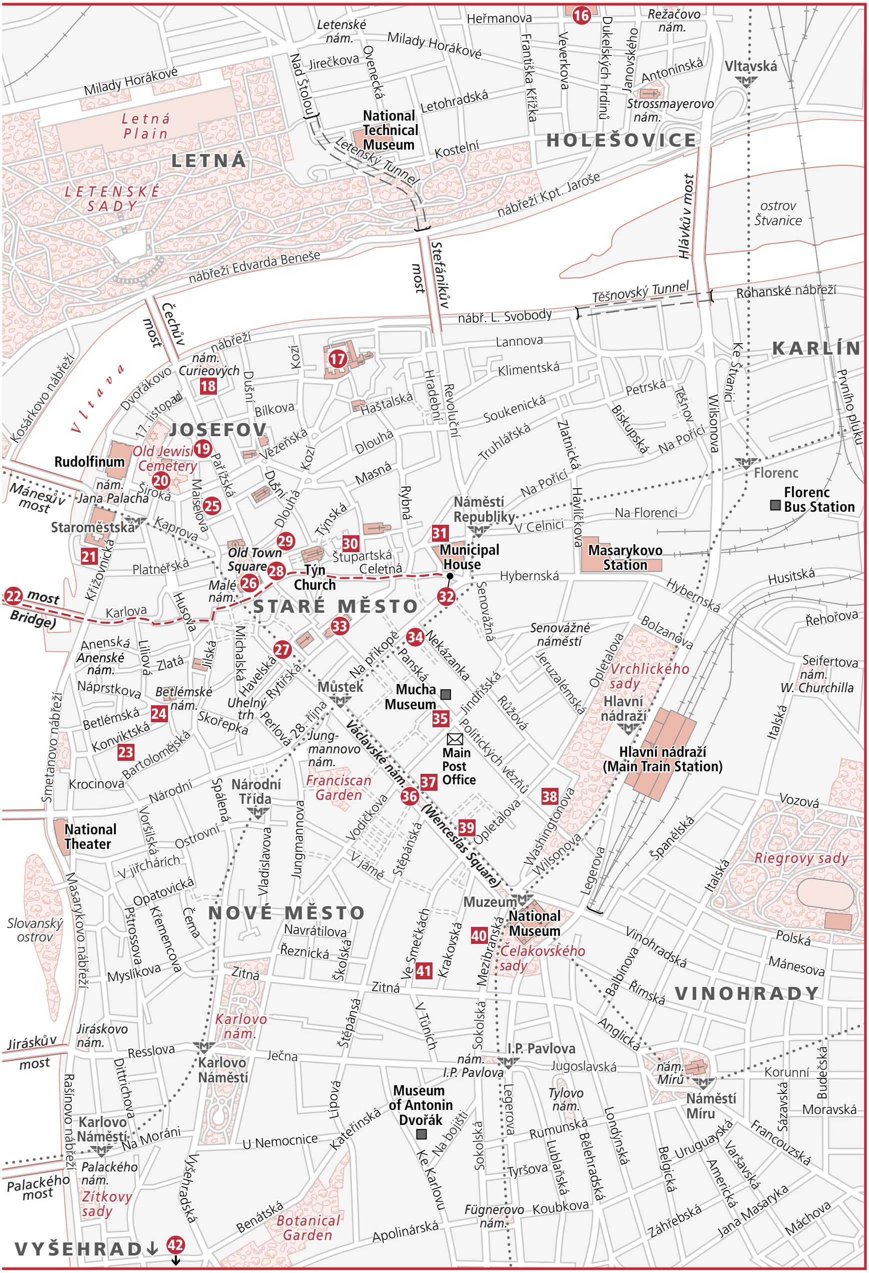
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Heřmanova
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Letenské nám.
Milady Horákové
Jirečkova
Ovenecká
Františka Křížka
Veverkova
Dukelských hrdinů
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Antonínská
Vltavská
Nad Štolou
Letohradská
Strossmayerovo nám.
Milady Horákové
Letná Plain
National Technical Museum
Kostelní
HOLEŠOVICE
LETNÁ
Letenský Tunnel
LETENSKÉ SADY
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ostrov Štvanice
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Štefánikův most
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Rohanské nábřeží
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KARLÍN
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Kosárkovo nábřeží
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Vězeňská
Dlouhá
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Rudolfinum
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Florenc
Pařížská
Široká
20
Dušní
Maiselova
25
Náměstí Republiky
Na Poříčí
Havlíčkova
Florenc Bus Station
Mánesův most
nám. Jana Palacha
Dlouhá
Týnská
Rybná
Na Florenci
Staroměstská
Kaprova
29
31
V Celnici
21
Old Town Square
30
Štupartská
Municipal House
Masarykovo Station
Křížovnická
Platnéřská
28
Týn Church
Celetná
Hybernská
Husitská
Malé nám.
26
32
Hybernská
22 most
(Charles Bridge)
Karlova
Husova
STARÉ MĚSTO
Senovážná
Řehořova
33
Senovážné náměstí
Bolzanova
Anenská
Anenské nám.
Liliová
Jilská
Michalská
27
34
Na příkopě
Seifertova nám.
W. Churchilla
Zlatá
Havelská
Rytířská
Panská
Nekázanka
Jindřišská
Jeruzalémská
Opletalova
Vrchlického sady
Náprstkova
Betlémské nám.
Uhelný trh
Můstek
Mucha Museum
Hlavní nádraží
Italská
Smetanovo nábřeží
Betlémská
24
Skořepka
Perlova
28. října
35
Růžova
Konviktská
23
Jungmannovo nám.
Václavské nám.
Main Post Office
Politických vězňů
Hlavní nádraží (Main Train Station)
Bartolomějská
Krocinova
Národní
Spálená
Národní Třída
Franciscan Garden
37
38
Vozová
36
(Wenceslas Square)
Washingtonova
National Theater
Vorsilská
Ostrovní
Vladislavova
Jungmannova
Vodičkova
39
Opletalova
Wilsonova
Španělská
Riegrovy sady
V jirchářích
V Jámě
Štěpánská
Legerova
Italská
Opatovická
Slovanský ostrov
Masarykovo nábřeží
Křemencova
Černá
NOVÉ MĚSTO
Muzeum
National Museum
Navrátilova
Polská
Pštrossova
Řeznická
Školská
40
Mezibranská
Čelakovského sady
Vinohradská
Ve Smečkách
Krakovská
Mánesova
Myslíkova
Zitná
41
Zitná
Balbínova
Římská
VINOHRADY
Karlovo nám.
Štěpánská
V Tůních
Sokolská
Anglická
Jiráskovo nám.
Jiráskův most
Resslova
Ječná
I.P. Pavlova
nám. I.P. Pavlova
Jugoslávská
nám. Míru
Korunní
Budečská
Karlovo Náměstí
Dittrichova
Lipová
Museum of Antonín Dvořák
Legerova
Tylovo nám.
Náměstí Míru
Sázavská
Moravská
Karlovo Náměstí
Na Moráni
Kateřinská
Na bojišti
Rumunská
Bělehradská
Londýnská
Uruguayská
Francouzská
U Nemocnice
Sokolská
Lublaňská
Belgická
Americká
Varšavská
Rašínovo nábřeží
Palackého nám.
Palackého most
Zítkovy sady
Vyšehradská
Ke Karlovu
Tyršova
Fügnerovo nám.
Koubkova
Záhřebská
Jana Masaryka
Máchova
Benátská
Botanical Garden
Apolinářská
VYŠEHRAD
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exchange and accommodations services. It is open daily 7 to 11am, 11:30am to 2pm, and 2:30 to 5:45pm. Visa and MasterCard are accepted. An information window is open 3:15am to 12:40am (the train station is closed 1–3am). The station's basement has luggage lockers for 60Kč ($2.85/£1.40) per day. They aren't secure though and should be avoided.

After you leave the modern terminal hall, a 5-minute walk to the left puts you at the top of Wenceslas Square and 15 minutes by foot from Old Town Square. Metro line C connects the station easily to the other two subway lines and the rest of the city. Metro trains depart from the lower level, and tickets, costing 14Kč to 20Kč (65¢–95¢/35p–50p), are available from the newsstand near the metro entrance. Gouging taxi drivers line up outside the station and are plentiful throughout the day and night but are not recommended.

Nádraží Holešovice, Partyzánská at Vrbenského, Praha 7 (✆ **224-615-865**), Prague's second train station, is usually the terminus for trains from Berlin and other points north. Although it's not as centrally located as the main station, its more manageable size and location at the end of metro line C make it almost as convenient.

VISITOR INFORMATION If you want to arrange accommodations before you come, Prague-based **E-travel.cz** offers handy English websites. The general site at www.travel.cz provides booking for hotels and practical touring information, while at www.apartments.cz, you can book a private apartment in a wide range of prices and areas. Once in the city, you can find E-travel.cz near the National Theater at Divadelní 24; or call its 24-hour call center (✆ **224-990-990;** fax 224-990-999; www.travel.cz). Especially for those arriving by train or air, **AVE Travel** (✆ **251-551-011;** www.ave travel.cz) can arrange accommodations or transfers inside these terminals. It has outlets at the airport, open daily from 7am to 10pm; and at the Nádraží Holešovice, open daily from 7am to 9pm.

The **Prague Information Service (PIS),** Rytířská 31, Praha 1 (✆ **12-444;** fax 222-221-721; www.pis.cz), near Můstek metro station, provides tips and tickets for upcoming cultural events and tours. It can also help you find a room. From April to October, it's open daily from 9am to 7pm. During the rest of the year, it's open daily from 9am to 6pm. There are also PIS offices inside Old Town Hall and the main train station.

The weekly newspaper the ***Prague Post*** (www.praguepost.com) has a fairly beefy culture section and a special supplement to help visitors. It can be found at most central newsstands.

Čedok, at Na Příkopě 18, Praha 1 (✆ **800-112-112** or 224-197-111; fax 224-216-324; www.cedok.cz), was once the state travel bureau and is now a privatized agency. Its entrenched position still gives it decent access to tickets and information about domestic events, and the staff can book rail and bus tickets and hotel rooms. Čedok accepts major credit cards and is open Monday to Friday from 9am to 7pm, Saturday 9:30am to 1pm.

CITY LAYOUT The **River Vltava** bisects Prague and provides the best line of orientation; you can use **Charles Bridge** as your central point. From the bridge, turn toward **Prague Castle,** the massive complex on the hill with the cathedral thrusting out. Now you're facing west.

Up on the hill is the Castle District known as **Hradčany.** Running up the hill between the bridge and the castle is the district known as **Malá Strana** (literally the "Small Side," but known as Lesser Town in English). Turn around, and behind you on the right (east) bank is **Staré Město (Old Town),** and farther to the south and east **Nové Město (New Town).** The highlands even farther east used to be the royal vineyards, **Vinohrady,** now a popular neighborhood for expatriates with a growing array of accommodations and restaurants.

On the left bank coming off Charles Bridge is **Mostecká Street,** and at the end of it sits the cozy square under the castle hill, **Malostranské náměstí.** On the hill outside the main castle gate is the motorcade-worn **Hradčanské náměstí,** on the city side of which you'll find a spectacular view of spires and red roofs below.

On the east side of Charles Bridge, you can wind through almost any of the old alleys leading from the bridge and get pleasantly lost amid the shops and cafes. The tourist-packed route through Old Town is **Karlova Street.** Like Karlova, almost any other route in Old Town will eventually lead you to **Staroměstské náměstí (Old Town Square),** the breathtaking heart of Staré Město. A black monument to Jan Hus, the martyred Czech Protestant leader, dominates the square. The tree-lined boulevard to the right behind Hus is **Pařížská (Parisian Blvd.)** with boutiques and restaurants; it forms the edge of the Jewish Quarter. Over Hus's left shoulder is **Dlouhá Street,** and in front of him to his left is the kitschy shopping zone on **Celetná.** Across the square to Hus's right, past the clock tower of Old Town Hall (Staroměstská radnice), is **Železná Street,** which leads to Mozart's Prague venue, the Estates' Theater. Farther to Hus's right is the narrow alley **Melantrichova,** which winds southeast to **Václavské náměstí (Wenceslas Square),** site of pro-democracy demonstrations in 1968 and 1989.

GETTING AROUND **By Metro, Bus & Tram** Prague's public transportation network is one of the few sound Communist-era legacies and is still remarkably affordable. In central Prague, metro (subway) stations abound. Trams and buses offer a cheap sightseeing experience but also require a strong stomach for jostling with fellow passengers in close quarters.

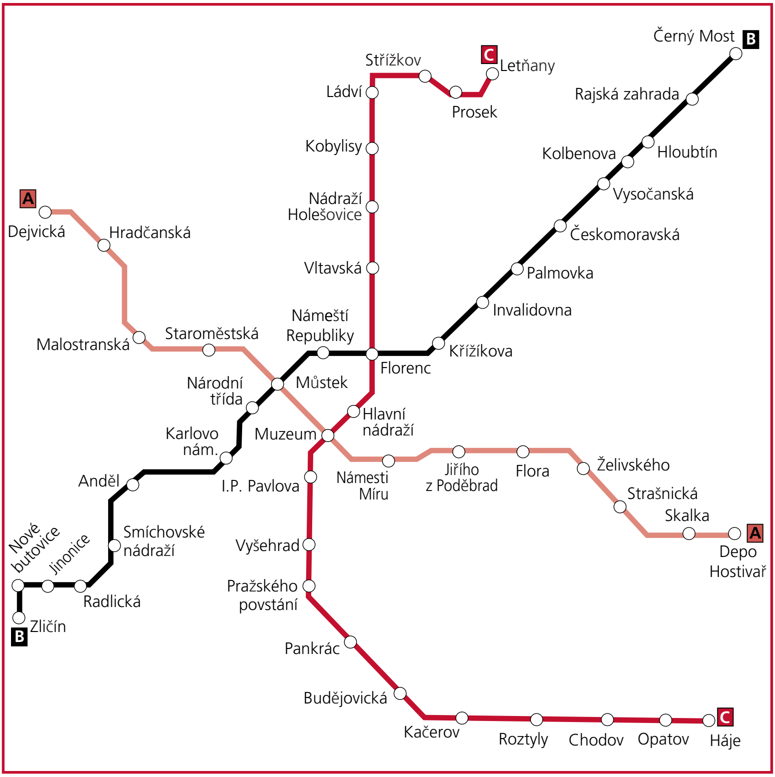
For single-use **tickets,** there are two choices. You can ride a maximum of five stations on the metro (not including the station of validation) or 20 minutes on a tram or bus, without transfers (on the metro you can transfer from line A to B to C within 30 min.), for 14Kč (65¢/35p); children 6 and under ride free, 6- to 15-year-olds for 7Kč (35¢/15p). This is usually enough for trips in the historic districts. Rides of more than five stops on the metro, or longer tram or bus rides, with unlimited transfers for up to 75 minutes (90 min. on Sat, Sun, public holidays, and after 8pm on workdays) after your ticket is validated, cost 20Kč (95¢/50p).

A **1-day pass** good for unlimited rides is 80Kč ($3.80/£1.90), a **3-day pass** 220Kč ($10/£5.25), a **7-day pass** 280Kč ($13/£6.65), and a **15-day pass** 320Kč ($15/£7.60).

You can buy tickets from yellow coin-operated machines in metro stations or at most newsstands marked TABÁK or TRAFIKA. Hold on to your validated ticket throughout your ride—you'll need to show it if a ticket collector (be sure to check for his or her badge) asks you. If you're caught without a valid ticket, you'll be asked, and not so kindly, to pay a fine on the spot while all the locals look on, shaking their heads in disgust. The fine is 500Kč ($24/£12).

Metro trains operate daily from 5am to midnight and run every 2 to 6 minutes. On the three lettered lines (A, B, and C, color-coded green, yellow, and red, respectively), the most convenient central stations are Můstek, at the foot of Václavské náměstí (Wenceslas Sq.); Staroměstská, for Old Town Square and Charles Bridge; and Malostranská, serving Malá Strana and the Castle District. Refer to the metro map on the inside back cover for details.

Prague Metro


A
Dejvická
Hradčanská
Malostranská
Staroměstská
Můstek
Muzeum
Náměstí Míru
Jiřího z Poděbrad
Flora
Želivského
Strašnická
Skalka
Depo Hostivař
A
B
Černý Most
Rajská zahrada
Hloubtín
Kolbenova
Vysočanská
Českomoravská
Palmovka
Invalidovna
Křižíkova
Florenc
Náměstí Republiky
Národní třída
Karlovo nám.
Anděl
Smíchovské nádraží
Radlická
Jinonice
Nové butovice
Zličín
B
C
Letňany
Prosek
Střížkov
Ládví
Kobylisy
Nádraží Holešovice
Vltavská
Hlavní nádraží
I.P. Pavlova
Vyšehrad
Pražského povstání
Pankrác
Budějovická
Kačerov
Roztyly
Chodov
Opatov
Háje
C

The 24 electric tram (streetcar) lines run practically everywhere, and there's always another tram with the same number traveling back. You never have to hail trams; they make every stop. The most popular trams, nos. 22 and 23 (aka the "tourist trams" and the "pickpocket express"), run past top sights like the National Theater and Prague Castle. Regular bus and tram service stops at midnight, after which selected routes run reduced schedules, usually only once per hour. Schedules are posted at stops. If you miss a night connection, expect a long wait for the next.

By Funicular The funicular (cog railway) makes the scenic run up and down Petřín Hill every 10 minutes (15 min. in winter season) daily from 9am to 11:30pm with an intermediate stop at the Nebozízek restaurant halfway down the hill, which overlooks the city. It requires the 20Kč (95¢/50p) ticket or any of the same transport passes as other modes of public transport and departs from a small house in the park at Újezd in Malá Strana.

By Taxi I have one word for you: *Beware.* If you must go by taxi, call reputable companies with English-speaking dispatchers: **AAA Taxi** (✆ **14014** or 222-333-222; www.aaataxi.cz); **ProfiTaxi** (✆ **844-700-800;** www.profitaxi.cz); or **SEDOP** (✆ **271-722-222;** www.sedop.cz). Demand a receipt for the fare before you start, as it'll keep them a little more honest.

By Car Driving in Prague isn't worth the money or effort. The roads are frustrating and slow, and parking is minimal and expensive. If you want to rent a car to explore the environs, try **Europcar Czech Rent a Car,** Pařížská 28, Praha 1 (✆ **224-811-290;** www.europcar.cz). There's also **Hertz,** Karlovo nám. 28, Praha 2 (✆ **225-345-031;** www.hertz.cz). **Budget** is at Ruzyně Airport (✆ **220-113-253;** www.budget.cz) and in the Hotel Inter-Continental, náměstí Curieových, Praha 1 (✆ **222-319-595**).

Local car-rental companies sometimes offer lower rates than the big international firms. Compare **CS Czechocar,** Kongresové centrum (Congress Center at Vyšehrad metro stop on the C line), Praha 4 (✆ **261-222-079** or 261-222-143; www.czechocar.cz), or at Ruzyně Airport, Praha 6 (✆ 220-113-454); or try **SeccoCar,** Přístavní 39, Praha 7 (✆ **220-800-647;** www.seccocar.cz).

FAST FACTS: Prague

American Express For travel arrangements, traveler's checks, currency exchange, and other member services, visit the city's sole American Express office at Václavské nám. 56 (Wenceslas Sq.), Praha 1 (✆ **222-800-237**). It's open daily from 9am to 7pm.

Business Hours Most **banks** are open Monday to Friday from 8:30am to 6pm. Business **offices** are generally open Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm. **Pubs** are usually open daily from 11am to midnight. Most **restaurants** open for lunch from noon to 3pm and for dinner from 6 to 11pm; only a few stay open later. **Stores** are typically open Monday to Friday from 9am to 6pm and Saturday from 9am to 1pm, but those in the tourist center keep longer hours and are open Sunday as well. ***Note:*** Some small food shops that keep long hours charge up to 20% more for all their goods.

Currency Exchange Banks generally offer the best exchange rates, but **American Express** is competitive and doesn't charge commission for cashing traveler's checks, regardless of the issuer. Don't hesitate to use a credit card; card exchange rates often work to the traveler's advantage. There's an American Express office in Prague (see above).

Komerční banka has three convenient Praha 1 locations with ATMs that accept Visa, MasterCard, and American Express: Na Příkopě 33, Spálená 51, and Václavské nám. 42 (✆ **800-111-055,** central switchboard for all branches; www.kb.cz). The exchange offices are open Monday to Friday from 8am to 5pm, but the ATMs are accessible 24 hours.

Živnostenská banka (UniCredit), Na Příkopě 20, Praha 1 (✆ **224-121-111;** www.ziba.cz), has an exchange office open Monday to Friday from 10am to 9pm and Saturday from 3 to 7pm.

Chequepoint keeps the longest hours but offers the worst exchange rates. Central Prague locations are at 28. října 13, Václavské nám. 48, and Železná 2 (all open 24 hr.).

Doctors & Dentists If you need a doctor or dentist and your condition isn't life-threatening, you can visit the Polyclinic at Národní, Národní 9, Praha 1 (✆ **222-075-120**) during walk-in hours Monday to Friday from 8:30am to 5pm. For emergency medical aid call their mobile phone (✆ 720-427-634). Dr. Stránský, the founder of this private practice, is an Ivy League–trained, straight-talking physician, born to a celebrated Czech émigré family that came back to reclaim property on National Boulevard. He turned part of the block into a Western-standard health center that acts as a clinic of record for the U.S. Embassy. You'll be asked to show proof of insurance or to pay upfront. The **Medicover Clinic,** Vyšehradská 35, Praha 2 (✆ **224-921-884**), provides EKGs, diagnostics, ophthalmology, house calls, and referrals to specialists. Normal walk-in hours are Monday to Saturday from 7am to 7pm.

For **emergency medical aid,** call the **Foreigners' Medical Clinic,** Na Homolce Hospital, Roentgenova 2, Praha 5 (✆ **257-272-174**).

Embassies The **U.S. Embassy,** Tržiště 15, Praha 1 (✆ 257-022-000), is open Monday to Friday from 8am to 4:30pm. The **Canadian Embassy,** Muchova 6, Praha 6 (✆ 272-101-800), is open Monday to Friday from 8:30am to 12:30pm and 1:30 to 4:30pm. The **U.K. Embassy,** Thunovská 14, Praha 1 (✆ 257-402-111), is open Monday to Friday from 8:30am to 12:30pm and 1:30 to 5pm. You can visit the **Australian Honorary Consul,** Klimentská 10, Praha 1 (✆ 296-578-350), Monday to Friday from 9am to 1pm and 2 to 5pm. The **Irish Embassy** is at Tržiště 13, Praha 1 (✆ 257-530-061), and is open Monday to Friday from 9am to 1pm and 2 to 5pm. The **New Zealand Honorary Consul** is located at Dykova 19, Praha 10 (✆ 222-514-672), and visits here are by appointment.

Emergencies Dial the European Emergency Number ✆ **112** or you can reach Prague's **police** at ✆ **158** and **fire** services by dialing ✆ **150** from any phone. To call an **ambulance,** dial ✆ **155.**

Hospitals Particularly welcoming to foreigners is **Nemocnice Na Homolce,** Roentgenova 2, Praha 5 (✆ **257-272-174**). The English-speaking doctors can also make house calls. See "Doctors & Dentists," above, for more information. In an emergency, dial ✆ **155** for an ambulance.

Internet Access One of Prague's trendiest places is the **Globe** ★, Pštrossova 6, Praha 1 (✆ **224-916-264;** www.globebookstore.cz), a cafe-cum-bookstore that provides Internet access. You can browse for 1.50Kč (5¢/5p) per minute. Its location is open daily from 10am until midnight.

Check your e-mail and surf the Web at the centrally located new **Internet Café Spika,** Dlážděná 4, Praha 1 (✆ **224-211-521;** http://netcafe.spika.cz). It is open Monday to Friday 8am to midnight and Saturday and Sunday 10am to 11pm, and the connection charge is 20Kč (95¢/50p) per 15 minutes. The **Bohemia Bagel,** Masná 2, Praha 1 (✆ **224-812-560;** www.bohemiabagel.cz), has about 15 PCs in a pleasant setting for 2Kč (10¢/5p) per minute; it is open daily from 7am to midnight on Monday to Friday, 8am to midnight on Saturday and Sunday. Another place to access the Internet is **Jáma** at V jámě 7, Praha 1 (✆ **224-222-383;** www.jamapub.cz). It is open daily 11am to 1am.

Language Berlitz has a comprehensive phrase book in Czech. A clever illustrated **Web tutorial** is found at **www.czechprimer.org**.

Lost Property If you lose any of your personal property, luggage, or other belongings, try your luck at the Lost Property Office at Karolíny Světlé 5, Praha 1 (✆ **224-235-085**).

Pharmacies The most centrally located pharmacy *(lékárna)* is at Václavské nám. 8, Praha 1 (✆ **224-227-532**), and is open Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm. The nearest emergency (24-hr.) pharmacy is at Palackého 5, Praha 1 (✆ **224-946-982**). If you're in Praha 2, there's an emergency pharmacy on Belgická 37 (✆ **222-519-731**).

Police Dial the European Emergency Number ✆ **112** from any phone in an emergency. For Czech police dial ✆ **158.**

Taxes A 19% **value-added tax (VAT)** is built into the price of most goods and services rather than tacked on at the register. Most restaurants also include the VAT in the prices stated on their menus. If they don't, that fact should be stated somewhere on the menu. There are no VAT refunds for the Czech Republic.

Telephone For **directory inquiries** regarding phone numbers within the Czech Republic, dial ✆ **1180.** For information about services and rates abroad, call ✆ **1181.** Dial tones are continual high-pitched beeps that sound something like busy signals in America. After dialing a number from a pay phone, you might hear a series of very quick beeps that tell you the line is being connected. Busy signals sound like the dial tones, only quicker.

There are two kinds of **pay phones** in normal use. The first accepts coins and the other operates exclusively with a phone card, available from post offices and newsdealers in denominations ranging from 50Kč to 500Kč ($2.40–$24/£1.20–£12). The minimum cost of a local call is 4Kč (20¢/10p). Coin-op phones have displays telling you the minimum price for your call, but they don't make change, so don't load more than you have to. You can add more coins as the display gets near zero. Phone-card telephones automatically deduct the price of your call from the card. These cards are especially handy if you want to call abroad, as you don't have to continuously chuck in the change. If you're calling the States, you'd better get a phone card with plenty of points, as calls run about 20Kč (95¢/£) per minute; calls to the United Kingdom cost 15Kč (70¢/35p) per minute.

A fast, convenient way to call the United States from Europe is via services like AT&T USA Direct. This bypasses the foreign operator and automatically links you to an operator with your long-distance carrier in your home country. The access number in the Czech Republic for **AT&T USA Direct** is ✆ **00-800-222-55288.** For **MCI CALL USA,** dial ✆ **00-800-001-112.** Canadians can connect with **Canada Direct** at ✆ **00-800-001-115,** and Brits can connect with **BT Direct** at ✆ **00-800-001-144.** From a pay phone in the Czech Republic, your local phone card will be debited only for a local call.

Tipping Rules for tipping aren't as strict in the Czech Republic as they are in the United States. At most restaurants and pubs, locals just round the bill up to the nearest few *koruny.* When you're presented with good service at tablecloth places, a 10% tip is proper. Washroom and cloakroom attendants usually expect a couple of koruny, and porters at airports and train stations usually receive 30Kč ($1.45/70p) per bag. Taxi drivers should get about 10%, unless they've already ripped you off, in which case they should get a referral to the police. Check restaurant menus to see if service is included before you leave a tip.

WHERE TO STAY

Prague's full-service hotels have begun to catch up with Western standards in the face of competition, but rooms are still more expensive than those in many European hotels of similar or better quality. **Pensions** with few services are cheaper than hotels, but when compared to similar Western B&Bs, they're still relatively expensive. The best budget lodgings are rooms in private homes or apartments.

Several local agencies offer assistance. The leader now is Prague-based **E-Travel.cz** (www.travel.cz or www.apartments.cz). Its office is near the National Theater at Divadelní 24 (✆ **224-990-990;** fax 224-990-999). Another agency, especially good for those arriving late by train or air, is **AVE Travel Ltd.** (✆ **251-091-111;** www.ave travel.cz). It has outlets at the airport, open daily from 7am to 10pm.

HRADČANY

Very Expensive

Hotel Savoy ★★★ One of Prague's finest hotels, the Savoy has attracted a demanding clientele. Just behind the Foreign Ministry and Černín Palace, and a few blocks from the castle, the Hotel Savoy welcomes you with a modern lobby. The guest rooms are richly decorated and boast every amenity as well as spacious marble bathrooms. The beds are consistently huge, which is in contrast to the customary central European style of two twin beds shoved together. As at the Palace, the pleasant staff provides an attention to detail that's a cut above that at most hotels in Prague. The Hradčany restaurant is excellent (p. 159).

Keplerova 6, Praha 1. ✆ **224-302-430.** Fax 224-302-128. www.hotel-savoy.cz. 59 units. From 10,475Kč ($499/£249) double; from 14,063Kč ($670/£335) suite. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Tram: 22 or 23. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; "relaxation" center w/small set of exercise machines; sauna; whirlpool; concierge; business services; salon; 24-hr. room service; massage; laundry. *In room:* A/C, TV, VCR, DVD, dataport, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Expensive

Romantik Hotel U raka ★ Hidden among the stucco houses and cobblestone streets of a pristine medieval neighborhood below Prague Castle is this pleasant surprise. The Romantik Hotel U raka (At the Crayfish), in a ravine beneath the Foreign Ministry gardens, has been lovingly reconstructed as an old-world farmhouse. It is the quietest getaway in this tightly packed city. The rustic rooms have heavy wooden furniture, open-beamed ceilings, and stone walls. The much-sought-after suite has a fireplace and adjoins a private manicured garden, making it a favorite with honeymooners. Water trickles through the Japanese garden that surrounds the hotel.

A few years ago, the English-speaking owners changed the name to "Romantik Hotel," which connotes to the mostly German clientele a higher standard than the previous "Pension." The owners are relaxed but attentive and will help you navigate the phalanx of nearby streets. Prague Castle is a 10-minute walk away, and you can catch a tram into the city center by walking up ancient steps at the side of the hotel. Reservations well in advance are recommended.

Černínská 10, Praha 1. ✆ **220-511-100.** Fax 233-358-041. www.romantikhotel-uraka.cz. 6 units (5 with shower only). From 5,166Kč ($246/£123) double; from 6,314Kč ($301/£150) suite. Rates include breakfast. AE, MC, V. Tram: 22 or 23. **Amenities:** Laundry service; safe in reception. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer.

MALÁ STRANA (LESSER TOWN)

Expensive

Best Western—Hotel Kampa On the edge of the park where troops once camped along the banks of the Vltava, the Kampa occupies what was a 17th-century armory.

It has a choice location on a quiet, winding alley off the park, with easy access to Malá Strana and Charles Bridge. The rooms suggest a bit of Communist chintz without much attention to aesthetics, but they're comfortable enough if you don't expect first-class surroundings. The best rooms boast a park view—request one of these when booking or checking in. There's a restaurant, but you'd be better off visiting one of those nearby, like Kampa Park under Charles Bridge (p. 166). The hotel also rents its large hall for private parties and that might become a disturbing factor in your stay here. Ask beforehand about planned events at the hall.

Všehrdova 16, Praha 1. ✆ **257-404-444.** Fax 257-404-333. www.euroagentur.cz. 84 units (shower only). From 6,170Kč ($294/£147) double. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Malostranská; then take tram no. 12, 22, or 23 to the Hellichova stop. **Amenities:** Restaurant w/garden; bar; Internet; room service; laundry service; dry cleaning. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Hotel Aria ★★ This new music-themed hotel recently opened in the heart of Malá Strana just around the corner from the St. Nicholas Cathedral. Each of its four floors is tastefully decorated by Versace designers to evoke a different genre of music, famous composer, or musician. The rooms and bathrooms vary in their size and layout, and all are kept to the same exceptionally high standard evident throughout the hotel. There is an impressive library of CDs, DVDs, and books about music off the lobby, and a full-time resident musicologist is available to help you choose a concert in the city. The Aria will delight newlyweds or any romantic soul with its luxurious but cozy atmosphere, and the extensive list of amenities, which includes a roof terrace garden with spectacular views of Malá Strana, a screening room, and music salon.

Tržiště 9, Praha 1. ✆ **225-334-111.** Fax 225-334-666. www.ariahotel.net. 52 units. From 10,332Kč ($492/£246) double; 12,915Kč ($615/£308) suite. Rates include breakfast. AE, MC, V. Metro: Malostranská and then tram no. 12, 22, or 23 to Malostranské nám. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; exercise room; courtesy car from the airport; 24-hr. business center; 24-hr. room service. *In room:* A/C, DVD/CD player, Internet, PC, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

STARÉ MÉSTO (OLD TOWN) & JOSEFOV

Expensive

Four Seasons Hotel ★★★ This addition to Prague's short list of luxury hotels is its most impressive. Located in an imposing position on the banks of the Vltava River right next to Charles Bridge, the Four Seasons provides an elegant base for exploring Old Town and enjoying the symphonies at the nearby Rudolfinum, while taking in a wonderful panoramic view of Prague Castle across the river.

The property actually melds three historic buildings from the city's most important architectural periods—baroque, Renaissance, and Art Nouveau. The most impressive wing, the 17th-century baroque villa, houses the Presidential Suite for 114,800Kč ($5,467/£2,733) per night. At least this rate grants a surprising amount of privacy (despite the hordes of tourists below the hotel), a cozy fireplace, a private dining room, and the privilege of peering into the castle's ornate staterooms across the way. The surrounding executive suites and guest rooms are smaller but still nicely appointed. The best have sweeping views and sunken marble tubs. In the tasteful and lower-priced Art Nouveau wing, comfortable doubles can be booked for less than $300, but the street-side views are much less impressive.

All rooms are fitted with fine solid wood furniture: some with antique pieces, others with more modern avant-garde accents. There are CD players with robust stereo systems, and high-speed Internet connections.

Veleslavínova 2a, Praha 1. ✆ **221-427-000.** Fax 221-426-000. www.fourseasons.com. 162 units. From 10,619Kč ($506/£253) double; from 23,390Kč ($1,114/£557) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Staroměstská. **Amenities:** Restaurant;

bar; health club; concierge; business services; 24-hr. room service; laundry; dry cleaning overnight. *In room:* A/C, TV, CD, DVD player, dataport, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Hotel Inter-Continental Praha ★ The upper suites of this hotel have hosted luminaries like Michael Jackson, Madeleine Albright, and, legend has it, global terrorist Carlos the Jackal. Mr. Jackson and Ms. Albright came for the comfortably reconstructed rooms; the Jackal apparently came because during the Communist era the hotel was a safe house with decent room and board. The 1970s facade is unappealing, but the interior has been updated with modern rooms, a glittering fitness center, and an atrium restaurant. The standard guest rooms aren't very large but are comfortable, with decent but not exceptional upholstered furniture, computer ports, and marble bathrooms. A riverside window might give you a glimpse of the castle or at least the metronome at the top of Letná Park across the river, where a massive statue of Joseph Stalin stood in the 1950s.

Náměstí Curieových 43/5, Praha 1. ✆ **296-631-111.** Fax 224-811-216. www.interconti.com. 364 units. From 4,161Kč ($198/£99) double; from 7,605Kč ($362/£181) suite. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Staroměstská. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; cafe; indoor swimming pool; fitness center; concierge; car rental; fax and business services; salon; 24-hr. room service; massage; laundry. *In room:* TV, dataport, minibar, hair dryer.

Hotel Paříž ★ At the edge of náměstí Republiky and across from the Municipal House, the 100-year-old Paříž provides a rare chance to put yourself back in the gilded First Republic. Each light fixture, etching, and curve at this Art Nouveau landmark recalls the days when Prague was one of the world's richest cities. The sinuous banister leading past the reception area is an intricate piece of ironwork, and the lobby is tastefully furnished in the Art Nouveau style known here as the *secese* motif. The high-ceilinged guest rooms are done in a purplish theme; they aren't plush but are comfortable and adequately equipped, with more modern furnishings than the lobby would suggest. It's the ground floor that really maintains an authentic period elegance. Now that the Municipal House is open again, offering beautiful salons, cafes, restaurants, and concert halls, you can have a 1920s experience without leaving the neighborhood.

U Obecního domu 1, Praha 1. ✆ **222-195-195.** Fax 222-195-907. www.hotel-pariz.cz. 94 units (74 with tub/shower combination, 20 with shower only). 4,650Kč ($221/£111) double; 8,250Kč ($393/£196) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: náměstí Republiky. **Amenities:** Restaurant; cafe; concierge; business services; 24-hr. room service; babysitting; laundry; dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, TV, dataport, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Hotel Ungelt ★★ *Value* *Kids* In the afternoon shadow of the Týn Church, just off Old Town Square, you'll find a place not as opulent as the Paříž, but a good value. The three-story Ungelt offers full apartments that are airy, spacious, and very comfortable for families. Each unit contains a bedroom, a living room, a full kitchen, and a bathroom. The bedrooms have standard-issue beds and not-too-attractive upholstered couches, but do boast luxurious accents like huge chandeliers and antique dressers. Some also have magnificent hand-painted ceilings. Because the Ungelt is in a tightly constructed neighborhood behind the church, there are no great exterior views. However, the back rooms overlook a quaint courtyard.

Štupartská 1, Praha 1. ✆ **224-828-686.** Fax 224-828-181. www.ungelt.cz. 10 units. From 3,616Kč ($172/£86) 1-bedroom suite; from 5,137Kč ($245/£122) 2-bedroom suite. Rates include breakfast. AE, MC, V. Metro: Staroměstská or line B to náměstí Republiky. **Amenities:** Bar; tour and activities desk at reception; car rental; Internet; business service; laundry. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer.

Moderate

Betlem Club *Value* Protestant firebrand Jan Hus launched his reformation drive at the reconstructed chapel across the street, but other than the vaulted medieval cellar where breakfast is served, little about the Betlem Club recalls those heady 15th-century days. Still, this small hotel has a great location on a cobblestone square. The rooms are unimaginatively decorated with bland modern pieces but are comfortable and fairly priced. The bathrooms are small but clean. If you come by car, you can park in spots in front of the hotel—a rarity for this parking-deficient city—but book a spot early.

Betlémské nám. 9, Praha 1. ✆ **222-221-575.** Fax 222-220-580. www.betlemclub.cz. 22 units (tub/shower combination). From 2,600Kč ($124/£62) double; from 2,900Kč ($138/£69) suite. Rates include breakfast. AE, MC, V. Metro: Národní třída. **Amenities:** Internet; babysitting; laundry; safe. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer.

Hotel Cloister Inn ★ *Value* Between Old Town Square and the National Theater, this property has been renovated into a good-value, midrange hotel. The original rooms of this unique spot were developed from holding cells used by the Communist secret police, the StB; the cells themselves were converted from a convent. It sounds ominous, but the Cloister Inn rooms are actually very inviting. A new proprietor has taken over management from the secret police and the Sisters of Mercy (the nuns, not the rock group). He has refurbished and expanded the hotel with smart colors and comfortable Nordic furniture. The rooms offer enough space, beds with comfortable firm mattresses, and reasonably sized bathrooms with shower only. All is maintained to a high standard. It is just 3 minutes by foot from both Charles Bridge and Wenceslas Square.

Konviktská 14, Praha 1. ✆ **224-211-020.** Fax 224-210-800. www.cloister-inn.cz. 73 units (showers only). From 3,100Kč ($148/£74) double. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Národní třída. **Amenities:** Concierge; tour and activities desk; Internet, safe. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

NOVÉ MĚSTO (NEW TOWN)

Very Expensive

Hotel Jalta ★ Recently reconstructed, the Jalta has put on a fresh face and a new attitude. The lobby is pretty cold and unwelcoming, but the rooms have high ceilings and decent upholstered chairs. An infusion of Japanese money has improved the hotel furnishings, which were formerly depressing Communist-issue pieces.

The Jalta is just below the statue of King Wenceslas, where the masses gathered to ring out the Communist government in 1989. The rooms facing the square have balconies, allowing a broad view of the busy square and a chance to imagine the scene on those historic, revolutionary November nights.

Václavské nám. 45, Praha 1. ✆ **222-822-111.** Fax 222-822-833. www.hoteljalta.com. 94 units. From 4,592Kč ($218/£109) double; 6,314Kč ($300/£150) suite. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Můstek or Muzeum. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; fitness center; concierge; business center; room service; laundry service; casino. *In room:* A/C, TV, Internet, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Palace Hotel ★★ The Palace has long been the quintessential Prague address for visiting dignitaries and celebrities like Josephine Baker, Enrico Caruso, Steven Spielberg, the Rolling Stones, and Britain's Prince Charles. Surpassed in comfort only by the Savoy in Hradčany, the Palace is a block from Wenceslas Square. The 1903 Art Nouveau building offers a more stoic "Viennese" approach to the era's architectural fashion than the more ornate Paříž (p. 156) and Esplanade (see below) nearby. The lobby boasts accents like buttery wood paneling and furniture with subtle flowered upholstery, but the overall effect is that of contemporary wealth sampling the past rather than building a museum to it. The staff makes a point of remembering guests' names and provides excellent service.

The soothing, delicately colored guest rooms are some of the largest luxury accommodations in Prague, each with an Italian marble bathroom. The special Lady Queen suites have luxurious dressing tables at which to prepare for an elegant night on the Golden City's social circuit.

Panská 12, Praha 1. ✆ **224-093-111.** Fax 224-221-240. www.palacehotel.cz. 124 units (tub/shower combination). From 5,166Kč ($246/£123) double; 6,314Kč ($301/£150) suite. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Můstek. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; cafe; conference hall; concierge; business services; 24-hr. room service; laundry service. *In room:* A/C, TV, Internet, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Expensive

Hotel Esplanade ★ Though the Esplanade doesn't get as much attention as the other Art Deco hotels around Old Town, a recent overhaul has put it into the top class. Constructed during the First Republic, the Esplanade began life as a bank and the offices of an Italian insurance company on a side street at the top of the square. The first owners must have had extravagant tastes, as indicated by the ornate accents that remain: An original multicolored flowered chandelier hangs from an atrium dome in the French restaurant that used to be the bank lobby. Huge oil paintings hang throughout, with intricate ceiling details framing every guest room. Individual private dining salons are available for special luncheons and meetings.

The halls have a musty feel, but the guest rooms are bright and airy, some with standard beds, others with French provincial headboards and tables, and others with elaborate canopies. Suite no. 101 is packed with antique wooden chairs, intricate inlaid tables, and a fascinating (but busy) embossed wall covering. Top-floor room nos. 711 and 712 offer a panorama of Prague. The quality of each room varies, so ask to see what you're offered before you commit. The main train station across the street may put you off, but the doorman claims the hotel is completely safe.

Washingtonova 19, Praha 1. ✆ **224-501-111.** Fax 224-222-306. www.esplanade.cz. 74 units (47 shower only). From 3,128Kč ($149/£74) double; from 5,711Kč ($272/£136) suite. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Muzeum. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; cafe/lounge; sauna; concierge; car-rental desk; room service; massage; babysitting; laundry; dry cleaning; executive-level rooms. *In room:* TV, dataport, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Moderate

Andante ★ *Value* This best-value choice near Wenceslas Square is tucked away on a dark side street, about 2 blocks off the top of the square. Despite the less-than-appealing neighborhood, this is the most comfortable property at this price. It lacks the character of the old Hotel Evropa (see below) but is better cared for. With modern beds and good firm mattresses, as well as high-grade Scandinavian furniture and colorful decorations, the rooms gain in comfort what they lose in adventure. They offer plenty of space and white, well-kept bathrooms with tub/shower combinations, some with shower only.

Ve Smečkách 4, Prague 1. ✆ **222-210-021.** Fax 222-210-591. www.andante.cz. 32 units (some with shower only, some with tub only). From 3,157Kč ($150/£75) double; 4,305Kč ($205/£103) suite. Rates include breakfast. AE, MC, V. Metro: Muzeum. **Amenities:** Restaurant; tours arranged w/the reception desk; business services; limited room service. *In room:* TV, dataport, minibar, hair dryer, iron, safe available at the reception desk.

Inexpensive

Hotel Evropa Established in 1889 as the Hotel Archduke Stephan, the Evropa was recast in the early 1900s as an Art Deco hotel. However, this is yet another classic that has seen much better days. Though the statue-studded exterior, still one of the most striking landmarks on Wenceslas Square, has recently been polished, the rooms are aging; most don't have bathrooms and some are just plain shabby. The best choice is a room facing the square with a balcony.

The hotel's famous cafe, a wood-encased former masterpiece that no longer glows, furthers the theme. Still, this is an affordable way to stay in one of Wenceslas Square's once grand addresses.

Václavské nám. 25, Praha 1. ✆ **224-215-387.** Fax 224-224-544. www.evropahotel.cz. 90 units, 20 with bathroom (tub only). 1,950Kč ($93/£46) double without bathroom; 3,000Kč ($143/£71) double with bathroom. Rates include continental breakfast. AE, MC, V. Metro: Můstek or Muzeum. **Amenities:** Restaurant; cafe; concierge; laundry; safe; luggage storage.

Pension Museum *Value* This is yet another example of a successful renovation of a 19th-century building in the very center of the city. Located just across the National Museum, the pension offers clean and comfortable rooms with modern furniture. Do not be put off by the busy road in front, however. There are actually only two rooms facing it, and their new double-glazed windows are blocking the noise very well. The private cozy courtyard garden serves as an oasis for relaxation, which is otherwise hard to find around Václavské náměstí, the city's most lively shopping area.

Mezibranská 15, Praha 1. ✆ **296-325-186.** Fax 296-325-188. www.pension-museum.cz. 12 units with bathroom (shower only). From 1,970Kč ($94/£47) double; 2,440Kč ($116/£58) suite. Rates include breakfast. AE, MC, V. Metro: Muzeum. **Amenities:** Atrium garden; concierge; laundry; Internet; luggage storage. *In room:* A/C, TV, fridge, hair dryer; safe.

WHERE TO DINE

The true Czech dining experience can be summed up in three native words: *vepřo, knedlo, zelo*—pork, dumplings, cabbage. If that's what you want, try most any *hostinec* (Czech pub). After you wash it down with Czech beer, you won't care about the taste—or your arteries. Other standard main courses are *svičková na smetaně,* sirloin slices in a baked, vegetable-based cream sauce served over tender, spongy, dumplings; *roštěná* (roast beef); *grilované kuře* (baked chicken); and *uzeniny* (smoked ham and other spicy cured meats).

HRADČANY

Expensive

Hradčany Restaurant ★ INTERNATIONAL Matching the crisp English setting of the hotel in which it resides, the Austrian-managed Hradčany is the most elegant choice this side of the castle. The menu lists vary depending on the season. At this writing, they offer delicious roasted veal with corn or tasty rump steak with pistachio crust. For dessert try their apple mousse. The service sets the standard for Prague, and the new lunch sitting is sure to attract a solid clientele to this jewel beyond the castle gates.

In the Hotel Savoy, Keplerova 6, Praha 1. ✆ **224-302-150.** Reservations recommended. Main courses lunch 450Kč–650Kč ($21–$31/£11–£15), dinner 590Kč–790Kč ($28–$38/£14–£19). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily noon–3pm and 6–11pm. Tram: 22 or 23, 2 stops past Prague Castle.

Inexpensive

Saté INDONESIAN The Saté has made quite a business out of simple Indonesian dishes at low prices. It's just down the street from the Castle Square (Hradčanské nám.) and past the massive Černín Palace. The unassuming storefront near the Swedish Embassy doesn't stand out, so look closely. The pork satay comes in a peanut sauce along with a hearty *mie goreng* (traditional Indonesian fried noodles). This casual place is a good choice if you've just visited the castle and need to refuel and rest your feet.

Pohořelec 152/3, Praha 1. ✆ **220-514-552.** Main courses 42Kč–220Kč ($2–$10/£1–£5.25). No credit cards. Daily 11am–10pm. Tram: 22 or 23.

A Few Dining Warnings

Some Czech restaurants gouge customers by charging exorbitant amounts for nuts or other seemingly free premeal snacks left on your table. Ask before you eat.

Many places, especially in the evening, tack on an extra 30Kč or 50Kč ($1.40/70p or $2.40/£1.20) per person as a cover charge, even if they don't offer live entertainment. If this charge is mentioned at all, it'll be written discreetly on the menu as *couvert.*

Finally, as more Czech restaurants begin to accept credit cards, stories of waiters adding a digit or two to your total have increased. One protection is to write out the total in words on the credit card bill, the way you would on a personal check. Keep a good record of where you've used your card to check against your bank statement to ensure that someone hasn't been using your number. The restaurants in this chapter don't seem to engage in these practices, but be on guard, especially if you veer from these suggested establishments.

MALÁ STRANA (LESSER TOWN)

Very Expensive

U Malířů ★ FRENCH The 1991 rebirth of the *vinárna* (wine bar) in the Malá Strana house "At the Painter's" brought French-trained Czech chef Jaromír Froulík's gourmet fare to Prague. Surrounded by Romance-age murals and gorgeously appointed tables in three intimate dining rooms, you're faced with some tough choices. Half-baked salmon filets swim in caper sauce, tiger shrimps come with oranges, lamb steak is glazed with red-pepper sauce, and baked quail bathe in sherry. The crispy breast of duck is a safe choice. If you want a truly old-world evening of elegant romance and French specialties, U Malířů is worth it.

Maltézské nám. 11, Praha 1. ✆ **257-530-000.** www.umaliru.cz. Reservations necessary. Main courses 480Kč–2,390Kč ($23–$114/£11–£57); fixed-price menus 1,190Kč ($57/£28) and 1,790Kč ($85/£43). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 7pm–2am. Metro: Malostranská.

Moderate

Hergetova Cihelna ★★ INTERNATIONAL/CZECH This late addition to a list of Prague's top dining experiences quickly became a popular spot on the riverbank. The building, dating from the 18th century, which used to serve as a brick factory *(cihelna),* was in very bad shape before its extensive reconstruction started in 2000. Now the interior is divided into a restaurant, cocktail bar, cafe, and music lounge, and the modern furniture from top Czech designer Barbora Škorpilová is simple and comfortable. From the large summer terrace you can experience one of the most exciting and unforgettable views of the river and Charles Bridge. The food is a good standard; I enjoyed their homemade Czech potato soup with forest mushrooms and garlic called *bramboračka* and Czech *svíčková* (sirloin) served in a cream sauce with dumplings and cranberries.

Cihelná 2b, Praha 1. ✆ **296-826-103.** www.cihelna.com. Main courses 215Kč–695Kč ($10–$33/£5.10–£17). AE, MC, V. Daily 11:30am–1am. Metro: Malostranská.

Kampa Park ★★ CONTINENTAL/SEAFOOD The best thing about Kampa Park is the summertime riverside view from its patio below Charles Bridge. In high season, the terrace is lively, with grills churning out solid portions of beef, pork, ribs, halibut, sea bass, and other barbecued favorites. Desserts like the fresh strawberry cappuccino have won raves from kids. During colder weather, this left-bank chalet is even more sublime, as candlelit tables provide glimpses of the stone bridge through the windows. Kampa Park boasts solid portions of fresh salmon, beefsteaks, and venison.

Na Kampě 8b, Praha 1. ✆ **296-826-102.** www.kampagroup.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses 345Kč–795Kč ($16–$38/£8.20–£19). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 11:30am–1am. Metro: Malostranská.

U modré kachničky ★★ CZECH/CONTINENTAL/WILD GAME The "Blue Duckling," on a narrow Malá Strana street, is our choice for the most innovative attempt at refining standard Czech dishes into true Bohemian haute cuisine. This series of small dining rooms with vaulted ceilings and playfully frescoed walls is packed with antique furniture and pastel-flowered linen upholstery. The menu is loaded with an array of wild game and quirky spins on Czech village favorites. President and former prime minister Václav Klaus took visiting leaders here when he wanted to prove that Czechs, too, have a unique style. Starters include lightly spiced venison pâté and gooseliver on toast. The roast rabbit, one of my mom's favorite dishes, is cooked to tender perfection and served with spinach and potato dumplings. You can choose from five different duck specialties. Finally, the ubiquitous *palačinky* crepes are thin and tender and filled with fruit, nuts, and chocolate.

Nebovidská 6, Praha 1. ✆ **257-320-308.** www.umodrekachnicky.cz. Reservations recommended for lunch, required for dinner. Main courses 290Kč–690Kč ($14–$33/£6.90–£16). AE, MC, V. Daily noon–4pm and 6:30–11:30pm. Metro: Malostranská. Reservations recommended. Main courses 240Kč–685Kč ($11–$33/£5.70–£16). AE, MC, V. Daily 11:30am–11:30pm. Metro: Můstek. There is an even more popular sister to the first "kachnička," at Michalská 16, Praha 1 (✆ **224-213-418**).

Inexpensive

Bohemia Bagel ★★ Kids BAGELS/SANDWICHES Bohemia Bagel emerged in 1997 as the answer to the bagel-less morning blues. The roster of golden-brown, hand-rolled, stone-baked bagels is stellar. There's plain, cinnamon raisin, garlic, onion, poppy, tomato, basil, cheese, or apple and nut providing a sturdy but tender frame for Scandinavian lox and cream cheese or maybe jalapeño-cheddar cheese (on which you can dollop Tex-Mex chili for the Sloppy Bagel). There are also turkey club, marinated chicken breast, and egg sandwiches. A Fatouš cucumber or tomato salad, daily quiche, gourmet coffee, and even a bloody mary round out the board. The earthy contemporary setting is comfortable.

There are five Bohemia Bagels around town, including the newest addition on Lázeňská in Malá Strana. There is also a Bohemia Bagel just off Old Town Square at Masná 2. This one includes an Internet cafe with 15 terminals (Internet connection 2 Kč [10¢/5p] per minute), a small garden with outside seating, and a playroom for children. The same menu is offered with the same opening hours. On www.bohemiabagel.cz you can order bagels and other food for at least 500Kč ($24/£12) to be delivered in Praha 1 within an hour.

Lázeňská 19, Praha 1 (Malá Strana). ✆ **257-218-192.** www.bohemiabagel.cz. Daily 7:30am–11pm. Bagels and sandwiches 30Kč–145Kč ($1.40–$6.90/70p–£3.45). No credit cards. Metro: Malostranská, or tram 12, 20, 22, or 23 to Malostranské náměstí. There's another branch at Masná 2 (Staré Město; ✆ **224-812-603;** Mon–Fri 7am–midnight, Sat–Sun 8am–midnight; metro: Staroměstská).

STARÉ MĚSTO (OLD TOWN)

Very Expensive

La Degustation ★★★ CONTINENTAL/CZECH Without a doubt, this is one of the city's best dining spots. It is housed in an Old Town corner building and has a minimalist interior. Three different seven-course menus are served, with a focus on diners' sampling an array of both food and wine. The *Boheme Bourgoisie* menu provides a spin on classic and modern European food, while the *Boheme Continentale* offers a tasting of smaller and simpler dishes. The *Boheme Traditionnelle* menu finds inspiration in old Czech cookbooks, and successfully raises, by miles, the level of Czech classic cuisine served in restaurants here. Each dish is accompanied by an excellent selection of wines served by experienced sommeliers. This unique experience is simply worth the money.

Haštalská 18, Praha 1. ✆ **222-311-234.** www.ladegustation.cz. Reservations recommended. Fixed-price menu 2,400Kč ($116/£58). AE, MC, V. Mon–Sat 5pm–midnight. Metro: Staroměstská.

Expensive

Bellevue ★★★ INTERNATIONAL With its excellent view of Prague Castle, the Bellevue is my perennial top choice. The ambitious owners (who also run Vinárna V zátiší and Mlýnec, both reviewed below) have put all their energy into the Bellevue's intelligent menu: beef, nouvelle sauces, well-dressed fish and duck, delicate pastas, and artistic desserts. For a tamer but extraordinary treat, try the filet of fallow deer. Al dente pastas share a plate with lobster-and-spinach purée, garlic and herbs, or tomatoes and olives. The greens on the side are always fresh and never overcooked. Desserts feature hot bitter chocolate tart, or wild berries in port and cognac served with vanilla and walnut ice cream. The consistent food and presentation and the pleasant and perfectly timed service make your meal at Bellevue one to remember.

Smetanovo nábřeží 18, Praha 1. ✆ **222-221-443.** www.zatisigroup.cz. Reservations recommended. Main courses 490Kč–890Kč ($23–$42/£12–£21). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily noon–3pm and 5:30–11pm; Sun brunch 11am–3pm. Metro: Staroměstská.

Vinárna V zátiší ★★ INTERNATIONAL Best described as "Bellevue Light," this laid-back version of our riverfront favorite provides the same quality and similar ingredients, with a few lighter choices such as the vegetarian dish gratinéed tagliatelle with broad beans. There are some fish choices as well. V zátiší ("still life") has a casual elegance, like the living room of a beachfront Mediterranean villa, with cushy upholstered wrought-iron chairs and plenty of artfully arranged flora.

Liliová 1, Praha 1. ✆ **222-221-155.** www.zatisigroup.cz. Reservations recommended. Main courses 495Kč–795Kč ($24–$38/£12–£19). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily noon–3pm and 5:30–11pm. Metro: Národní třída.

Moderate

Kogo ★★ *Value* ITALIAN This modern, upscale trattoria has become the local Italian favorite for the many brokers and bankers who work nearby. Tucked away on a side street adjacent to the Estates' Theater, Kogo manages to combine the warmth and boisterousness of a family restaurant with a high culinary standard in its pastas, meaty entrees, and desserts. Try the fresh, zesty mussels in white wine and garlic *(cozze al vino bianco e aglio)* or the tangy grilled salmon. The wine list is extensive, and the tiramisu, if you get it before the nightly supply runs out, is light and sweet without being soggy.

Kogo has a second location in the atrium of the Slovanský Dům shopping and culture center at Na Příkopě 22 (✆ **221-451-259**). This venue, which maintains the menu of its parent, has become a favorite hangout of the 30-something set. However, it lacks the cozy ambience of the original.

Havelská 27, Praha 1. ✆ **224-214-543.** www.kogo.cz. Reservations recommended. Main courses 190Kč–480Kč ($9–$23/£4.50–£11). AE, MC, V. Daily 9am–midnight. Metro: Můstek.

Reykjavik SEAFOOD/INTERNATIONAL On one of the busiest pedestrian intersections, Reykjavik is a great choice just off Charles Bridge. It's decorated inside like a clubby brasserie with plenty of cozy wood and curiosities, and the narrow menu consistently features Icelandic salmon and steaks from the north country. During summer you can dine on a platform out in front as the throngs of tourists pass by on Karlova Street on their way to Charles Bridge or Old Town Square.

Karlova 20, Praha 1. ✆ **222-221-218.** www.reykjavik.cz. Main courses 265Kč–525Kč ($13–$25/£6.30–£13). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 11am–midnight. Metro: Staroměstská.

Inexpensive

Pizzeria Rugantino ★★ *Kids* PIZZA/PASTA Pizzeria Rugantino serves generous iceberg lettuce salads and the best selection of individual pizzas in Prague. Wood-fired stoves and handmade dough result in a crisp and delicate crust. The Diabolo with fresh garlic bits and very hot chilies goes nicely with a salad and a pull of beer. More spacious Rugantino II was opened at Klimentská 40, Praha 1 (✆ **224-815-192;** metro: Florenc or náměstí Republiky) with children's corner and plasma TV. The constant buzz, nonsmoking area, heavy childproof wooden tables, and lots of baby chairs make this a family favorite.

Dušní 4, Praha 1. ✆ **222-318-172.** Individual pizzas 100Kč–250Kč ($4.75–$12/£2.40–£5.95). AE, MC, V. Mon–Sat 11am–11pm; Sun noon–11pm. Metro: Staroměstská.

NOVÉ MĚSTO (NEW TOWN)

Moderate

Fakhreldine LEBANESE This outlet of London's popular Lebanese restaurant delivers a quality exotic menu in an elegant dining room. Entrees include charcoal-grilled lamb, marinated veal, and steak. Better yet, put together a mix of appetizers in a fantastic variety of tastes to constitute a meal. These include raw lamb, grilled Armenian sausages, the spicy eggplant dish baba ghanouj, and Lebanese cream cheese. The hummus isn't too pastelike, as it is in many Middle Eastern eateries, and meals come with fresh unleavened nan bread. Three kinds of baklava and cardamom-scented coffee are a great final course. Service is sharp and attentive.

Štěpánská 32, Praha 1. ✆ **222-232-616.** Main courses 250Kč–350Kč ($12–$17/£5.95–£8.35). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat noon–midnight. Metro: Muzeum.

Restaurant U Čížků ★ *Value* CZECH One of the city's first private restaurants, this cozy cellar-cum–hunting lodge on Charles Square can now be identified by the long line of German tour buses parked outside. The fare is purely Czech, and the massive portions of game, smoked pork, and other meats will stay with you for a while. The traditional *Staročeský talíř,* with a variety of local meat preparations, dumplings, and cabbage, is about as authentic as it gets. The excellent value earns this pioneer a star.

Karlovo nám. 34, Praha 2. ✆ **222-232-257.** www.restaurantucizku.cz. Reservations recommended. Main courses 120Kč–290Kč ($5.70–$14/£2.85–£6.90). AE, MC, V. Daily 11:30am–10:30pm. Metro: Karlovo nám.

Zahrada v Opeře (Garden at the Opera) ★ INTERNATIONAL Czech designer Bořek Šípek, the man who remodeled former president Havel's offices in Prague Castle, has created a pleasant earthy interior mixing dark and light wood, rattan chairs,

Moments Kavárna Society

Cafe life is back in a big way in Prague. From dissident blues to high society, these are the places where nonpub Praguers spend their afternoons and evenings, sipping coffee and smoking cigarettes while reading, writing, or talking with friends.

The **Kavárna (Cafe) Slavia** ★, Národní at Smetanovo nábřeží2, Praha 1 (✆ **224-218-493;** metro: Národní třída) reopened in 1997 after a half-decade's sleep, in a fight for restoration spearheaded by regular Vaclav Haval. The restored crisp Art Deco room recalls the Slavia's 100 years as a meeting place for the city's cultural and intellectual crowd. You'll still find a relatively affordable menu of light fare served with the riverfront views of Prague Castle and the National Theater. It's open daily 8am to midnight.

Of all the beautifully restored spaces in the Municipal House, **Kavárna Obecní dům** ★★, naměstí Republiky 5, Praha 1 (✆ **222-002-763;** metro: naměstí Republiky), might be its most spectacular room. Lofty ceilings, marble accents and tables, an altar-like mantle, huge windows, and period chandeliers provide the impressive setting for coffees, teas, and other drinks, along with pastries and light sandwiches. It's open daily 7:30am to 11pm.

A New Age alternative to the clatter of the kavárnas is **Dahab** ★★, Dlouhá 33, Praha 1 (✆ **224-827-375;** metro: Náměstí Republiky). This tearoom was founded by Prague's king of tea, Luboš Rychvalský, who introduced Prague to Eastern and Arabic tea cultures soon after the 1989 revolution. Here you can choose from about 20 varieties of tea and more than 10 kinds of coffee. Arabic soups, hummus, tahini, couscous, pita, and tempting sweets are also on the menu. It's open daily from noon to midnight.

and intricate floral arrangements. In this calm oasis, you can relax and enjoy an excellent meal. Highly recommended among the light (but lively) salads and fish and vegetarian dishes is the filet of salmon boiled in champagne with an egg yolk tarragon sauce and served with ginger rice and sautéed vegetables.

Legerova 75, Praha 1 (behind the Radio Free Europe building). ✆ **224-239-685.** www.zahradavopere.cz. Main courses 150Kč–530Kč ($7.15–$25/£3.55–£13). AE, MC, V. Daily 11:30am–1am. Metro: Muzeum.

Inexpensive

Café-Restaurant Louvre CZECH/INTERNATIONAL A big, breezy upstairs hall, Café-Restaurant Louvre is great for breakfast, coffee, an inexpensive pretheater meal, or an upscale game of pool. A fabulous Art Nouveau interior, with huge original chandeliers, buzzes with the noise of local coffee talk, the shopping crowd, business lunches, and students. Starters include smoked salmon, or Greek *tzatziki* (yogurt and cucumber). Main dishes range from grilled steak of salmon to lamb filets with rosemary. Avoid the always-overcooked pasta dishes and stick to the basic meats and fish. In the snazzy billiards parlor in back, you can enjoy drinks and light meals.

Národní 20, Praha 1. ✆ **224-930-949.** www.cafelouvre.cz. Reservations accepted. Main courses 79Kč–259Kč ($3.75–$12/£1.90–£6.15). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 8am–11:30pm. Metro: Národní třída.

VINOHRADY

Moderate

Bonante Restaurant Value INTERNATIONAL My favorite choice above Wenceslas Square in Vinohrady, Bonante is especially great for shunning the cold of an autumn or winter evening near the roaring fire in the brick-cellar dining room. This place is a bridge between French cuisine and other Continental foods. You can start with a fish soup with salmon and mussels, or deep-fried jalapeños. There are several vegetarian and low-calorie chicken-based selections. Jazz combos play on most nights from a small stage in the corner. When reserving, ask for a table within view of, but not too close to, the fireplace. If you do break into a sweat, it's not because of the check, as Bonante provides one of the best values in a full-service restaurant in Prague.

Anglická 15, Praha 2. ✆ **224-221-665.** www.bonante.cz. Reservations recommended. Main courses 105Kč–295Kč ($5–$14/£2.50–£7). AE, MC, V. Daily 11am–11pm. Metro: I. P. Pavlova or náměstí Míru.

Inexpensive

Radost FX Café ★★ Value VEGETARIAN *En vogue* and full of vegetarian offerings, Radost is a clubhouse for hip new Bohemians, but it attracts plenty of international visitors, too. The veggie burger served on a grain bun is well seasoned and substantial, and the soups, like lentil and onion, are light and full of flavor. Sautéed vegetable dishes, tofu, and huge Greek salads round out the health-conscious menu. The dining area is a dark rec room seemingly furnished by a rummage sale of upholstered armchairs, chaise longues, and couches from the 1960s. Meals are served at coffee tables. Too cool.

Bělehradská 120, Praha 2. ✆ **224-254-776.** www.radostfx.cz. Main courses 60Kč–285Kč ($2.85–$14/£1.45–£6.80). AE, MC, V. Daily 11:30am–5am. Metro: I. P. Pavlova.

SEEING THE SIGHTS

In Prague, you'll get the most enjoyment from a slow, aimless wander through the city's heart. Except for the busy main streets, where you may have to dodge traffic, Prague is ideal for walking—really the only way to explore the city. Most of the city's oldest areas are walking zones, with motor traffic restricted. If you have the time and energy, absorb the grand architecture of Prague Castle and the Old Town skyline (best from Charles Bridge) at sunrise and then at sunset. You'll see two completely different cities.

SIGHTSEEING SUGGESTIONS FOR FIRST-TIME VISITORS

If You Have 1 Day If you have only 1 day, do what visiting kings and potentates do on a short visit: Walk the **Royal Route** from the top of Hradčany hill (trams nos. 22 and 23 or a taxi are suggested for the ride up unless you're very fit). Tour **Prague Castle,** and then stroll across Charles Bridge on the way to the winding alleys of **Staré Město (Old Town).**

If You Have 2 Days On day 2, explore the varied sights of **Staré Město (Old Town), Malá Strana (Lesser Town),** and **Josefov (the Jewish Quarter).** Wander and browse through numerous shops and galleries offering the finest Bohemian crystal, porcelain, and modern artwork, as well as top boutiques, cafes, and restaurants.

If You Have 3 Days On day 3, visit the **National Art Gallery** at Šternberk Palace and the **Strahov Monastery** with its ornate libraries. Include the **Loreto Palace,** with its peculiar artwork.

If You Have 4 or 5 Days Beyond day 3, tour one of the many other museums or galleries. For a great respite from the crowded city, visit the old southern citadel over the Vltava, **Vyšehrad,** where you get a completely different view of the city you've just explored.

PRAGUE CASTLE (PRAŽSKÝ HRAD) & CHARLES BRIDGE (KARLŮV MOST)

Dating from the 14th century, **Karlův most (Charles Bridge)** ★★★, Prague's most celebrated structure, links Prague Castle to Staré Město. For most of its 600 years, the 510m-long (1,673-ft.) span has been a pedestrian promenade, though for centuries walkers had to share the concourse with horse-drawn vehicles and trolleys. Today, the bridge is filled with folks walking among artists and busking musicians.

The best times to stroll across the bridge are in early morning and around sunset, when the crowds have thinned and the shadows are most mysterious. You'll be criss-crossing the bridge throughout your stay.

Pražský Hrad (Prague Castle) ★★★ *Moments* The huge hilltop complex known collectively as Pražský Hrad encompasses dozens of houses, towers, churches, courtyards, and monuments. A visit to the castle can easily take an entire day or more, depending on how thoroughly you explore it. Still, you can see the top sights—St. Vitus Cathedral, the Royal Palace, St. George's Basilica, the Powder Tower, and Golden Lane—in the space of a morning or an afternoon.

St. Vitus Cathedral (Chrám sv. Víta), named for a wealthy 4th-century Sicilian martyr, isn't just the dominant part of the castle, it's the most important section historically. Built over various phases beginning in A.D. 926 as the court church of the Premyslid princes, the cathedral has long been the center of Prague's religious and political life. Of the massive Gothic cathedral's 21 chapels, the **St. Wenceslas Chapel (Svatováclavská kaple)** ★ stands out as one of Prague's few must-see, indoor sights.

The Royal Palace (Královský palác) is located in the third courtyard of the castle grounds. Vaulted **Vladislav Hall (Vladislavský sál),** the interior's centerpiece, hosted coronations and is still used for special occasions of state such as inaugurations of presidents. The adjacent Diet was where kings and queens met with their advisers and where the Supreme Court was held

St. George's Basilica (Bazilika sv. Jiří), adjacent to the Royal Palace, is Prague's oldest Romanesque structure, dating from the 10th century. It also houses Bohemia's first convent. No longer serving a religious function, the convent contains a gallery of Gothic Czech art.

Golden Lane (Zlatá ulička) and Daliborka Tower ★ is a picturesque street of tiny 16th-century houses built into the castle fortifications. Once home to castle sharpshooters, the houses now contain small shops, galleries, and refreshment bars. In 1917, Franz Kafka is said to have lived briefly at no. 22; however, the debate continues as to whether Kafka actually took up residence or just worked in a small office there.

The **Powder Tower (Prašná věž, aka Mihulka)** forms part of the northern bastion of the castle complex just off the Golden Lane. Originally a gunpowder storehouse and a cannon tower, it was turned into a laboratory for the 17th-century alchemists serving the court of Emperor Rudolf II.

Tickets are sold at the **Prague Castle Information Center** in the second courtyard after you pass through the main gate from Hradčanské náměstí. The center also arranges tours in various languages and sells tickets for individual concerts and exhibits.

Hradčanské náměstí, Hradčany, Praha 1. ☎ **224-373-368.** Fax 224-310-896. www.hrad.cz. Grounds free. Combination ticket for permanent exhibition, St. George's Basilica, Powder Tower, Golden Lane, Daliborka Tower, the Prague Castle Picture Gallery, without guide, 350Kč ($17/£8.35) adults, 175Kč ($8.35/£4.15) students; short tour (Royal Palace, St. George's Basilica, Golden Lane, and Daliborka Tower) 250Kč ($12/£5.95) adults, 125Kč ($5.95/£3) students. For guided tours (groups of 5 and more), supplement 100Kč ($4.75/£2.40) per person and hour (4 hr. minimum) only Tues–Sun 9am–4pm. All tours free for children under 6. Tickets valid 2 days. The castle is open daily 9am to 6pm (to 4pm Nov–Mar). Metro: Malostranská, then tram no. 22 or 23, up the hill 2 stops.

THE JEWISH MUSEUM

The Jewish Museum in Prague (www.jewishmuseum.cz) is the name of the organization managing all the Jewish landmarks in Josefov, which forms the northwest quarter of Old Town. The museum offers guided package tours with an English-speaking guide as part of a comprehensive admission price. The package includes the Ceremonial Hall, Old Jewish Cemetery, Old-New Synagogue, Pinkas Synagogue, Klaus Synagogue, Maisel Synagogue, and Spanish Synagogue. From April to October, tours leave on the hour starting at 9am with the last tour at 5pm, but there must be at least 10 people in a group. Off season, the tours are between 9am and 4:30pm. The package costs 490Kč ($23/£12) for adults and 330Kč ($16/£7.85) for students, free for children under 6.

Maisel Synagogue The Maisel Synagogue now serves as the exhibition space for the **Jewish Museum.** In 1994, the State Jewish Museum closed; the Torah covers, 100,000 books, and other exhibits once housed there were given to the Jewish community, who then proceeded to return many items to synagogues throughout the country. The Nazis destroyed much of Prague's Jewish ghetto and heritage during World War II. Ironically, those same Germans constructed an "exotic museum of an extinct race," thus salvaging thousands of objects, such as the valued Torah covers, books, and silver now displayed at the Maisel Synagogue.

Maiselova 10 (btw. Široká and Jáckymova 3), Praha 1. ☎ **222-317-191.** www.jewishmuseum.cz. See admission information above. Metro: Line A to Staroměstská.

Old-New Synagogue (Staronová synagóga) ★ First called the New Synagogue to distinguish it from an even older one that no longer exists, the Old-New Synagogue, built around 1270, is Europe's oldest remaining Jewish house of worship. The faithful have prayed here continuously for more than 700 years, carrying on even after a massive 1389 pogrom in Josefov that killed over 3,000 Jews. Its use as a house of worship was interrupted only between 1941 and 1945 because of the Nazi occupation. The synagogue is also one of Prague's great Gothic buildings, built with vaulted ceilings and retro-fitted with Renaissance-era columns. It is not part of the Jewish Museum, so you can visit this synagogue separately.

Červená 2. ☎ **222-317-191.** www.synagogue.cz. Admission 200Kč ($9.50/£4.75) adults, 140Kč ($6.65/£3.35) students. (If part of the package for Jewish Museum, 490Kč/$23/£12 adults, 330Kč/$16/£7.85 students.) Free for children under 6. Jan–Mar Sun–Thurs 9:30am–4:30pm, Fri 9am–2pm; Apr–Oct Sun–Fri 9:30am–6pm; Nov–Dec Sun–Thurs 9:30am–5pm, Fri 9am–2pm. Metro: Line A to Staroměstská.

Old Jewish Cemetery (Starý židovský hřbitov) ★ Just 1 block from the Old-New Synagogue, this is one of Europe's oldest Jewish burial grounds, dating from the mid–15th century. Because the local government of the time didn't allow Jews to bury their dead elsewhere, graves were dug deep enough to hold 12 bodies vertically, with each tombstone placed in front of the last. The result is one of the world's most crowded cemeteries: a 1-block area filled with more than 20,000 graves. Among the most famous persons buried here are the celebrated Rabbi Loew (Löw; d. 1609), who created the legend of Golem (a giant clay "monster" to protect Prague's Jews); and banker Markus Mordechai Maisel (d. 1601), then the richest man in Prague and protector of the city's Jewish community during the reign of Rudolf II.

U Starého hřbitova; the entrance is from Široká 3. ☎ **222-317-191.** www.jewishmuseum.cz. Admission 290Kč ($14/£6.90) adults, 190Kč ($9/£4.50) students, free for children under 6. Apr–Oct Sun–Fri 9am–6pm; Nov–Mar Sun–Fri 9am–4:30pm. Metro: Line A to Staroměstská.

THE NATIONAL GALLERY SITES

The national collection of fine art is grouped for display in the series of venues known collectively as **Národní Galerie** (National Gallery; www.ngprague.cz). Remember that this term refers to several locations, not just one gallery.

The most extensive collection of classic European works spanning the 14th to 18th centuries is found at the Archbishop's Palace complex in the **Šternberský palác** across from the main gate to Prague Castle. **Veletržní Palace** houses most of the 20th-century art collection, and now also shows the important national revival works from Czech artists of the 19th century. While much of the national collection is shown at **Kinský Palace** on Old Town Square, Gothic pieces may be seen at **St. George's Convent** at Prague Castle, and 19th-century Czech painters and sculptors are shown at **St. Agnes Convent** near the river in Old Town.

Šternberk Palace (Šternberský palác) ★ The jewel in the National Gallery crown (also known casually as the European Art Museum), the gallery at Šternberk Palace, adjacent to the main gate of Prague Castle, displays a wide menu of European art throughout the ages. It features 5 centuries of everything from Orthodox icons to Renaissance oils by Dutch masters. Pieces by Rembrandt, El Greco, Goya, and Van Dyck are mixed among numerous pieces from Austrian imperial court painters. Exhibits such as Italian Renaissance bronzes rotate throughout the seasons.

Hradčanské nám. 15, Praha 1. ☎ **233-090-570.** www.ngprague.cz. Admission 130Kč ($6.20/£3.10) adults, 80Kč ($3.80/£1.90) students and children. Tues–Sun 10am–6pm. Metro: Line A to Malostranská or Hradčanská.

St. Agnes Convent (Klášter sv. Anežky České) A complex of early Gothic buildings and churches dating from the 13th century, the convent, tucked in a corner of Staré Město, began exhibiting much of the National Gallery's collection of Gothic art in 2000.

U Milosrdných 17, Praha 1. ☎ **224-810-628.** www.ngprague.cz. Admission 100Kč ($4.75/£2.40) adults, 50Kč ($2.40/£1.20) children. Tues–Sun 10am–6pm. Metro: Line A to Staroměstská.

St. George's Convent at Prague Castle (Klášter sv. Jiří na Pražském hradě) Dedicated to displaying traditional Czech art, the castle convent is especially packed with Gothic and baroque Bohemian iconography as well as portraits of patron saints. The most famous among the unique collection of Czech Gothic panel paintings are those by the Master of the Hohenfurth Altarpiece and the Master Theodoricus. The collections are arranged into special exhibits usually revolving around a specific place, person, or historical time.

Jiřské nám. 33. ☎ **257-531-644.** www.ngprague.cz. Admission 130Kč ($6.20/£3.10) adults, 80Kč ($3.80/£1.90) students, free for children under 6. Daily 10am–6pm. Metro: Line A to Malostranská or Hradčanská.

Palác Kinských (Kinský Palace) The reconstructed rococo palace houses graphic works from the National Gallery collection, including pieces by Georges Braque, André Derain, and other modern masters. Pablo Picasso's 1907 *Self-Portrait* is here and has virtually been adopted as the National Gallery's logo. Good-quality international exhibits have included Max Ernst and Rembrandt retrospectives, as well as shows on functional arts and crafts.

Staroměstské nám. 12, Praha 1. ☎ **224-810-758.** www.ngprague.cz. Admission 100Kč ($4.75/£2.40) adults, 50Kč ($2.40/£1.20) students. Tues–Sun 10am–6pm. Metro: Line A to Staroměstská.

Veletržní Palace (National Gallery) This 1925 constructivist palace, built for trade fairs, was remodeled and reopened in 1995 to hold the bulk of the National Gallery's collection of 20th-century works by Czech and other European artists. Three atrium-lit concourses provide a comfortable setting for some catchy and kitschy Czech sculpture and multimedia works. Alas, the best cubist works from Braque and Picasso, Rodin bronzes, and many other primarily French pieces have been relegated to the second floor. Other displays are devoted to peculiar works by Czech artists that demonstrate how creativity flowed even under the weight of the iron curtain. The first floor features temporary exhibits from traveling shows.

Veletržní at Dukelských hrdinů 47, Praha 7. ☎ **224-301-111.** www.ngprague.cz. Admission 160Kč ($7.60/£3.80) adults, 80Kč ($3.80/£1.90) students. Free for children under 6. Tues–Sun 10am–6pm. Metro: Line C to Vltavská. Tram: 17.

FAMOUS SQUARES

The most celebrated square in the city, **Old Town Square (Staroměstské nám.)** ★★★ is surrounded by baroque buildings and packed with colorful craftspeople, cafes, and entertainers. In ancient days, the site was a major crossroads on central European merchant routes. At its center stands a memorial to Jan Hus, the 15th-century martyr who crusaded against Prague's German-dominated religious and political establishment. It was unveiled in 1915, on the 500th anniversary of Hus's execution. Take metro line A to Staroměstská.

The **Orloj** (Astronomical Clock) ast Starměstská radnice (Old Town Hall) performs a glockenspiel spectacle daily on the hour from 8am to 8pm. Originally constructed in 1410 to mark the phases of the moon, the equinoxes, the seasons, the days, and numerous Christian holidays, the clock has long been an important symbol of Prague.

One of the city's most historic squares, **Wenceslas Square (Václavské nám.)** ★★ was formerly the horse market (Koňský trh). The pedestal of the giant equestrian statue of St. Wenceslas on horseback surrounded by four other saints has become a popular platform for speakers. Actually, the square has thrice been the site of riots and revolutions—in 1848, 1968, and 1989. Take metro line A or B to Můstek.

PARKS & GARDENS

My favorite inner-city getaway is **Vyšehrad Park** ★ above the Vltava south of the city center. This 1,000-year-old citadel encloses a peaceful set of gardens, playgrounds, footpaths, and the national cemetery next to the twin-towered Church of Sts. Peter and Paul. The park provides a fantastic wide-angle view of the whole city. Take metro line C to Vyšehrad or tram no. 3 or 16 to Výtoň. The park is open at all times.

The **Royal Garden (Královská zahrada)** ★ at Prague Castle, Praha 1, once the site of the sovereigns' vineyards, was founded in 1534. Dotted with lemon trees and surrounded by 16th-, 17th-, and 18th-century buildings, the park is consciously and conservatively laid out with abundant shrubbery and fountains. Entered from U Prašá ného mostu Street, north of the castle complex, it's open daily from 10am to 6pm in the summer season.

The castle's **Garden on the Ramparts (Zahrada na Valech)** is on the city-side hill below the castle. Beyond beautifully groomed lawns and sparse shrubbery is a tranquil low-angle view of the castle above and the city below. Enter the garden from the south side of the castle complex, below Hradčanské náměstí. The garden is open daily from 10am to 6pm in the summer season.

Looming over Malá Strana, adjacent to Prague Castle, lush green **Petřín Hill (Petřínské sady)** is easily recognizable by the miniature replica of the Eiffel Tower that tops it. Gardens and orchards bloom in spring and summer. Throughout the myriad monuments and churches are a mirror maze and an observatory. The Hunger Wall, a decaying 6m-high (20-ft.) stone wall that runs up through Petřín to the grounds of Prague Castle, was commissioned by Charles IV in the 1360s as a medieval welfare project designed to provide jobs for Prague's starving poor. Take tram no. 12, 22, or 23 to Újezd.

Part of the excitement of **Waldstein (Wallenstein) Gardens (Valdštejnská zahrada)** at Letenská, Praha 1 (✆ **257-072-759**) is its location, behind a 9m (30-ft.) wall on the back streets of Malá Strana. Inside, elegant gravel paths dotted with classical bronze statues and gurgling fountains fan out in every direction. Laid out in the 17th century, the baroque park was the garden of Gen. Albrecht Waldstein (or Wallenstein; 1581–1634), commander of the Roman Catholic armies during the Thirty Years' War. These gardens are the backyards of Waldstein's Palace—Prague's largest—which replaced 23 houses, three gardens, and the municipal brick kiln. The gardens are open March to October, daily from 10am to 6pm.

THE SHOPPING SCENE

Czech **porcelain, glass,** and cheap but well-constructed clothing draw hordes of day-trippers from Germany. Blood-red **garnets** are the official Czech national gem, and the ones you can buy here are among the world's finest, as well as one of the country's top exports. Finally, because beer is a little heavy to carry home and the local wine isn't worth it, take home a bottle of **Becherovka,** the nation's popular herbal liqueur from Karlovy Vary. You'll find the distinctive green decanter in shops around the city, and it costs about 400Kč ($17/£8.35) per liter.

The L-shaped half-mile running from the middle of **Wenceslas Square** around the corner to the right on **Na Příkopě** and to the Myslbek Center has become Prague's principal shopping hub. In this short distance you'll find three multilevel shopping gallerias, with foreign chains like **H&M, Next, Kenvelo, Pierre Cardin, Adidas,** and **Zara.** Between the centers is a wide array of boutiques and antiques shops; in high season there's also a crafts market at the low end of the square.

For glass and crystal, try Moser ★★★, at Na Příkopě 12, Praha 1 (✆ **224-212-293;** metro: Můstek), or at Malé nám. 11, Praha 1 (✆ **224-222-012;** Metro: Můstek). The Moser family began selling Bohemia's finest crystal in central Prague in 1857, drawing customers from around the world.

Celetná Crystal ★★, Celetná 15, Praha 1 (✆ **222-324-022;** metro: Náměstí Republiky), has a wide selection of world-renowned Czech crystal, china, arts and crafts, and jewelry displayed in a spacious three-floor showroom in the heart of Prague.

Czechs swear by Halada ★★, Na Příkopě 16, Praha 1 (✆ **224-221-304;** metro: Můstek), Prague's premier jeweler, for its quality, price, and selection of garnets.

On the short, wide street perpendicular to Melantricova, between Staroměstské naměstí and Václavaké naměstí, **Havelský trh (Havel's Market),** Havelská ulice, Praha 1, is an outdoor market (named well before Havel became president) featuring dozens of private vendors selling seasonal homegrown fruits and vegetables at the best prices in the city center. Other goods, including detergent, flowers, and cheese, are also for sale. Open Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm. Take metro line A or B to Můstek.

PRAGUE AFTER DARK

Prague's nightlife has changed completely since the Velvet Revolution—for the better if you plan to go clubbing, for the worse if you hope to sample the city's classical offerings. Still, seeing Don Giovanni in the Estates' Theater, where Mozart first premiered it, is worth the admission cost. Ticket prices, while low by Western standards, have become prohibitively high for the average Czech. You'll find, however, the exact reverse in the rock and jazz scene. Dozens of clubs have opened, and world-class bands are finally adding Prague to their European tours.

Turn to the ***Prague Post*** (www.praguepost.com) for listings of cultural events and nightlife around the city; it's available at most newsstands in Old Town and Malá Strana.

Once in Prague, you can buy tickets at theater box offices or from any one of dozens of agencies throughout the city center. Large, centrally located agencies are **Prague Tourist Center,** Rytířská 12, Praha 1 (✆ **296-333-333**), open daily from 9am to 8pm; **Bohemia Ticket,** Na Příkopě 16, Praha 1 (✆ **224-215-031;** www.bohemiaticket.cz), open Monday to Friday from 10am to 7pm, Saturday from 10am to 5pm, and Sunday from 10am to 3pm; and **Čedok,** Na Příkopě 18, Praha 1 (✆ **800-112-112** toll-free, or 224-197-640; www.cedok.cz), open Monday to Friday from 9am to 7pm and Saturday from 10am to 2pm. You can buy event tickets in person at these computerized outlets.

THE PERFORMING ARTS

Although there's plenty of music year-round, the city's orchestras all come to life during the international **Prague Spring Festival,** an annual 3-week series of classical music events that runs from mid-May to early June; the events began as a rallying point for Czech culture in the aftermath of World War II. The country's top performers usually participate in the festival, as well as some noted international stars. Tickets for concerts range from 250Kč to 2,000Kč ($12–$95/£5.95–£48) and are available in advance from Hellichova 18, Praha 1 (✆ **257-312-547;** www.festival.cz).

The Czech Philharmonic Orchestra performs at the **Rudolfinum,** Alšovo nábřeží 12, Praha 1 (✆ **227-059-352;** www.rudolfinum.cz; metro: Staroměstská). It's the traditional voice of the country's national pride, often playing works by Dvořak and Smetana. The **Prague Symphony** performs at the Art Nouveau **Smetana Hall** ★★, naměstí Republiky 5, Praha 1 (✆ **222-002-336;** metro: Naměstí Republiky). It focuses more on 20th-century music with occasional forays into Bach.

Lavishly constructed in the late-Renaissance style of northern Italy, the gold-crowned **Národní divadlo (National Theater)**, Národní 2, Praha 1 (✆ **224-901-448;** www.nd.cz; metro: Národní třída), overlooking the Vltava River, is one of

Prague's most recognizable landmarks. Completed in 1881, the theater was built to nurture the Czech National Revival—a grass-roots movement to replace the dominant German culture with that of native Czechs. Today, classic productions are staged here.

THE CLUB & MUSIC SCENE

Prague's club and music scene is limited but lively. Local acts still have a garage-band sound but are adding more sophisticated numbers to their gigs. Many venerable jazz groups who toiled in the cellar clubs are finding a new audience in visitors who stumble upon their smoky underground venues. It is no longer a shock to see well-known western European bands playing sets in Prague.

JAZZ CLUBS Upscale by Czech standards, the **AghaRTA Jazz Centrum,** Železná 16, Praha 1 (✆ **222-211-275;** www.agharta.cz; metro: Můstek), regularly features some of the best music in town, from standard acoustic trios and quartets to Dixieland, funk, and fusion. Bands usually begin at 9pm. It's open daily from 7pm to midnight. **Reduta Jazz Club,** Národní 20, Praha 1 (✆ **224-933-487;** www.redutajazzclub.cz; metro: Národní třída), is the most familiar of all of Prague's jazz clubs, and most of the good Czech acts will make an appearance here sometime during the year. This smoky cavern has cramped seating in fixed metallic boxes with veneer-wood tables, forcing everyone to sit in the same position through most of the night. Drinks are usually ordered from the adjacent bar, though a waitress is known to occasionally show up. But the reason people come here is the wide range of solid jazz acts. Music usually starts at 9:30pm. It's open daily from 9pm to midnight, and the cover is usually 120Kč ($5.70/£2.85).

PUBS & BARS

Good pub brews and conversations are Prague's preferred late-evening entertainment. Unlike British, Irish, or German beer halls, a true Czech pub ignores accouterments like cushy chairs and warm wooden paneling, and cuts straight to the chase—beer. While some Czech pubs do serve a hearty plate of food alongside the suds, it's the brew, uncommonly cheap at usually less than 30Kč ($1.45/70p) a pint, that keeps people sitting for hours.

One of the most Czech of the central city pubs, **U zlatěho tygra (At the Golden Tiger),** Husova 17, Praha 1 (✆ **222-221-111;** www.uzlatehotygra.cz; metro: Staroměstská or Můstek), was a favorite watering hole of Václav Havel and the writer Bohumil Hrabal. Particularly smoky and not especially visitor-friendly, this is a one-stop education in Czech pub culture. Václav Havel and Bill Clinton joined Hrabel for a traditional Czech pub evening here during Clinton's 1994 visit to Prague. Pilsner Urquell is the house brew. Open daily from 3 to 11pm.

DAY TRIPS FROM PRAGUE

KARLŠTEJN CASTLE ★★ By far the most popular destination in the Czech Republic after Prague, Karlštejn Castle is an easy day trip for those interested in getting out of the city. Charles IV built this medieval castle from 1348 to 1357 to safeguard the crown jewels of the Holy Roman Empire. As you approach, little can prepare you for your first view: a spectacular Disney-like castle perched on a hill, surrounded by lush forests and vineyards. The **Holy Rood Chapel** is famous for the more than 2,000 precious and semiprecious inlaid gems adorning its walls, and the Chapel of St. Catherine was King Karel IV's private oratory. Both the **Audience Hall** and the **Royal Bedroom** are impressive.

Note that you need to make a reservation to visit the Holy Rood Chapel on Tour 2 (✆ **274-008-154;** fax 274-008-152; www.hradkarlstejn.cz). The shorter Tour 1 costs 220Kč ($10/£5.25) adults, 120Kč ($5.70/£2.85) students, 20Kč (95¢/50p) children under 6. Tour 2 with the Holy Rood Chapel costs 300Kč ($14/£7.15) adults, 150Kč ($7.15/£3.55) students, free for children under 6. The castle is open Tuesday to Sunday: May, June, and September 9am to noon and 12:30 to 5pm; July and August 9am to noon and 12:30 to 6pm; April and October 9am to noon and 1 to 4pm; November, December, and March 9am to noon and 1 to 3pm; closed January and February.

Getting There The best way to get to Karlštejn is by **train** (there's no bus service). Most trains leave from Prague's Main Station (at the Hlavní nádraží metro stop) hourly throughout the day and take about 45 minutes to reach Karlštejn. The one-way, second-class fare is 46Kč ($2.20/£1.10). You can also **drive:** Leave Prague from the southwest along Hwy. 4 in the direction of Strakonice and take the Karlštejn cutoff, following the signs (and traffic!).

TEREZÍN (THERESIENSTADT) ★★ The name Terezín (Theresienstadt in German) occupies a unique place in the atrocious history of Nazism. The former Austro-Hungarian imperial fortress, turned into a concentration camp, 50km (31 miles) northwest of Prague, witnessed no gas chambers, mass machine-gun executions, or medical testing; it was used as a transit camp. About 140,000 people passed though Terezín's gates; more than half ended up at the death camps of Auschwitz and Treblinka.

Terezín stands as a memorial to the dead and a monument to human depravity. Once inside the **Major Fortress,** you'll immediately be struck by its drab, plain streets. Just off the main square lies the **Museum of the Ghetto,** chronicling the rise of Nazism and life in the camp. English pamphlets describing the exhibits are provided. It's open daily: November to March from 9am to 5:30pm and April to October from 9am to 6pm. Admission is 160Kč ($7.60/£3.80) adults and 130Kč ($6.20/£3.10) children. A 10-minute walk from the Major Fortress over the Ohře River gets you to the **Minor Fortress.** In front of the fortress's main entrance is the **National Cemetery (Národní hřbitov),** where the bodies exhumed from the mass graves were buried. As you enter the main gate, the sign above it, ARBEIT MACHT FREI (Work Sets One Free), sets a gloomy tone. You can walk through the prison barracks, execution grounds, workshops, and isolation cells. A ticket to enter both the **Minor Fortress** and the **Museum of the Ghetto** is 200Kč ($9.50/£4.75) adults and 150Kč ($7.15/£3.55) children. The Minor Fortress is open daily November to March 8am to 4:30pm and April to October 8am to 6pm. For more information or reservations for guided tours, call ✆ **416-782-225** (fax 416-782-300; www.pamatnik-terezin.cz).

Getting There If you're **driving,** Terezín lies directly on the main highway leading north out of Prague, which takes you eventually to Berlin via Dresden. It's a 45-minute drive. Six **buses** leave daily from Florenc bus station (metro line C). The ride takes about an hour and costs 59Kč ($2.80/£1.40).

2 West Bohemia & The Spas

The Czech Republic is composed of two regions: Bohemia and Moravia. The larger of the two, Bohemia, occupying the central and western areas of the country, has for centuries been caught between a rock (Germany) and a hard place (Austria). Bohemia was almost always at the center of regional conflicts, both secular and religious. But the area also flourished, as witnessed by the wealth of castles that dot the countryside and the spa towns that were once the playgrounds of the rich and famous.

This section focuses on west Bohemia, home to the country's spa towns. It's also one of the few places in the Czech Republic where a full-blown tourist infrastructure is already in place. Its main towns offer a wide variety of accommodations, restaurants, and services to meet every visitor's needs.

A relatively inexpensive network of trains and buses covers the region, allowing travel between towns and to and from Prague with a minimum of fuss. West Bohemia is generally rougher terrain, so only serious bikers should consider seeing the area on two wheels. Most towns are distant enough that you should drive from one to another. However, if you'd rather stay in one place and make day trips, we recommend staying in Karlovy Vary.

KARLOVY VARY (CARLSBAD) ★

The discovery of Karlovy Vary (Carlsbad) by Charles IV reads like a 14th-century episode of the TV show *The Beverly Hillbillies.* According to local lore, the king was out huntin' for some food when up from the ground came a-bubblin' water (though discovered by his dogs and not an errant gunshot). Knowing a good thing when he saw it, Charles immediately set to work building a small castle in the area, naming the town that evolved around it Karlovy Vary, which translates as "Charles's Boiling Place." The first spa buildings were built in 1522, and before long, notables like Albrecht of Wallenstein, Peter the Great, and later Bach, Beethoven, Freud, and Marx all came to Karlovy Vary for a vacation retreat.

After World War II, East Bloc travelers (following in the footsteps of Marx, no doubt) discovered the town, and Karlovy Vary became a destination for the proletariat. On doctors' orders, most workers would enjoy regular stays of 2 or 3 weeks, letting the mineral waters ranging from 110°F (43°C) to 162°F (72°C) from the town's 12 springs heal their tired and broken bodies. Even now, a large number of spa guests are here by a doctor's prescription.

Most of the 40-plus years of Communist neglect have been erased as a barrage of renovations continues to restore the spa's former glory. Gone is the statue of Russian cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin. Gone are almost all the fading, crumbling building facades that used to line both sides of the river. In their places stand restored buildings, cherubs, caryatids, and more.

Today, some 150,000 people, both traditional clientele and newer patrons, travel to the spa resort every year to sip, bathe, and frolic, though most enjoy the "13th spring" (actually a hearty herb-and-mineral liqueur called Becherovka) as much as—if not more than—the 12 nonalcoholic versions. Czechs will tell you that all have medical benefits. The Slavic nouveau riche have once again found a comfortable setting after the backlash they faced soon after the iron curtain was drawn. In a throwback to Soviet days, many shopkeepers cater to Russian clientele, so don't be surprised if you're nowadays addressed in Russian rather than English or German.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE At all costs, *avoid the train from Prague,* which takes more than 4 hours on a circuitous route. If you're arriving from another direction, Karlovy Vary's main train station is connected to the town center by bus no. 12 or 13.

Taking a bus to Karlovy Vary is much more convenient. Frequent express **buses** make it from Prague's Florenc bus station in 2¼ hours at a cost of 140Kč ($6.65/£3.35). From Karlovy Vary's Dolní nádraží (bus station) take a 10-minute walk or local bus no. 4 into Karlovy Vary's spa center. Note that you must have a ticket to board local transport. You can buy tickets for 10Kč (50¢/25p) at the bus station stop, or from the bus driver, which will then cost you 15Kč (70¢/35p). For timetable information go to www.jizdnirady.cz.

The nearly 2-hour **drive** from Prague to Karlovy Vary can be very busy and dangerous due to undisciplined Czech drivers. If you're going by car, take Hwy. E48 from the western end of Prague and follow it straight through to Karlovy Vary. This two-lane highway widens in a few spots to let cars pass slow-moving vehicles on hills.

VISITOR INFORMATION **Infocentrum města Karlovy Vary** is located near the main Mlýnská kolonáda, on Lázeňská 1 (✆ **355-321-176**). It's open Monday to Friday from 9am to 7pm and Saturday and Sunday from 10am to 6pm. It has a window at the terminal of the **Dolní (lower) nádraží** bus and train station, Západní ulice (✆ **353-232-838**). These are the official town's information centers, which will answer your questions and help you with accommodations, getting tickets for entertainment in the city, and so on. Be sure to pick up *Promenáda* magazine, a comprehensive collection of events with a small map of the town center. Alternatively, you'll find information on www.karlovyvary.cz.

ORIENTATION Karlovy Vary is shaped like a T, with the Teplá River running up the stem and the Ohře River at the top of the T. Most of the major streets are pedestrian promenades lining both sides of the Teplá.

WHERE TO STAY

Private rooms used to be the best places to stay in Karlovy Vary with regard to quality and price. But this is changing as more and more hotels renovate and raise standards—as well as prices. Private accommodations can still provide better value, but they take a little extra work. If you want to arrange a room, try the **Infocentrum** (see above). Expect to pay about 1,500Kč ($71/£36) for a double.

Some of the town's major spa hotels accommodate only those who are paying for complete treatment, unless for some reason their occupancy rates are particularly low. The hotels I've listed below accept guests for stays of any length.

Grandhotel Pupp ★ The Pupp, built in 1701, is one of Europe's oldest grand hotels. Its public areas boast the expected splendor and charm, as do the renovated guest rooms. The best ones tend to be those facing the town center and are located on the upper floors; these have good views and sturdy wooden furniture. Some rooms have amenities such as air-conditioning, television, minibar, and safe, though not all do. The Grand has as grand a dining room as you'll find, with the food to match (see "Where to Dine," below). The hotel also has a stylish casino (open midnight–4am).

Mírové nám. 2, 360 91, Karlovy Vary. ✆ **353-109-111.** Fax 353-226-032. www.pupp.cz. 110 units. 7,749Kč ($369/£185) double deluxe; from 10,038Kč ($478/£239) suite; 37,296Kč ($1,776/£888) presidential apt. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Valet parking. **Amenities:** 4 restaurants; bar; cafe; pool; golf course; tennis courts; health club; limousine/taxi service; salon; room service (6am–midnight); same-day laundry; casino. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Hotel Dvořák ★ As a part of the Vienna International hotel/resort chain, the Dvořák has improved immensely over the past years, especially in terms of service. This hotel is within sight of the Pupp, but it's less expensive. The Pupp may have the

Spa Cures & Treatments

Most visitors to Karlovy Vary come for a spa treatment, a therapy that lasts 1 to 3 weeks. After consulting with a spa physician, you're given a specific regimen of activities that may include mineral baths, massages, waxings, mudpacks, electrotherapy, and pure oxygen inhalation. After spending the morning at a spa or sanatorium, you're usually directed to walk the paths of the town's surrounding forest.

The common denominator of all the cures is an ample daily dose of hot mineral water, which bubbles up from 12 springs. This water definitely has a distinct odor and taste. You'll see people chugging it down, but it doesn't necessarily taste very good. Some thermal springs actually taste and smell like rotten eggs (from sulfur). You may want to take a small sip at first. Do keep in mind that the waters are used to treat internal disorders, so the minerals may cleanse the body thoroughly—in other words, they can cause diarrhea.

You'll also notice that almost everyone in town seems to be carrying "the cup." This funny-looking cup is basically a mug with a built-in straw running through the handle. Young and old alike parade around with their mugs, filling and refilling them at each thermal water tap. You can buy these mugs everywhere for as little as 60Kč ($2.85/£1.45) or as much as 230Kč ($11/£5.50); they make a quirky souvenir. ***But be warned:*** None of the mugs can make the warmer hot springs taste any better.

The minimum spa treatment lasts 1 week and must be arranged in advance. A spa treatment package traditionally includes room, full board, and complete therapy regimen; the cost varies from about 840Kč ($40/£20) to 2,100Kč ($100/£50) per person per day, depending on season and facilities. Rates are highest from May to September and lowest from November to February.

For information and reservations in Prague, contact **Čedok,** at Na Příkopě 18, and also at Václavské nám. 53, Praha 1 (✆ **224-197-632;** fax 224-213-786; www.cedok.cz). Many hotels also provide spa and health treatments, so ask when you book your room. Most will happily arrange a treatment if they don't provide them directly.

If you're coming for just a day or two, you can experience the waters on an "outpatient" basis. The largest balneological complex in town (and in the Czech Republic) is the **Alžbětiny Lázně-Lázně V,** Smetanovy sady 1145/1 (✆ **353-222-536;** www.spa5.cz). On their menu are all kinds of treatments, including water cures, massages, a hot-air bath, a steam bath, a whirlpool, and a pearl bath, as well as use of their swimming pool. You can choose packages of different procedures between 90Kč and 600Kč ($4.30–$29/£2.15–£14). It's open Monday to Friday 8am to 3pm for spa treatments; the pool is open Monday to Friday 9am to noon and 1 to 9pm, Saturday 9am to 9pm, and Sunday 9am to 6pm.

history and elegance, but the Dvořák has the facilities. The rooms are spacious, with elegant decor and medium-size bathrooms with lots of marble. The staff is very attentive. Business travelers will appreciate the hotel's business facilities.

Nová Louka 11, 360 21 Karlovy Vary. ✆ **353-102-111.** Fax 353-102-119. www.hotel-dvorak.cz. 126 units. 5,883Kč ($280/£140) double. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant; indoor pool; tennis courts; fitness center; sauna; salon; casino. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer, iron, trouser press, safe.

Hotel Embassy ★ On the riverbank across from the Pupp, the Embassy has well-appointed rooms, many with an early-20th-century motif. Set in a historic house, the rooms are medium-size with medium-size bathrooms. The staff here really helps make this hotel worthy of consideration, as does the proximity to the pub, which serves some of the best goulash and beer in the city.

Nová Louka 21, 360 01 Karlovy Vary. ✆ **353-221-161.** Fax 353-223-146. www.embassy.cz. 20 units. 3,130Kč ($149/£75) double; 3,990Kč ($190/£95) suite. AE, MC, V. **Amenities:** Pub; lobby bar; indoor golf; pool table. *In room:* TV, minibar, safe.

Parkhotel Pupp ★ Part of the Pupp complex, these are basically rooms in the section of the hotel that doesn't quite measure up to the grand standards of its sister. But they are still nice and functional, if not quite as cozy and elegant as the others. I'd stay in one of these rooms and use the money I save on a nice meal and a couple of Karlovy Vary kisses (Becherovka in a frozen glass).

Mírové nám. 2, 360 91 Karlovy Vary. ✆ **353-109-111.** Fax 353-226-032. www.pupp.cz. 255 units. 6,300Kč ($300/£150) double; 10,038Kč ($478/£239) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 4 restaurants (shared w/Grandhotel Pupp); indoor pool; tennis courts; fitness center; sauna; salon; casino. *In room:* TV, minibar, iron, safe.

WHERE TO DINE

Embassy Restaurant CZECH/CONTINENTAL On the ground floor of the Embassy Hotel, this is one of the oldest restaurants in town. It offers an intimate dining room with historic interior. If you visit in winter, get a table next to the original hearth. Here you'll find many traditional Czech dishes with slight twists that make them interesting. The grilled loin of pork covered with a light, creamy, green-pepper sauce makes a nice change from the regular roast pork served by most Czech restaurants. The spicy goulash is more reminiscent of Hungary's piquant flavors than bland Czech fare.

Nová Louka 21. ✆ **353-221-161.** Reservations recommended. Soups 55Kč–85Kč ($2.60–$4.05/£1.30–£2); main courses 175Kč–985Kč ($8.35–$47/£4.15–£23). AE, MC, V. Daily 11am–11pm.

Grand Restaurant ★ CONTINENTAL It's no surprise that the Grandhotel Pupp has the nicest dining room in town: an elegant space with tall ceilings, huge mirrors, and glistening chandeliers. A large menu features equally large portions of salmon, chicken, veal, pork, turkey, and beef in a variety of heavy and heavier sauces. Even the mouthwatering trout with mushrooms is smothered in butter sauce.

In the Grandhotel Pupp, Mírové nám. 2. ✆ **353-109-646.** Reservations recommended. Soups 80Kč ($3.80/£1.90); main courses 280Kč–590Kč ($13–$28/£6.65–£14). AE, MC, V. Daily noon–3pm and 6–11pm.

Hospoda U Švejka CZECH This addition to the pub scene plays on the tried-and-true touristy *Good Soldier Švejk* theme. Luckily, the tourist trap goes no further, and once inside, you find a refreshingly unsmoky though thoroughly Czech atmosphere. Locals and tourists alike rub elbows while throwing back some fine lager for 55Kč ($2.60/£1.30) per half liter, and standard pub favorites such as goulash and beef tenderloin in cream sauce.

Stará Louka 10. ✆ **353-232-276.** Soups 35Kč ($1.65/85p); appetizers 35Kč–109Kč ($1.65–$5.20/85p–£2.60); main courses 135Kč–319Kč ($6.45–$15/£3.20–£7.60). AE, MC, V. Daily 11am–10pm.

XXX long ★ ITALIAN/INTERNATIONAL The interior of this addition to the list of local restaurants offers an interesting combination of modern decoration and old furniture. On the large menu is a wide assortment of Italian and international meals at reasonable prices. There are several good seafood options to complement the pastas, which are not overcooked, as they are in many Czech eateries. Children will appreciate the extensive pizza menu here. Don't forget to get a good Italian cappuccino served here in funky ceramic cups.

Vřídelní 23. ✆ **353-224-232.** Soups 30Kč ($1.45/70p); main courses 120Kč–350Kč ($5.70–$17/£2.85–£8.35). AE, MC, V. Daily 11am–11pm.

EXPLORING KARLOVY VARY

The town's slow pace and pedestrian promenades, lined with turn-of-the-20th-century Art Nouveau buildings, turn strolling into an art form. Nighttime walks take on an even more mystical feel as the sewers, the river, and the many major cracks in the roads emit steam from the hot springs running underneath.

If you're traveling here by train or bus, a good place to start your exploration is the **Hotel Thermal,** I. P. Pavlova 11 (✆ **359-001-111**), at the north end of the Old Town's center. Built in the 1970s, it exemplifies how obtrusive Communist architecture can be. Nestled between the town's eastern hills and the Ohře River, the glass, steel, and concrete Thermal sticks out like a sore thumb amid the rest of the town's 19th-century architecture. Nonetheless, you'll find three important places at the Thermal: the only centrally located outdoor public pool; an upper terrace boasting a truly spectacular view of the town; and Karlovy Vary's largest theater, which holds many of the film festival's premier events. Look at it. Take it all in. But since the Hotel Thermal is certainly not pleasing to the eye, it's best to keep walking before you remember too much of it.

As you enter the heart of the town on the river's west side, you'll see the ornate white wrought-iron gazebo named **Sadová Kolonáda** adorning the beautifully manicured park, **Dvořákovy Sady.** Continue to follow the river, and about 100m (328 ft.) later you'll encounter the **Mlýnská Kolonáda.** This long, covered walkway houses several Karlovy Vary springs, which you can sample free 24 hours a day. Each spring has a plaque beside it describing its mineral elements and temperature. Bring your own cup or buy one just about anywhere (see the box "Spa Cures & Treatments," above) to sip the waters, since most are too hot to drink from with your hands. When you hit the river bend, you'll see the majestic **Church of St. Mary Magdalene** perched atop a hill, overlooking the **Vřídlo,** the hottest spring. Built in 1736, the church is the work of Kilian Ignac Dienzenhofer, who also created two of Prague's more notable churches—both named St. Nicholas.

Housing Vřídlo, which blasts water some 15m (49 ft.) into the air, is the glass building where the statue of Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin once stood. (Gagarin's statue has since made a safe landing at the Karlovy Vary Airport, where it greets the waves of Russian visitors who flood the town.) Now called the **Vřídelní Kolonáda,** the structure, built in 1974, houses several hot springs that you can sample for free daily from 6am to 7pm. There are also public restrooms, open daily 6am to 6pm and costing 6Kč (30¢/15p).

Heading away from the Vřídelní Kolonáda are Stará and Nová Louka streets, which line either side of the river. Along **Stará (Old) Louka** are several fine cafes and glass and crystal shops. **Nová (New) Louka** is lined with many hotels and the historic town's main theater, built in 1886, which houses paintings by notable artists like Klimt and has just finished a major renovation project that has restored the theater to its original splendor.

Both streets lead to the **Grandhotel Pupp,** Mírové nám. 2 (✆ **353-109-111**). The Pupp's main entrance and building have just come out of extensive renovations that have more or less erased the effects of 40 years of communism (the hotel's name was changed from the Moskva-Pupp). Regardless of capitalism or communism, the Pupp remains what it always was: the grande dame of hotels in central Europe. Once catering to nobility from all over Europe, the Pupp still houses one of the town's finest restaurants, the Grand (see below), while its grounds are a favorite with the hiking crowd.

If you still have the energy, atop the hill behind the Pupp stands the **Diana Lookout Tower** (✆ **353-222-872**). Footpaths lead to the tower through the forests and eventually spit you out at the base of the tower, as if to say, "Ha, the trip is only half over." The five-story climb up the tower tests your stamina, but the view of the town is more than worth it. For those who aren't up to the climb up the hill, a cable car runs up the hill every 15 minutes June to September daily from 9:15am to 6:45pm; February, March, November, and December 9:15am to 4:45pm; April, May, and October 9:15am to 5:45pm; for 36Kč ($1.70/85p) one-way, 60Kč ($2.85/£1.45) round-trip.

THE SHOPPING SCENE

Crystal and porcelain are Karlovy Vary's other claims to fame. Dozens of shops throughout town sell everything from plates to chandeliers.

Ludvík Moser founded his first glassware shop in 1857 and became one of this country's foremost names in glass. You can visit the **Moser Factory,** kapitána Jaroše 19 (✆ **353-449-455;** www.moser-glass.com; bus no. 1, 10, or 22), just west of the town center. Its glass museum is open Monday to Friday 8am to 5:30pm and Saturday 9am to 3pm. There's also a **Moser Store,** on Tržiště 7 (✆ **353-235-303**), right in the heart of New Town; it's open daily from 10am to 7pm (Sat–Sun until 6pm). Dozens of other smaller shops also sell the famed glass and are as easy to find in the Old Town as spring water.

ČESKÝ KRUMLOV

If you have time on your visit to the Czech Republic for only one excursion, seriously consider making it **Český Krumlov.** One of Bohemia's prettiest towns, Krumlov is a living gallery of elegant Renaissance-era buildings housing charming cafes, pubs, restaurants, shops, and galleries. In 1992, UNESCO named Český Krumlov a World Heritage Site for its historic importance and physical beauty.

Bustling since medieval times, the town, after centuries of embellishment, is exquisitely beautiful. In 1302, the Rožmberk family inherited the castle and moved in, using it as their main residence for nearly 300 years. You'll feel that time has stopped as you look from the Lazebnický Bridge and see the waters of the Vltava below snaking past the castle's gray stone. At night, by the castle lights, the view becomes even more dramatic.

Few dared change the appearance of Český Krumlov over the years, not even the Schwarzenbergs, who had a flair for opulence. At the turn of the 19th century, several facades of houses in the town's outer section were built, as were inner courtyards. Thankfully, economic stagnation in the area under communism meant little money for "development," so no glass-and-steel edifices, like the Hotel Thermal in Karlovy

Vary, jut out to spoil the architectural beauty. Instead, a medieval sense reigns supreme, now augmented by the many festivals and renovations that keep the town's spirit alive.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE From České Budějovice, it's about a 45-minute **drive** to Krumlov, depending on traffic. Take Hwy. 3 from the south of České Budějovice and turn onto Hwy. 159. The roads are clearly marked, with several signs directing traffic to the town. From Prague, it's a 2-hour drive down Highway 3 through Tábor.

The only way to reach Český Krumlov by **train** from Prague is via České Budějovice, a slow ride that deposits you at a station relatively far from the town center (trip time: 3 hr. 50 min.). Six trains leave daily from Prague's Hlavní nádraží; the fare is 336Kč ($16/£8) first class, 224Kč ($11/£5.35) second class. If you are already in České Budějovice and you want to make a trip to Krumlov, several trains connect these two cities throughout the day. The trip takes about 57 minutes and costs 46Kč ($2.20/£1.10). For timetables, go to **www.jizdnirady.cz**.

The nearly 3-hour **bus** ride from Prague usually involves a transfer in České Budějovice. The fare is 136Kč ($6.50/£3.25), and the bus station in Český Krumlov is a 15-minute walk from the town's main square.

VISITOR INFORMATION Right on the main square, the **Information Centrum,** náměstí Svornosti 2, 381 01 Český Krumlov (✆ **380-704-622;** fax 380-704-619; www.ckrumlov.cz), provides a complete array of services, from booking accommodations to reserving tickets for events, as well as a phone and Internet service. It's open daily in July and August from 9am to 8pm; in June and September from 9am to 7pm; in April, May, and October from 9am to 6pm; and from November to March from 9am to 5pm.

SPECIAL EVENTS After being banned during communism, the **Slavnost pětilisté růže (Festival of the Five-Petaled Rose)** has made a triumphant comeback. It's held each year during the summer solstice. Residents of Český Krumlov dress up in Renaissance costume and parade through the streets. Afterward, the streets become a stage for music, plays, duels "to the death," and even chess games with people dressed as pieces.

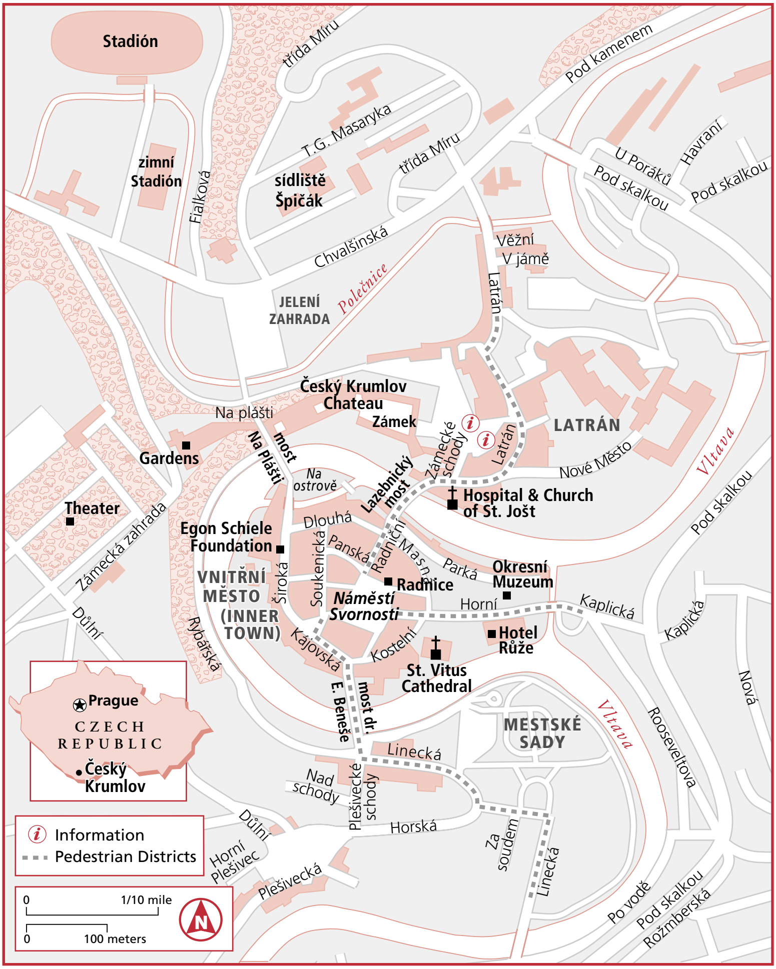
Český Krumlov also plays host to the **International Music Festival** every August, attracting performers from all over the world. Performances are held in nine spectacular venues. For details or ticket reservations, contact the festival organizer, **Auviex,** at Perlitová 1820, 140 00, Praha 4 (✆ **241-445-404**); or in Český Krumlov at Latrán 37 (✆ **380-711-453;** www.auviex.cz).

WHERE TO STAY

With the rise of free enterprise after the fall of communism, many hotels have sprouted up or are getting a "new" old look. PENSION and ZIMMER FREI signs line Horní and Rooseveltova streets and offer some of the best values in town. For a comprehensive list of area hotels and help with bookings, call or write to the Information Centrum listed above in "Visitor Information."

Hotel Konvice *Value* The rooms at the Konvice are on the small side and have rustic furniture. The real lure here is the view. Ask for a room with a view out the back—as you gaze at the river and the castle on the opposite bank, you'll wonder why anyone would choose to stay anywhere else.

Český Krumlov



Stadión
třída Míru
Pod kamenem
zimní Stadión
Fialková
T.G. Masaryka
sídliště Špičák
třída Míru
U Poráků
Havraní
Pod skalkou
Pod skalkou
Věžní
V jámě
Chvalšinská
JELENÍ ZAHRADA
Polečnice
Latrán
Český Krumlov Chateau
Zámek
Na plášti
Na plášti
most
Zámecké schody
Latrán
LATRÁN
Gardens
Nové Město
Vltava
Na ostrově
Lazebnický most
Hospital & Church of St. Jošt
Theater
Egon Schiele Foundation
Dlouhá
Panská
Radniční
Masná
Parká
Okresní Muzeum
Pod skalkou
Zámecká zahrada
VNITŘNÍ MĚSTO (INNER TOWN)
Široká
Soukenická
Radnice
Náměstí Svornosti
Horní
Kaplická
Kaplická
Dlúhní
Rybářská
Kájovská
Kostelní
Hotel Růže
St. Vitus Cathedral
E. Beneše
most dr.
Prague
CZECH REPUBLIC
Český Krumlov
MESTSKÉ SADY
Vltava
Rooseveltova
Nová
Linecká
Nad schody
Plešivecké schody
Horská
Za soudem
Linecká
Dlúhní
Horní Plešivec
Plešivecká
Information
Pedestrian Districts
0
1/10 mile
0
100 meters
N
Po vodě
Pod skalkou
Rožmberská

Horní ul. 144. 381 01 Český Krumlov. ✆ **380-711-611.** Fax 380-711-327. www.boehmerwaldhotels.de. 10 units. 800Kč ($38/£19) double; 1,295Kč ($62/£31) suite. Rates include breakfast. AE, MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant. *In room:* TV.

Hotel Růže (Rose Hotel) ★ Once a Jesuit seminary, this stunning Italian Renaissance building has been turned into a well-appointed hotel. Comfortable in a big-city kind of way, it's packed with amenities and is one of the top places to stay in Český Krumlov. But for all of the splendor of the building, you may find the Růže somewhat of a disappointment. The rooms contain no period pieces and look as though they were furnished from a Sears catalog. They're clean and spacious, but the promise of a Renaissance stay dissipates quickly. For families or large groups, the larger suites, which have eight beds, provide good value. For the adventurous or those with the right haircut, try one of the cells, where the Jesuit monks used to stay.

Horní 154, 381 01 Český Krumlov. ✆ **380-772-100.** Fax 380-713-146. www.hotelruze.cz. 71 units. 3,800Kč–7,100Kč ($181–$338/£90–£169) double; 5,300Kč–9,600Kč ($252–$457/£126–£228) suite. Rates include breakfast. AE, MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; pool; health club. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer.

Pension Anna ★ *Kids* Along "pension alley," this is a comfortable and rustic place. What makes the pension a favorite are the friendly management and homey feeling you get as you walk up to your room. Forget hotels—this is the kind of place where you can relax. The owners even let you buy drinks and snacks at the bar downstairs and take them to your room. The suites, with four beds and a living room, are great for families and groups.

Rooseveltova 41, 381 01 Český Krumlov. ✆/fax **380-711-692.** www.pensionanna.euweb.cz. 8 units. 1,250Kč ($60/£30) double; 1,550Kč ($74/£37) suite. Rates include breakfast. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Bar. *In room:* TV.

Pension Na louži ★ Smack-dab in the heart of the Inner Town, the small Na louži, decorated with early-20th-century wooden furniture, is a charming change from many of the bigger, bland rooms found in nearby hotels. If the person at reception starts mentioning names without apparent reason, don't worry; it's not a language problem. Management has given the rooms human names instead of numbers. The only drawback is that the beds can be a little short.

Kájovská 66, 381 01 Český Krumlov. ✆/fax **380-711-280.** www.nalouzi.cz. 7 units. 1,350Kč ($64/£32) double; 1,700Kč ($81/£40) triple; 2,300Kč ($110/£55) suite. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Restaurant/bar.

Pension Ve Věži (In the Tower) *Finds* A private pension in a renovated medieval tower just a 5-minute walk from the castle, Ve Věži is one of the most magnificent places to stay in town, and the only one I would recommend on the Latrán side. It's not the accommodations themselves that are so grand; none has a bathroom and all are sparsely decorated. What's wonderful is the ancient ambience. Reservations are recommended.

Pivovarská 28, 381 01 Český Krumlov. ✆ **380-711-742.** www.ckrumlov.cz/pensionvevezi. 4 units (all with shared bathroom). 1,200Kč ($57/£29) double. Rates include breakfast. No credit cards.

WHERE TO DINE

Hospoda Na louži CZECH The large wooden tables encourage you to get to know your neighbors at this Inner Town pub, located in a 15th-century house. The atmosphere is fun and the food above average. If no table is available, stand and have a drink; tables turn over pretty quickly, and the staff is accommodating. In summer, the terrace seats only six, so dash over if a seat empties.

Kájovská 66. ✆ **380-711-280.** Main courses 58Kč–158Kč ($2.75–$7.50/£1.40–£3.75). No credit cards. Mon–Sat 10am–11pm; Sun 10am–10pm.

Restaurace Na Ostrově (On the Island) CZECH In the shadow of the castle and, as the name implies, on an island, this restaurant is best on a sunny day when the terrace overflows with flowers, hearty Czech food (including plenty of chicken and fish), and lots of beer. The staff is very friendly, which helps with your patience since usually only two waiters work each shift, making service on the slow side. A great place to relax and enjoy the view.

Na ostrově 171. ✆ **380-711-326.** Main courses 139Kč–399Kč ($6.60–$19/£3.30–£9.50). No credit cards. Daily 10am–10pm.

Rybářská Bašta Jakuba Krčína CZECH One of the town's most celebrated restaurants, this place specializes in freshwater fish from surrounding lakes. Trout, perch, pike, and eel are sautéed, grilled, baked, and fried in a variety of herbs and spices. Venison, rabbit, and other game are also available, along with the requisite roast beef and pork cutlet dinners.

Kájovská 54. ✆ **380-712-692.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 85Kč–370Kč ($4.05–$18/£2–£8.80). AE, MC, V. Daily 11am–10pm.

EXPLORING ČESKÝ KRUMLOV

Bring a good pair of walking shoes and be prepared to wear them out. Český Krumlov's hills and alleyways cry out for hours of exploration, but if you push the pace you can see everything in 1 day. No cars, thank goodness, are allowed in the historic town, and the cobblestones keep most other vehicles at bay. The town is split into two parts—the **Inner Town** and **Latrán,** which houses the castle. They're best tackled separately, so you won't have to crisscross the bridges several times.

Begin your walk at the **Okresní Muzeum (Regional Museum; ✆ 380-711-674)** at the top of Horní ulice 152. Once a Jesuit seminary, the three-story museum now contains artifacts and displays relating to Český Krumlov's 1,000-year history. The highlight of this mass of folk art, clothing, furniture, and statues is a giant model of the town that offers a bird's-eye view of the buildings. Admission is 50Kč ($2.40/£1.20). The museum is open May to September, daily 10am to 5pm (till 6pm July–Aug); in October to December and March to April, it's open Tuesday to Friday 9am to 4pm, and Saturday and Sunday 1 to 4pm.

Across the street is the **Hotel Růže (Rose),** Horní 154 (✆ **380-772-100**), which was once a Jesuit student house. Built in the late 16th century, the hotel and the prelature next to it show the development of architecture—Gothic, Renaissance, and rococo influences are all present. If you're not staying at the hotel, don't be afraid to walk around and even ask questions at the reception desk.

Continue down the street to the impressive late Gothic **St. Vitus Cathedral.** The church is open daily from 9am to 5pm.

As you continue down the street, you'll come to **náměstí Svornosti.** Few buildings here show any character, making the main square of such an impressive town a little disappointing. The **Radnice (Town Hall),** at náměstí Svornosti 1, is one of the few exceptions. Open daily from 9am to 6pm, its Gothic arcades and Renaissance vault inside are exceptionally beautiful in this otherwise run-down area. From the square, streets fan out in all directions. Take some time to wander through them.

When you get closer to the river, you still can see the high-water marks on some of the quirky bank-side houses, which were devastated by the floods of 2002. Most of the places have taken the opportunity to make a fresh start after massive reconstruction. **Krumlovský Mlýn (The Krumlov Mill),** Široká 80 (✆ **380-712-838;** www.krumlovskymlyn.cz), is a combination restaurant, gallery, antiques shop, and exhibition space. For an additional treat, stroll through the exhibition of historical motorcycles. Open daily 10am to 10pm.

One of Český Krumlov's most famous residents was Austrian-born artist Egon Schiele. He was a bit of an eccentric who on more than one occasion raised the ire of the town's residents (many found his use of young women as nude models distressing), and his stay was cut short when the locals' patience ran out. But the town readopted the artist in 1993, setting up the **Egon Schiele Foundation and the Egon Schiele Art Centrum** in Inner Town, Široká 70–72, 381 01, Český Krumlov (✆ **380-704-011**). It documents his life and work, housing a permanent selection of his paintings

Tips **A Crowd Alert**

Consider yourself warned: Word has spread about Český Krumlov. Late spring to early autumn can be unbearable as thousands of visitors blanket its medieval streets. If possible, try to visit in the off season, when the crowds recede, the prices decrease, and the town's charm can really shine. Who knows, you may even hear some Czech!

as well as exhibitions of other 20th-century artists. Admission 120Kč ($5.70/£2.85); hours are daily from 10am to 6pm.

After you see the museum, cut down Panenská ulice to Soukenická 39 and stop in at **Galerie u rytíře Kryštofa,** Panenská 6, where you can try on the latest in body armor! This place is like the wardrobe room at a theater, and most everything is for sale. It's open Monday to Saturday from 10am to 6pm, Sunday from 1 to 6pm.

For a different perspective on the town, take the stairs from the **Městské divadlo (Town Theater)** on Horní ulice down to the riverfront and rent a rowboat from **Maleček Boat Rentals** (✆ **380-712-853;** www.malecek.cz) at 350Kč ($17/£8.35) for a half-hour trip.

You might want to grab a light lunch at one of the many cafes in Inner Town before crossing the river.

As you cross the bridge and head toward the castle, you'll see immediately to your right the former **hospital and church of St. Jošt.** Founded at the beginning of the 14th century, it has since been turned into apartments. Feel free to snoop around, but don't enter the building.

EXPLORING THE ČESKÝ KRUMLOV CHATEAU

Reputedly the second-largest castle in Bohemia (after Prague Castle), **Český Krumlov Château** was constructed in the 13th century as part of a private estate. Throughout the ages, it has been passed on to a variety of private owners, including the Rožmberk family, Bohemia's largest landholders, and the Schwarzenbergs, the Bohemian equivalent of the Hilton family.

Perched high atop a rocky hill, the château is open only from April to October, exclusively by guided tours.

Follow the path for the long climb up to the **castle.** Greeting you is a round 12th-century **tower**—painstakingly renovated, with its Renaissance balcony. You'll pass over the moat, now occupied by two brown bears. Next is the **Dolní Hrad (Lower Castle)** and then the **Horní Hrad (Upper Castle).**

There are three guided tours. Tour 1 begins in the rococo **Chapel of St. George,** and continues through the portrait-packed **Renaissance Rooms,** and the **Schwarzenberg Baroque Suite,** outfitted with ornate furnishings that include Flemish wall tapestries, European paintings, and also the extravagant 17th-century **Golden Carriage.** Tour 2 includes the **Schwarzenberg portrait gallery** as well as their 19th-century suite. Tour 3 presents the castle's **Baroque Theater.** Tours last about 1 hour and depart frequently. Most are in Czech or German, however. If you want an English-language tour, arrange it ahead of time (✆ **380-725-110;** tourist.service@unios.cz). The guided tours cost 160Kč ($7.60/£3.80) adults, 80Kč ($3.80/£1.90) students (Tour 1); 140Kč ($6.65/£3.35) adults, 70Kč ($3.35/£1.65) students (Tour 2); 180Kč ($8.55/£4.30) adults, and 90Kč ($4.30/£2.15) students (Tour 3). The tickets are sold separately. The castle hours are from Tuesday to Sunday: June to August 9am to 6pm; April, May, September, and October 9am to 5pm. The last entrance is 1 hour before closing.

Once past the main castle building, you can see one of the more stunning views of Český Krumlov from **Most Na Plášti,** a walkway that doubles as a belvedere to the Inner Town. Even farther up the hill lie the castle's riding school and gardens.

ČESKÉ BUDĚJOVICE

This fortress town was established in 1265, when Otakar II decided that the intersection of the Vltava and Malše rivers would be the site of a bastion to protect the approaches to southern Bohemia. Although Otakar was killed at the battle of the Moravian Field in 1278 and the town was subsequently ravaged by the rival Vítkovic family, the construction of České Budějovice continued, eventually taking the shape originally envisaged.

Today, České Budějovice, the hometown of the original Budweiser brand beer, is now more a bastion for the beer drinker than a protector of Bohemia. But its slow pace, relaxed atmosphere, and interesting architecture make it a worthy stop, especially as a base for exploring southern Bohemia or for those heading on to Austria.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE If you're **driving,** leave Prague to the south via the main D1 expressway and take the cutoff for Hwy. E55, which runs straight to České Budějovice. The trip takes about 1½ hours.

Daily express **trains** from Prague make the trip to České Budějovice in about 2½ hours. The fare is 306Kč ($15/£7.30) first class or 204Kč ($9.70/£4.85) second class. Several express **buses** run from Prague's Florenc station each day and take 2½ hours; tickets cost 120Kč ($5.70/£2.85).

VISITOR INFORMATION **Tourist Infocentrum,** náměstí Přemysla Otakara II. 2 (✆ **386-801-414**), provides maps and guidebooks and finds lodging. It is open Monday to Friday 8:30am to 6pm, Saturday till 5pm, and Sunday 10am to 4pm. In winter it is open Monday and Wednesday 9am to 5pm; Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday 9am to 4pm; and Saturday 9am to 1pm. There is a good website about the city; go to **www.c-budejovice.cz** for information.

SPECIAL EVENTS Each August, České Budějovice hosts the largest **International Agricultural Show** in the country.

WHERE TO STAY

Several agencies can locate reasonably priced private rooms. Expect to pay about 500Kč ($24/£12) per person, in cash. **Tourist Infocentrum,** náměstí Přemysla Otakara II. 2 (✆ **386-801-414**), can point you toward a wide selection of conveniently located rooms and pensions.

Grand Hotel Zvon Location is everything to the city's most elegant hotel, which occupies several historic buildings on the main square. In fact, pretty soon the hotel and its accompanying businesses will occupy nearly a quarter of the addresses in the area. The upper-floor rooms have been renovated and tend to be more expensive, especially those with a view of the square. Others are relatively plain and functional. The views from those in front, however, can't be topped, and since the square is so big, noise is rarely a problem. Try to avoid the smaller rooms, usually reserved for tour groups. There's no elevator, but if you don't mind the climb, stay on the fourth floor. One of the biggest changes here in recent years has been the staff, who appear to be learning that guests deserve respect and quality treatment.

Náměstí Přemysla Otakara II. 28, 370 01 České Budějovice. ✆ **381-601-601.** Fax 381-601-605. www.hotel-zvon.cz. 68 units. 1,600Kč–5,600Kč ($76–$267/£38–£133) double. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant; cafe; bar; business center; Internet. *In room:* TV, minibar, safe.

Hotel Malý Pivovar (Small Brewery) ★ Around the corner from the Zvon, this renovated 16th-century microbrewery combines the charms of a B&B with the amenities of a modern hotel. The kind of management found here is a rarity in the Czech tourism industry: They work hard to help out. The rooms are bright and cheery, with antique-style wooden furniture and exposed wooden ceiling beams providing a farmhouse feeling in the center of town. It's definitely worth consideration if being directly on the square (you're only 30m/98 ft. from it) isn't a priority. This is also one of the best places to arrange a trip to the brewery.

Ulice Karla IV. 8–10, 370 01 České Budějovice. ✆ **386-360-471.** Fax 386-360-474. www.malypivovar.cz. 29 units. 2,600Kč–3,300Kč ($124–$157/£62–£79) double; 2,900Kč–3,800Kč ($138–$180/£69–£90) suite. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant/pub; wine bar. *In room:* TV, minibar.

WHERE TO DINE

Potrefená husa CZECH/INTERNATIONAL This addition to the list of local restaurants is owned by Budvar's competitor, the Prague brewery Staropramen. In its modern interior, which is divided into a bar, restaurant, and large terrace with a pleasant view of the river, there is a good selection of pasta, meat dishes, and salads at reasonable prices. The barbecue ribs are very popular, and so is the Czech potato soup served in a bread bowl.

Česká 66. ✆ **387-420-560.** Main courses 69Kč–295Kč ($3.30–$14/£1.65–£7). AE, MC, V. Mon 11am–midnight; Tues–Thurs 11am–1am; Fri 11am–1:30am; Sat noon–1:30am; Sun noon–midnight.

U královské pečeti (At the Royal Seal) ★ CZECH This typical Czech-style pub serves up hearty food at reasonable prices. It offers a tasty goulash as well as *svíčková* or game dishes. Located in the popular Hotel Malý pivovar, this is a very good choice for a Czech food experience.

In the Hotel Malý Pivovar, ulice Karla IV. 8–10. ✆ **386-360-471.** Soups 30Kč ($1.45/70p); main courses 65Kč–290Kč ($3.10–$14/£1.55–£6.90). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 10am–11pm.

EXPLORING THE TOWN

You can comfortably see České Budějovice in a day. At its center is one of central Europe's largest squares, the cobblestone **náměstí Přemysla Otakara II**—it may actually be too large, as many of the buildings tend to get lost in all the open space. The square contains the ornate **Fountain of Sampson,** an 18th-century water well that was once the town's principal water supply, plus a mishmash of baroque and Renaissance buildings. On the southwest corner is the **Town Hall,** an elegant baroque structure built by Martinelli between 1727 and 1730. On top of the Town Hall, the larger-than-life statues by Dietrich represent the civic virtues: justice, bravery, wisdom, and diligence.

One block northwest of the square is the **Černá věž (Black Tower),** which you can see from almost every point in the city. Consequently, its 360 steps are worth the climb to get a bird's-eye view in all directions. The most famous symbol of České Budějovice, this 70m-tall (236-ft.) 16th-century tower was built as a belfry for the adjacent **St. Nicholas Church.** This 13th-century church, one of the town's most important sights, was a bastion of Roman Catholicism during the 15th-century Hussite rebellion. You shouldn't miss the church's flamboyant, white-and-cream, 17th-century baroque interior. The tower is open Tuesday to Sunday (daily July–Aug) from 10am to 6pm; admission is 20Kč (95¢/50p). The church is open daily from 9am to 6pm.

TOURING A BEER SHRINE

On the town's northern edge sits a shrine to those who pray to the gods of the amber nectar. This is where **Budějovický Budvar,** the original brewer of Budweiser beer, has its one and only factory. Established in 1895, Budvar draws on more than 700 years of the area's brewing tradition to produce one of the world's best beers.

One trolleybus—no. 2—and bus no. 8 stop by the brewery; this is how the brewery ensures that its workers and visitors reach the plant safely each day. The trolley ride to the brewery costs 10Kč (50¢/25p). You can also hop a cab from the town square for about 120Kč ($5.70/£2.85).

Tours can be arranged by phoning ahead, but only for groups. Contact Budvar n.p., Karolíny Světlé 4, České Budějovice (✆ **387-705-111;** www.budvar.cz). If you're traveling alone or with only one or two other people, ask a hotel concierge at one of the bigger hotels (I suggest the Zvon or Hotel Malý Pivovar) if he or she can put you with an already-scheduled group. Failing that, you may want to take a chance and head up to the brewery where, if a group has arrived, another person or two won't be noticed.

CHEB (EGER) & FRANTIŠKOVY LÁZNĚ

Few people who travel through Cheb—most on their way across the border to Germany—actually stop and take a look around. From the outside, that's understandable, but it's too bad, since the center of Cheb is one of the more architecturally interesting places in west Bohemia. Its history is fascinating as well.

A former stronghold for the Holy Roman Empire on its eastern flank, Eger, as it was then known, became part of Bohemia in 1322. Cheb stayed under Bohemian rule until it was handed over to Germany as part of the 1938 Munich Pact. Soon after the end of World War II, it was returned to Czech hands, when most of the area's native Germans, known as Sudeten Germans, were expelled for their open encouragement of the invading Nazi army. You can see this bilingual, bicultural heritage in the main square, which could be mistaken for being on either side of the border if it weren't for the Czech writing on windows. These days, the Germans have returned as tourists; many indulge in the town's thriving sex trade and cheap alcohol. Don't be surprised to see women around almost every corner. Still, Cheb is worth exploring for its mélange of architectural styles, the eerie Jewish Quarter Špalíček, and the enormous Romanesque Chebský Hrad (Cheb Castle).

Only about 20 minutes up the road from Cheb is the smallest of the three major Bohemian spa towns, **Františkovy Lázně.** Though it pales in comparison to Karlovy Vary and Mariánské Lázně, Františkovy Lázně has taken great strides in the past few years to erase the decline it experienced under communism. There's not much to see save for the **Spa Museum,** which holds an interesting display of bathing artifacts, but it's a much quieter and cleaner place to spend the night than Cheb. Listed below are places to stay and dine in both Cheb and Františkovy Lázně.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE Cheb is located on the E48, one of the main highways leading to Germany. If you're **driving** from Prague, take the same route you would to Karlovy Vary, which eventually brings you to Cheb. The drive takes about 2 hours.

To get to Františkovy Lázně from Cheb by car, take Hwy. E49. The trip takes about 20 minutes.

Express **trains** from Prague usually stop in Cheb, as do several trains daily from Karlovy Vary. Cheb is on a main train route of the Czech Republic, so it's easy to catch many international connections here. The train takes 3½ hours and costs 375Kč ($18/£8.95) first class and 250Kč ($12/£5.95) second class.

Cheb is a long **bus** ride from Prague, and I suggest avoiding it if possible. It's more manageable to take the bus from Karlovy Vary or Mariánské Lázně.

VISITOR INFORMATION You'll find maps, guidebooks, and lodging at the **Informační Centrum,** náměstí Krále Jiřího z Poděbrad 33 (✆ **354-440-302;** fax 354-440-330; www.mestocheb.cz).

WHERE TO STAY

In Cheb

Hotel Hvězda (Hotel Star) Overlooking the rather noisy main square, the Hvězda is a lone star in the Cheb hotel universe. The rooms are small, but most overlook the square, and the staff tries to make your stay comfortable. If you can't stay in Františkovy Lázně and don't want to drive farther, this is really the only recommended hotel in town.

Náměstí Krále Jiřího z Poděbrad 5, 350 02 Cheb. ✆ **354-422-549.** Fax 354-422-546. 40 units. 1,000Kč ($48/£24) double. AE, MC, V. **Amenities:** *In room:* TV.

In Františkovy Lázně

Hotel Tři Lilie (Three Lilies Hotel) The Three Lilies is worth the extra money since it's the only luxury hotel in the area. Cheb needs a nice hotel like this. At night, you can relax, blocking out noise in your spotless, spacious room that's outfitted with satellite television. The staff is very attentive and can arrange spa treatments, massages, and other health services.

Národní 3, 351 01 Františkovy Lázně. ✆ **354-208-900.** Fax 354-208-995. www.franzensbad.cz. 32 units. 1,460Kč ($70/£35) double; 1,920Kč ($91/£46) suite. AE, MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant/bar; cafe; spa treatments. *In room:* TV, minibar.

WHERE TO DINE

Restaurace Fortuna CZECH If you're craving a schnitzel, this is as good a place as any. Most Czech specialties are served, and the goulash's slightly piquant sauce is a pleasant surprise. It's one of the only restaurants open late, and a terrace right on the main square lends to its appeal.

Náměstí Krále Jiřího z Poděbrad 28. ✆ **354-422-110.** Soups 30Kč ($1.45/70p); main courses 79Kč–185Kč ($3.75–$8.80/£1.90–£4.40). No credit cards. Daily 10am–2am.

Staročeská–U Koček Restaurace CZECH/CHINESE This restaurant serves much the same fare as all of the other restaurants on or around the square, but what catches the eye are a few Chinese dishes. The *kuře kung-pao* (kung pao chicken) is a good spicy alternative to the customary sausages and meat with dumplings. The chicken with mushrooms is also a nice light choice if you've had your fill of heavy meals.

Kamenná 1. ✆ **354-422-170.** Main courses 75Kč–360Kč ($3.55–$17/£1.80–£8.55). No credit cards. Daily 10am–10pm.

EXPLORING CHEB

The main square, **náměstí Krále Jiřího z Poděbrad,** attracts most of the attention and is a good place to begin a stroll of the Old Town. Though it has been overrun with tourist shops and cafes that serve mediocre German fare, the square still shines with Gothic burgher houses and the baroque **Old Town Hall (Stará radnice).** At its south end, the **statue of Kašna Roland,** built in 1591 and a former symbol of capital punishment, reminds people of the strength wielded by justice. At the other end of the square stands the **Kašna Herkules,** a monument to the town's former strength and power. Next to it is a cluster of 11 timber houses, called **Špalíček.** These used to be owned by Jews in the early 14th century, but a fervently anti-Semitic clergy in the area incited such hatred that the Jews were forced up Židská ulice (Jews St.) and into an alleyway called ulička Zavražděných (Murder Victim's Lane), where they were unceremoniously slaughtered in 1350.

Across from Špalíček is the **Cheb Museum** (**✆ 354-422-246**), where another murder took place almost 300 years later—that of Albrecht von Wallenstein in 1634. On the upper level, a display vividly depicts the assassination. The museum's first floor displays many 20th-century paintings, from which you can trace the town's slow demise. Admission is 50Kč ($2.40/£1.20). Hours are March to December, Tuesday to Sunday from 9am to 5pm.

The Old Town is also packed with churches. The most interesting is **St. Nicholas,** around the corner from the museum. It's a hodgepodge of architectural styles: Its Romanesque heritage is reflected in the tower windows, while a Gothic portal and baroque interior round out the renovations over the years. The church is open daily from 9am to 6pm.

TOURING CHEB CASTLE

An excellent example of Romanesque architecture in the northeast part of the Old Town is **Cheb Castle.** Overlooking the Elbe River, the castle, built in the late 12th century, is one of central Europe's largest Romanesque structures.

The castle's main draws are its **Chapel of Sts. Erhard and Ursala** and the **Černá věž (Black Tower).** The two-tiered, early Gothic chapel has a somber first floor where the proletariat would congregate, while the emperor and his family went to the much cheerier and brighter second floor with its Gothic windows.

Across the courtyard from the chapel stands the **Černá věž (Black Tower).** From its 18m-high (59-ft.) lookout, you'll have the best views of the town. The tower seems dusty and smeared with pollution; its color is black because the blocks from which it is made are lava rocks taken from the nearby Komorní Hůrka volcano (now dormant).

Alas, there are no tours of the castle, and the English text provided at the entrance does little to inform you. Admission is 50Kč ($2.40/£1.20). It's open Tuesday to Sunday: June to September from 9am to noon and 1 to 6pm (July–Aug daily), April, May, October, and November from 9am to noon and 1 to 5pm.

5

Denmark

by Darwin Porter & Danforth Prince

In this chapter, we concentrate on Copenhagen, Denmark's capital, and have added a few tantalizing side trips you can take in a day or two. Copenhagen got its name from the word *københavn,* meaning "merchants' harbor." This city grew in size and importance because of its position on the Øresund (the Sound) between Denmark and Sweden, guarding the entrance to the Baltic. From its humble beginnings, Copenhagen has become the largest city in Scandinavia, home to 1.7 million people.

If you'd like to tie in a visit to Copenhagen with the châteaux country of Sweden, it's as easy as crossing a bridge: In 2000 Denmark was linked to Sweden by the 16km (10-mile) Øresund Bridge. The two cities of Copenhagen and Malmö, Sweden, are the hubs of the Øresund Region, northern Europe's largest domestic market, larger than Stockholm and equal in size to Berlin, Hamburg, and Amsterdam. The bridge is the longest combined rail-and-road bridge in the world.

1 Copenhagen

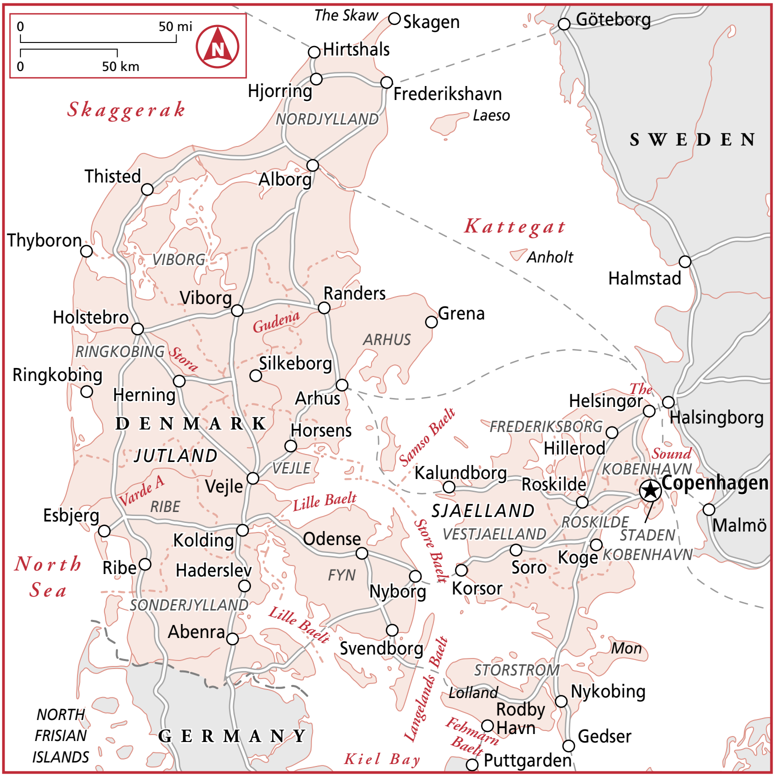
Copenhagen is a city with much charm, as reflected in its canals, narrow streets, and old houses. Its most famous resident was the writer Hans Christian Andersen, whose memory still lives on here. Another of Copenhagen's world-renowned inhabitants was Søren Kierkegaard, who used to take long morning strolls in the city, planning his next essay; his completed writings eventually earned him the title "father of existentialism."

But few modern Copenhageners are reading Kierkegaard today, and neither are they as melancholy as Hamlet. Most of them are out having too much fun. Copenhagen epitomizes the Nordic *joie de vivre,* and the city is filled with a lively atmosphere, good times (none better than at the Tivoli Gardens), sex shows, countless outdoor cafes, and all-night dance clubs. Of course, if you come in winter, the fierce realities of living above the 55th parallel set in. That's when Copenhageners retreat inside their smoky jazz clubs and beer taverns.

Modern Copenhagen still retains some of the characteristics of a village. If you forget the suburbs, you can cover most of the central belt on foot, which makes it a great tourist spot. It's almost as if the city were designed for pedestrians, as reflected by its **Strøget** (strolling street), Europe's longest and oldest walking street.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **By Plane** **SAS** (**✆ 800/221-2350;** www.flysas.com) is the major carrier to Copenhagen. **Finnair** (**✆ 800/950-5000;** www.finnair.com) offers flights through Helsinki from New York and Miami. **Icelandair** (**✆ 800/223-5500;**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Langelands Baelt
Lolland
Nykobing
NORTH FRISIAN ISLANDS
Rodby Havn
GERMANY
Febmarn Baelt
Gedser
Kiel Bay
Puttgarden

Denmark

www.icelandair.com) has service through Reykjavik from several North American cities.

You arrive at **Kastrup Airport** (✆ **45/3231-3231;** www.cph.dk), 12km (7½ miles) from the center of Copenhagen. Since 1998, air-rail trains have linked the airport with Copenhagen's Central Railway Station, in the center of the hotel zone, and the whole affair now takes a mere 11 minutes and costs 26DKK ($5.20/£2.60). The Air Rail Terminal is underneath the airport's arrivals and departure halls, just a short escalator ride from the gates. You can also take an SAS bus to the city terminal; the fare is 26DKK ($5.20/£2.60). A taxi to the city center costs around 175DKK ($35/£18). Yet another option is a local bus, no. 250S, which leaves from the international arrivals terminal every 15 or 20 minutes for Town Hall Square in central Copenhagen and costs 25DKK ($5/£2.50).

By Train Trains from the Continent arrive at the **Hoved Banegård (Central Railroad Station),** in the very center of Copenhagen, near the Tivoli and the Rådhuspladsen. For **rail information,** call ✆ **33-14-17-01.** The station operates a luggage-checking service, but room bookings are available only at the tourist office (see "Visitor Information," below). You can also exchange money at the **Den Danske Bank** branch on-site, open daily from 7am to 8pm.

Copenhagen

DENMARK
Copenhagen

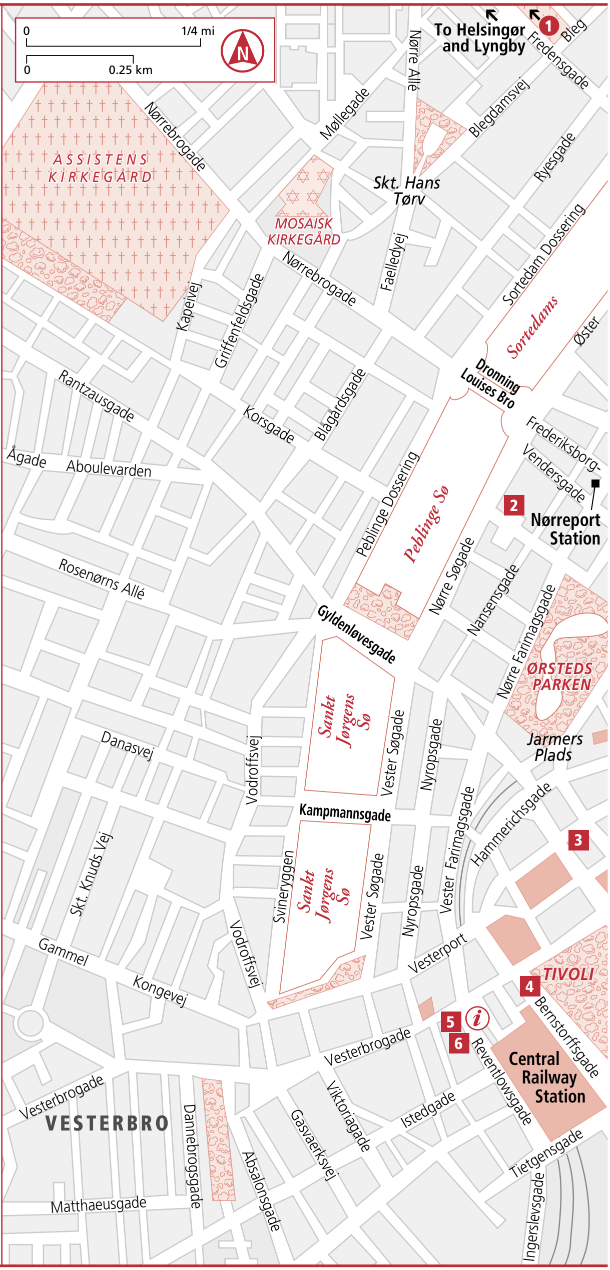
ATTRACTIONS ●

Amalienborg Palace	26
Botanisk Have	17
Christiansborg Palace	12
Erotica Museum	16
Frederikskirke	27
Frihedsmuseet	28
Frilandsmuseet (Open Air Museum)	1
Hirschsprung Collection	18
Little Mermaid	29
Nationalmuseet	10
Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek	7
Rådhus and World Clock	9
Rosenborg Castle	20
Rundetårn	15
Statens Museum for Kunst	19
Tivoli Gardens	8
Tøjhusmuseet	11
Vor Frue Kirke	13

ACCOMMODATIONS ■

Absalon Hotel	6
Ascot Hotel	14
Christian IV	21
Copenhagen Strand	24
Hotel Alexandra	3
Hotel d'Angleterre	22
Hotel Selandia	5
Kong Arthur	2
Phoenix Copenhagen	25
71 Nyhavn	23
Sofitel Copenhagen Plaza	4

†	Church
ⓘ	Information
✉	Post Office
—	Railway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Faelledvej
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Griffenfeldsgade
Nørrebrogade
Dronning Louises Bro
Rantzausgade
Korsgade
Blågårdsgade
Frederiksborg-
Vendersgade
2
Nørreport Station
Ågade
Aboulevarden
Peblinge Dossering
Peblinge Sø
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TIVOLI
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Bernstorffsgade
Vesterbrogade
Central Railway Station
Vesterbrogade
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Viktoriagade
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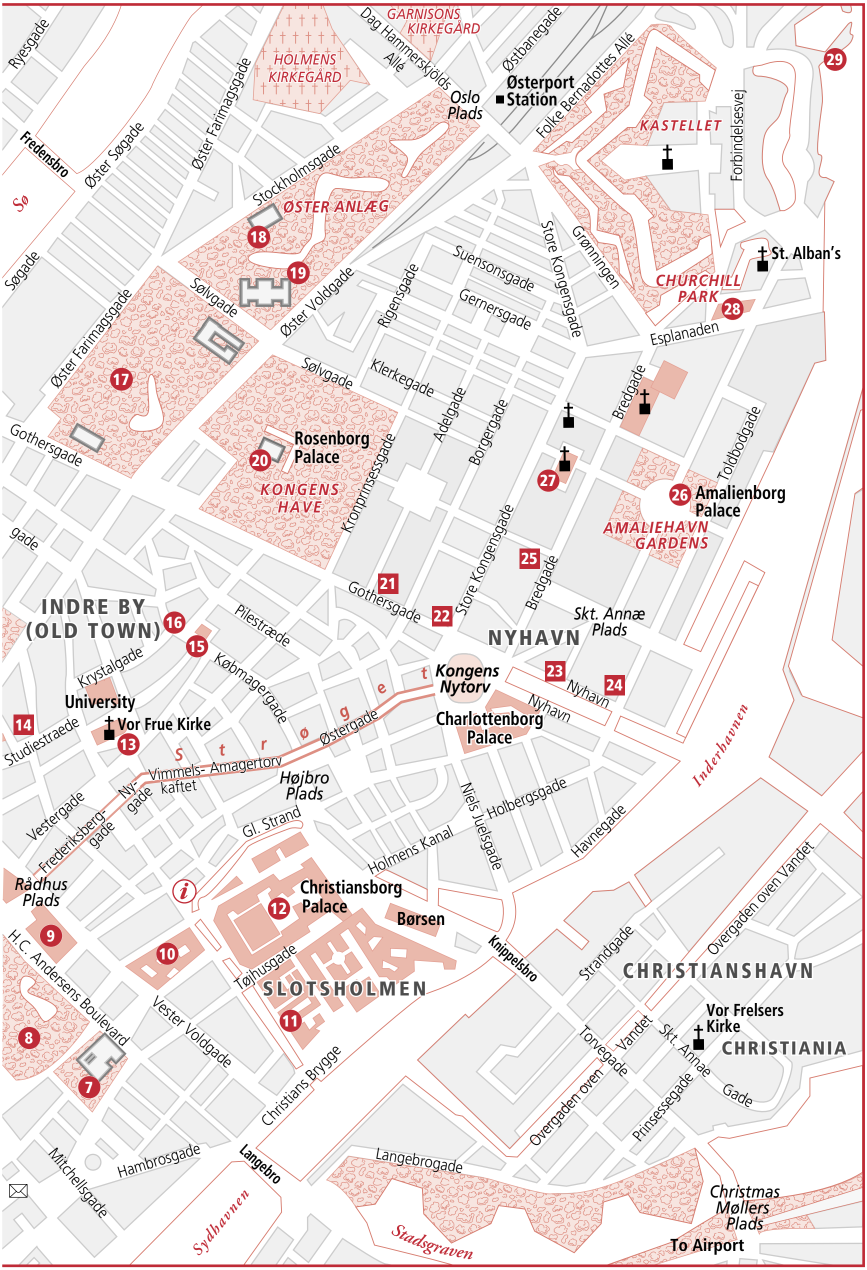
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Østbanegade
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Oslo Plads
Folke Bernadottes Allé
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Fredensbro
Øster Søgade
Øster Farimagsgade
KASTELLET
Forbindelsesvej
Sø
Stockholmsgade
ØSTER ANLÆG
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Søgade
Sølvgade
Øster Voldgade
Suensonsgade
Store Kongensgade
Grønningen
St. Alban's
Rigensgade
Gernersgade
CHURCHILL PARK
28
Esplanaden
Øster Farimagsgade
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Sølvgade
Klerkegade
Adelgade
Borgergade
Bredgade
Toldbodgade
Gothersgade
Rosenborg Palace
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KONGENS HAVE
Kronprinsessegade
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Amalienborg Palace
AMALIEHAVN GARDENS
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Gothersgade
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Store Kongensgade
Bredgade
INDRE BY (OLD TOWN)
16
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Pilestræde
Skt. Annæ Plads
NYHAVN
Købmagergade
Krystalgade
Kongens Nytorv
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Nyhavn
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University
Nyhavn
Charlottenborg Palace
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Vor Frue Kirke
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Studiestraede
Strøget
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Amagertorv
Vimmels- kaftet
Ny- gade
Højbro Plads
Inderhavnen
Vestergade
Frederiksberg- gade
Gl. Strand
Niels Juelsgade
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Rådhus Plads
Holmens Kanal
Christiansborg Palace
12
Børsen
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H.C. Andersens Boulevard
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Knippelsbro
Strandgade
Overgaden oven Vandet
Tøjhusgade
SLOTSHOLMEN
CHRISTIANSHAVN
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To Airport

From the Central Railroad Station, you can connect with **S-tog,** the local subway, with trains leaving from platforms in the terminus itself. To find out which train you should board to reach your destination, inquire at the information desk near Tracks 9 and 12.

By Car If you're driving from Germany, a car-ferry will take you from Travemünde to Gedser in southern Denmark. From Gedser, get on E-55 north, an express highway that will deliver you to the southern outskirts of Copenhagen. If you're coming from Sweden and crossing at Helsingborg, you'll land on the Danish side at Helsingør. Take express highway E-55 south to the northern outskirts of Copenhagen. If you're coming from Malmö, Sweden, you can cross on the Øresund Bridge.

VISITOR INFORMATION **Tourist Office** **Wonderful Copenhagen Tourist Information Center,** Gammel Kongevej 1 (✆ **33-25-74-00;** see website below), is open September to October, Monday to Saturday 9am to 4pm; November to April, Saturday 9am to 2pm; May and June, daily 9am to 8pm; July and August, daily 8am to 11pm.

Websites The Wonderful Copenhagen Tourist Information Center website (**www.visitcopenhagen.dk**) takes awhile to load but is worth the wait; you'll find all the basics on dining, lodging, and attractions. The **Danish Tourist Board** (**www.visitdenmark.com**) offers a wide-ranging website where you'll find late news and transportation tips; the accommodation choices range from castles and manor houses to farm vacations.

CITY LAYOUT The heart of **Old Copenhagen** is a maze of pedestrian streets, formed by Nørreport Station to the north, Town Hall Square (Rådhuspladsen) to the west, Kongens Nytorv to the east, and the Inderhavnen (Inner Harbor) to the south. One continuous route, **Strøget,** the world's longest pedestrian street, goes east from Town Hall Square to Kongens Nytorv and is made up of five streets: Frederiksberggade, Nygade, Vimmelskaftet, Amagertorv, and Østergade. Strøget is lined with shops, bars, restaurants, and sidewalk cafes in summer. **Pistolstraede,** a narrow street a 3-minute walk west of Kongens Nytorv, is a maze of galleries, restaurants, and boutiques, all housed in restored 18th-century buildings.

Fiolstræde (Violet St.), a dignified street with antiques shops and bookshops, cuts through the university (Latin Quarter). If you turn into Rosengaarden at the top of Fiolstræde, you'll come to **Kultorvet (Coal Sq.)** just before you reach Nørreport Station. Here you join the third main pedestrian street, **Købmagergade (Butcher St.),** which winds around and finally meets Strøget on Amagertorv.

At the end of Strøget you approach **Kongens Nytorv (King's Sq.),** the site of the Royal Theater and Magasin, the largest department store. This will put you at the beginning of **Nyhavn,** the former seamen's quarter that has been gentrified into an upmarket area of expensive restaurants, apartments, cafes, and boutiques. The government of Denmark is centered on the small island of **Slotsholmen,** connected to the center by eight bridges. Several museums, notably Christiansborg Castle, are found here.

The center of Copenhagen is **Rådhuspladsen (Town Hall Sq.).** From here it's a short walk to the Tivoli Gardens, the major attraction, and to the Central Railroad Station, the main railroad and subway terminus. The wide boulevard, **Vesterbrogade,** passes by Tivoli until it reaches the Central Railroad Station. Another major street is named after Denmark's most famous writer; **H. C. Andersens Boulevard** runs along Rådhuspladsen and the Tivoli Gardens.

Value Traveling for Less

The **Copenhagen Card** entitles you to free and unlimited travel by bus and rail throughout the metropolitan area (including North Zealand), 25% to 50% discounts on crossings to and from Sweden, and free admission on more than 60 sights and museums. The card is available for 1 or 3 days. The 1-day card costs 199DKK ($40/£20) adults, 125DKK ($25/£13) children between 10 and 15 years old; 3-day card 429DKK ($86/£43) adults, 249DKK ($50/£25) children. Up to 2 children age 9 and under are allowed free entrance with each adult card. For more information, contact the Copenhagen Tourist Information Center (see above).

Copenhagen lies in the northern part of the island of Zealand. In spite of Copenhagen, most of North Zealand is rather rural and enjoys many associations with Danish royalty. It is, in fact, the site of Helsing (Hamlet's castle) and many sea shores, lakes, fishing villages, and woodlands.

GETTING AROUND A joint zone-fare system includes Copenhagen Transport buses and State Railway and S-tog trains in Copenhagen and North Zealand, plus some private rail routes within a 40km (25-mile) radius of the capital, enabling you to transfer from train to bus and vice versa with the same ticket.

A *grundbillet* (basic ticket) for both buses and trains costs 19DKK ($3.80/£1.90). You can buy 10 tickets for 120DKK ($24/£12). Children 11 and under ride for half fare; those 4 and under travel free on local trains, and those 6 and under ride free on buses. You can purchase a ticket allowing 24-hour bus and train travel through nearly half of Zealand for 110DKK ($22/£11); half price for children 7 to 11; free for children 6 and under.

Students who have an **International Student Identity Card (ISIC)** are entitled to a number of travel breaks. You can buy a card in the United States at **STA Travel** (✆ **800/781-4040;** www.statravel.com).

Eurailpasses and Nordturist Pass tickets are accepted on local trains.

By Bus Copenhagen's well-maintained buses are the least expensive method of getting around. Most buses leave from Rådhuspladsen. A basic ticket costing 17DKK ($3.40/£1.70) allows 1 hour of travel and unlimited transfers within two zones. For information, call ✆ **36-13-14-15.**

By S-tog (Subway) The S-tog connects heartland Copenhagen with its suburbs. Use of the tickets is the same as on buses (above). You can transfer from a bus line to an S-train on the same ticket. Eurailpass holders generally ride free. For more information, call ✆ **33-14-17-01** anytime.

By Metro In 2001 Copenhagen launched its first Metro line, taking passengers from east to west across the city and vice versa. Operating round-the-clock, the Metro runs as far west as Vanløse and as far south as Vestamager. Nørreport is the transfer station to the S-tog system, the commuter rail link to the suburbs. Metro trains run every 2 minutes during rush hours and every 15 minutes at night. Fares are integrated into the existing zone system (see "By Bus," above). For information, call ✆ **33-11-17-00.**

By Car It's best to park your car in any of the dozens of city parking lots, and then retrieve it when you're ready to explore the capital's environs. Many parking lots are open 24 hours; a few others tend to close between 1 and 7am. Some close on Saturday afternoon and on Sunday during nonpeak business hours when traffic is presumably lighter. Costs tend to be about 23DKK to 25DKK ($4.60–$5/£2.30–£2.50) per hour or 240DKK ($48/£24) per 24 hours. One of the most central parking lots is **Industriens Hus,** H. C. Andersens Blvd. 18 (✆ **33-91-21-75**), open Monday to Friday 7am to 1:30am and Saturday and Sunday from 9am to 12:45am.

By Taxi Watch for the FRI (free) sign or green light to hail a taxi. Be sure the taxis are metered. **Hovedstadens Taxi** (✆ **38-77-77-77**) operates one of the most central taxi companies. ***Note:*** Tips are included in the meter price: 23DKK ($4.60/£2.30) at the drop of the flag and 11DKK ($2.25/£1.15) per kilometer thereafter, Monday through Friday from 7am to 4pm. From 4pm to 7am, the fare is 15DKK ($3/£1.50). On Saturday and Sunday between 11pm and 7am, the cost is 15DKK ($3/£1.50) per kilometer. Basic drop-of-the-flag costs remain the same, however. Many drivers speak English.

By Bicycle To reduce pollution from cars, Copenhageners ride bicycles. For 60DKK to 150DKK ($12–$30/£6–£15) per day, plus a 200DKK to 500DKK ($40–$100/£20–£50) deposit, you can rent a bike at **Københavns Cyklebors,** Reventlowsgade 11 (✆ **33-14-07-17**). Hours are Monday to Friday 8:30am to 5:30pm, Saturday 10am to 1:30pm, and Sunday by appointment.

FAST FACTS: Copenhagen

American Express American Express is represented throughout Denmark by **Neiman & Schultz,** Nansens (✆ **33-11-25-00**), with a branch in Terminal 3 of the Copenhagen Airport. Fulfilling all the functions of American Express except foreign-exchange services, the main office is open Monday to Thursday 8:30am to 4:30pm, and Friday 8:30am to 4pm. The airport office remains open until 8:30pm Monday to Friday. On weekends, and overnight on weekdays, a recorded message, in English, provides the phone number of a 24-hour Amex service in Stockholm. This is useful for anyone who has lost a card or traveler's checks. As for foreign exchange, you'll find Neiman & Schultz offices scattered throughout Copenhagen, including a branch that's open 24 hours a day at the railway station.

Business Hours Most **banks** are open from Monday to Friday 9:30am to 4pm (Thursday to 6pm). **Stores** are generally open Monday to Thursday 9am to 6pm, Friday 9am to 7 or 8pm, and Saturday 9am to 3pm; most are closed Sunday.

Currency The Danish currency is the **krone (crown),** or DKK, made up of 100 øre. The rate of exchange used in this chapter is $1 = 5.05DKK, or 1DKK = 20¢. Note that in contrast to the fiscal policies of most of western Europe, Denmark opted not to convert its monetary system to the euro in January 2001, despite its membership in the E.U. Therefore, at least as of this writing, the euro is not the legal tender of Denmark.

Currency Exchange Banks are generally your best bet to exchange currency. When banks are closed, you can exchange money at **Forex** (✆ **33-11-22-20;** S-tog: Central Station) in the Central Railroad Station, open daily from 8am to 9pm, or at the **Change Group** (✆ **33-93-04-55;** bus no. 1, 6, or 9; Metro: Kongens

Nytorv), Østergade 61, open Monday through Saturday from 8:30am to 10pm and Sunday from 10am to 6pm.

Dentists & Doctors For emergency dental treatment, go to **Tandlaegevagten,** Oslo Plads 14 (✆ **35-38-02-51;** S-tog: Østerport), near Østerport Station and the U.S. Embassy. It's open Monday through Friday from 8am to 9:30pm and Saturday, Sunday, and holidays from 10am to noon. Be prepared to pay in cash. To reach a doctor, dial ✆ **33-93-63-00** Monday to Friday 8am to 4pm or ✆ **38-88-60-41** after hours. The doctor's fee is payable in cash. Virtually every doctor speaks English.

Drugstores An *apotek* (pharmacy) open 24 hours a day in central Copenhagen is **Steno Apotek,** Vesterbrogade 6C (✆ **33-14-82-66;** bus no. 6).

Embassies All embassies are in Copenhagen. The embassy of the **United States** is at Dag Hammärskjölds Allé 24, DK-2100 København 0 (✆ 33-41-71-00). Other embassies are the **United Kingdom,** Kastelsvej 36–40, DK-2100 København (✆ 35-44-52-00); **Canada,** Kristen Berniskows Gade 1, DK-1105 København (✆ 33-48-32-00); **Australia,** Dampfaergeveg 26, DK-2100 København (✆ 70-26-36-76); and **Ireland,** Østbanegade 21, DK-2100 København (✆ 35-42-32-33).

Emergencies Dial ✆ **112** for the fire department, the police, or an ambulance, or to report a sea or air accident.

Internet Access Across from the entrance to the Tivoli, **Boomtown**, Axeltorv 1-3 (✆ **33-32-10-32**), is open 24 hours, charging 30DKK ($6/£3) for use of one of its computers.

Post Office For information about the Copenhagen post office, call ✆ **33-41-56-00.** The main post office is at Tietgensgade 35–39, DK-1570 København (✆ **31-41-56-00;** S-tog: Central Station), open Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm, Saturday 9am to noon. The post office at the Central Railroad Station is open Monday to Friday 8am to 10pm, Saturday 9am to 4pm, and Sunday 10am to 4pm.

Taxes The 25% VAT (value-added tax) on goods and services is known in Denmark as *moms* (pronounced "mumps") and is normally included in the price. Special tax-free exports are possible, and many stores will mail goods home to you, circumventing *moms.* If you want to take your purchases with you, look for shops displaying Danish tax-free shopping notices. Such shops offer tourists' tax refunds for personal export. This refund applies to purchases of at least 300DKK ($60/£30) for U.S. and Canadian visitors. Your tax-free invoice must be stamped by Danish Customs when you leave the country. You can receive your refund at Copenhagen's Kastrup International Airport when you depart. If you go by land or sea, you can receive your refund by mail. Mail requests for refunds to Danish Tax-Free Shopping A/S, H. J. Holstvej 5A, DK-2605 Brøndby, Denmark. You'll be reimbursed by check, cash, or credit or charge card in the currency you want. Service and handling fees are deducted from the total, so actual refunds come to about 18%.

A 25% *moms* is included in hotel and restaurant bills, service charges, entrance fees, and repair bills for foreign-registered cars. No refunds are possible on these items.

Telephone The country code for Denmark is **45.** It should precede any call made to Denmark from another country.

Danish phones are fully automatic. Dial the eight-digit number; there are no city area codes. At public telephone booths, don't insert any coins until your party answers. Use two 50-øre coins or a 1-krone or 5-krone coin only. You can make more than one call on the same payment if your time hasn't run out. Remember that calling direct from your hotel room can be expensive. Emergency calls are free.

Tipping Tips are seldom expected, but when they are, you should give only 1DKK (20¢/10p) or 2DKK (40¢/20p). Porters charge fixed prices, and tipping is not customary for hairdressers or barbers. Service is built into the system, and hotels, restaurants, and even taxis include a 15% service charge in their rates. Because of the service charge, plus the 25% *moms,* you'll probably have to pay an additional 40% for some services!

Consider tipping only for special services—some Danes would feel insulted if you offered them a tip.

WHERE TO STAY

NEAR KONGENS NYTROV & NYHAVN

Very Expensive

Hotel d'Angleterre ★★★ If you've made it, stay here. At the top of Nyhavn, this seven-story hotel, built in 1755 and extensively renovated, is the premier choice for Denmark (though it's a bit staid and stodgy). The rooms are beautifully furnished with art objects and the occasional antique. They vary in size, but each has a grand bed that has sheltered notables ranging from Hans Christian Andersen to Madonna and Ricky Martin. The bathrooms come with phones and scales.

Kongens Nytorv 34, DK-1021 København. ✆ **33-12-00-95.** Fax 33-12-11-18. www.dangleterre.com. 123 units. 2,760DKK–3,060DKK ($552–$612/£276– £306) double; from 4,980DKK ($996/£498) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 400DKK ($80/£40). Bus: 1A, 5, 15, or 18. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; indoor pool; fitness center; spa; sauna; room service; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service, nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Phoenix Copenhagen ★★ More than any other hotel, this top-of-the-line lodging poses a challenge to the discreet grandeur of the nearby d'Angleterre. Opened in 1991, the Phoenix was a royal guesthouse, originally built in 1780 to accommodate the aristocratic courtiers of Amalienborg Palace. The spacious rooms are tastefully elegant and decorated with discreet Louis XVI reproductions. The large beds sport fine linens, and the bathrooms are state-of-the-art. The very best units also have faxes, bathrobes, and phones in the bathrooms.

Bredgade 37, DK-1260 København. ✆ **33-95-95-00.** Fax 33-33-98-33. www.phoenixcopenhagen.com. 213 units. 1,290DKK–1,900DKK ($258–$380/£129– £190) double; from 3,900DKK ($780/£390) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 225DKK ($45/£23). Bus: 1, 6A, 15, or 19. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; room service (6:30am–10pm); babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service, nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

Expensive

71 Nyhavn ★★ On the corner between Copenhagen harbor and Nyhavn Canal, this hotel is housed in a restored old warehouse from 1804, and was thoroughly renovated in 1997. Most of the rooms have a harbor and canal view. The rooms have a nautical decor, with exposed brick, dark woods, and crisscrossing timbers. Bathrooms are rather small; most have a stall shower. The best rooms are equipped with bathrobes, faxes, and high-speed Internet hookups.

Nyhavn 71, DK-1051 København. ☎ **33-43-62-00.** Fax 33-43-62-01. www.71nyhavnhotel.com. 150 units. Mon–Thurs 1,690DKK–1,990DKK ($338–$398/£129–£199) double, Fri–Sun 1,390DKK–1,790DKK ($278–$358/£139–£179) double; 3,990DKK–4,590DKK ($798–$918/£399–£459) year-round suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. Bus: 1A, 6A, 29, or 650-S. Metro: Kongens Nytorf. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; room service; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service, nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C (in some), TV, minibar, hair dryer, trouser press (in some), iron (in some), safe.

Moderate

Christian IV This small, cozy hotel enjoys one of the most desirable locations in Copenhagen. Dating from 1958, the hotel takes its name from Christian IV, who constructed Rosenburg Castle lying adjacent to the hotel. The hotel provides a "bridge" linking King's Garden, the castle, and the more modern structures in the neighborhood. Enjoying a lot of repeat business, it offers attractively decorated bedrooms with a modern Danish design, along with immaculately kept private bathrooms with tub and shower.

Dronningens Tvaergade 45, DK-1302 Københaven. ☎ **33-32-10-44.** Fax 33-32-07-06. www.hotelchristianiv.dk. 42 units. 995DKK–1,495DKK ($199–$299/£100-£150) double. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. No parking. Bus: 26. **Amenities:** Breakfast room; bar; access to nearby fitness center; laundry service; 1 room for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* TV, minibar in some, Wi-Fi.

Copenhagen Strand ★ One of the city's most modern hotels, opened in 2000, lies within a pair of former brick-and-timber factories. The savvy architects retained as many of the old-fashioned details as they could. The medium-size rooms are filled with comfortable, contemporary-looking furnishings. The hotel is rated three stars by the Danish government, but frankly, all that it lacks for elevation into four-star status is a full-fledged restaurant.

Havnegade 37, DK-1058 København K. ☎ **33-48-99-00.** Fax 33-48-99-01. www.copenhagenstrand.dk. 174 units. 1,050DKK–1,950DKK ($210–$390/£105– £195) double; 2,495DKK–3,795DKK ($499–$759/£250– £380) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 125DKK ($25/£13). Metro: Kongens Nytorv. **Amenities:** Bar; business center; room service; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer.

NEAR RÅDHUSPLADSEN & TIVOLI

Expensive

Sofitel Copenhagen Plaza ★ This successful overhaul of an older hotel near the rail station combines first-class comfort and antique furnishings. Opposite the Tivoli Gardens, the hotel was commissioned by King Frederik VIII in 1913 and has entertained its share of celebrities and royalty. Rooms vary greatly in size and resemble what you might find in an English country house—but with all the modern amenities. The antiques, double-glazed windows, and views from many rooms make this a good choice. Bathrooms are generous in size. The **Library Bar** is one of Copenhagen's most charming.

Bernstorffsgade 4, DK-1577 København. ☎ **800-SOFITEL** or 33-14-92-62. Fax 33-93-93-62. www.sofitel.com. 93 units. 1,149–1,395DKK ($230–$275/£115– £140) double; from 3,600DKK ($720/£360) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 225DKK ($45/£23). Bus: 2A, 5A, 46, or 150S. Metro: Norreport. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; fitness center; room service; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

Moderate

Absalon Hotel ★ *Value* Since 1938 the Nedergaard family has been welcoming guests to its hotel, which has grown and expanded over the years in the neighborhood near the rail station. Today the hotel comprises a government-rated three-star hotel with private bathrooms, and a one-star annex without private bathrooms, the two hotels sharing the same entrance and reception. You can stay here in comparative luxury or at budget prices, depending on your choice of accommodations. Most bedrooms are medium in size or even somewhat cramped, but all are comfortably furnished and well maintained. If you want to stay here luxuriously, opt for one of the large and elegantly furnished top-floor rooms in a classical English or French Louis XIV style.

Helgolandsgade 15, DK-1653. København. ✆ **33-24-22-11.** Fax 33-24-34-11. www.absalon-hotel.dk. 165 units. Absalon Hotel (with private bathroom) 995DKK–1,260DKK ($199–$252/£100–£126) double. Annex (without private bathroom) 750DKK ($150/£75) double. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. No parking. Closed Dec 19–Jan 2. Bus: 6, 10, 16, 27, or 28. **Amenities:** Breakfast room; lounge; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV, dataport (in some), fridge (in some), hair dryer (in some), trouser press (in some), safe (in some).

Ascot Hotel ★ *Value* On a side street, 180m (591 ft.) from the Tivoli and a 2-minute walk from Town Hall Square, sits one of Copenhagen's best small hotels. The Ascot was built in 1902 and enlarged and modernized in 2007. The furniture is tasteful and very comfortable, and a few of the units offer a kitchenette. The finest rooms open onto the street, though the rooms in the rear get better air circulation and more light.

Studiestræde 61, DK-1554 København. ✆ **33-12-60-00.** Fax 33-14-60-40. www.ascot-hotel.dk. 165 units. 1,090DKK–1,490DKK ($218–$298/£109–£149) double; from 2,000DKK ($400/£200) suite. Rates include buffet breakfast. Winter discounts available. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. Bus: 2, 6, 8, 11, 14, 28, 29, 30, 34, 67, 68, 69, 150S, or 250S. Metro: Norreport. **Amenities:** Breakfast room; bar; fitness center; room service; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service. *In room:* TV, kitchenette, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

Hotel Alexandra ★ *Finds* This conveniently located address is a designer hotel with period furniture from Danish modern masters Arne Jacobsen and Ole Wanscher, with avant-garde lighting by Paul Henningsen. Each room is uniquely decorated, and 13 units are "special design rooms." Danish furniture classics are enhanced by Danish art on the walls. Guests meet fellow guests in the hotel's restaurant, Bistroen KBH, which serves a large Danish buffet in the morning.

H. C. Andersens Blvd. 8, D-1553 København. ✆ **33-74-44-44.** Fax 33-74-44-88. www.hotel-alexandra.dk. 61 units. 1,195DKK–2,125DKK ($239–$425/£120–£213) double. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: 1, 6, or 8. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; room service; laundry service/dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV, hair dryer, spa next door, Wi-Fi.

Hotel Selandia One of the better hotels behind the railroad station, this solidly built structure has been receiving guests since 1928, and has been renovated many times since. A longtime favorite of budget-conscious travelers, it is well maintained, with comfortable, immaculately kept bedrooms. The furnishings in the midsize rooms are contemporary Scandinavian modern. A good Danish breakfast is served in a ground-floor room.

Helgolandsgade 12, DK-1653 København. ✆ **33-31-46-10.** Fax 33-31-46-09. www.hotel-selandia.dk. 87 units, 57 with bathroom. 595DKK–765DKK ($119–$153/£60–£77) double without bathroom; 995DKK–1,295DKK ($199–$259/£100–£130) double with bathroom. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 222DKK ($44/£22). Closed Dec 15–Jan 5. Bus: 10 or 26. **Amenities:** Breakfast room; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service. *In room:* TV, minibar (in some), hair dryer (in some).

Kong Arthur ★ *Value* An orphanage when it was built in 1882, this hotel sits behind a private courtyard next to the tree-lined Peblinge Lake. Today, it's an antiques-filled mansion of old-world charm. It's been completely renovated into a contemporary hostelry, and a recent expansion offers more spacious rooms, including 30 for nonsmokers.

Nørre Søgade 11, DK-1370 København. ✆ **33-11-12-12.** Fax 33-32-61-30. www.kongarthur.dk. 117 units. 1,720DKK–1,770DKK ($344–$354/£172–£177) double; from 2,200DKK ($440/£220) suite. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. Bus: 5, 8, 14, 42, or 43. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; bar; sauna; room service; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer, trouser press, safe, Wi-Fi.

WHERE TO DINE

That national institution, the smørrebrød (open-faced sandwich), is introduced at lunch. Literally, this means "bread and butter," but the Danes stack this sandwich as if it were the Leaning Tower of Pisa—then they throw in a slice of curled cucumber and bits of parsley or perhaps sliced peaches or a mushroom for added color.

NEAR KONGENS NYTORV & NYHAVN

Very Expensive

Era Ora ★★★ ITALIAN This reminder of the "Golden Age" is on virtually everyone's list as the best Italian restaurant in Denmark, and is one of the consistently best restaurants of any kind within Copenhagen. Established in 1982 by Tuscan-born partners Alessandro and Elvio, it offers an antique-looking dining room. Enjoy a cuisine based on Tuscan and Umbrian models, with sophisticated variations inspired by Denmark's superb array of fresh seafood and produce. Traditional favorites include a platter of 10 types of antipasti. All pastas are freshly made every day. Depending on the season and the inspiration of the chef, main courses include succulent veal dishes, rack of venison with balsamic vinegar and chanterelles, and ultrafresh fish.

Overgaden Neden Vandet 33B. ✆ **32-54-06-93.** Reservations required. Fixed-price menus 700DKK–2,300DKK ($140–$460/£70–£230). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat 7pm–1am. Bus: 2, 8, or 48.

Godt ★★★ INTERNATIONAL This small-scale favorite is known to everyone in the neighborhood, including the queen of Denmark. Despite its fame, there's an appealing lack of pretentiousness here. Food is prepared fresh every day, based on ingredients that are the best at the market. The repertoire served here is splendid and the atmosphere so special it is worth reserving for your final night in Copenhagen. Some exciting new dishes on the menu include quail stuffed with foie gras served with a salad of apple and celery; venison with a sauce of wild mushrooms; or fresh fish served with a sauce of almonds, vanilla, and fresh berries.

Gothersgade 38. ✆ **33-15-21-22.** Reservations required. Fixed-price menus 480DKK–600DKK ($96–$120/£48–£60). DC, MC, V. Tues–Sat 6pm–midnight. Closed July and Dec 23–Jan 3. Bus: 6, 10, or 14.

Kommandanten ★★ DANISH/FRENCH Built in 1698 as the residence of the city's military commander, this deluxe restaurant is the epitome of Danish chic and charm. The menu offers a mouthwatering array of classical dishes mixed with innovative selections, a medley of strong yet subtle flavors. The finest seasonal ingredients are used, and the menu changes every 2 weeks. You might be offered the grilled catch of the day, fried veal tenderloin, grilled turbot with langoustines, or scallops and smoked quail. The service is the best in Copenhagen.

Ny Adelgade 7. ✆ **33-12-09-90.** Reservations required. Main courses 330DKK–400DKK ($66–$80/£33–£40); 3-course menu 790DKK ($158/£79). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat 5:30–10pm. Bus: 1, 2, 5, or 6.

Kong Hans Kaelder ★★★ MODERN DANISH/INTERNATIONAL Housed in the oldest building in the city that's still in commercial use, this vaulted Gothic cellar may be the best restaurant in Denmark. Its most serious competition comes from Kommandanten, which many discriminating palates hail as the best. On "the oldest corner of Copenhagen," the restaurant has been carefully restored and is now a Relais

Gourmand. A typical three-course dinner would include smoked salmon from the restaurant's smokehouse, breast of duck with *bigarade* (sour orange) sauce, and plum ice cream with Armagnac. If you dine here, prepare for innovation and delightful taste sensations, as evoked by slightly smoked scallops with a side of Sevruga caviar. Another signature dish is sautéed lobster with Jerusalem artichokes in a soy-ginger butter. These dishes can be served as either a starter or a main course.

Vingårdsstræde 6. ✆ **33-11-68-68.** Reservations required. Main courses 275DKK–415DKK ($55–$83/£28–£42); fixed-price menus 825DKK ($165/£83). AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Sat 6–10pm. Closed July 20–Aug 4 and Dec 24–26. Bus: 1, 6, or 9.

Moderate

Café Lumskebugten ★ *Finds* DANISH This restaurant is a well-managed bastion of Danish charm, with an unpretentious elegance. Now-legendary matriarch Karen Marguerita Krog established it in 1854 as a rowdy tavern for sailors. A tastefully gentrified version of the original beef hash is still served. Two glistening-white dining rooms are decorated with antique ships' models and oil paintings. The food and service are excellent. Specialties include tartar of salmon with herbs, Danish fish cakes with mustard sauce and minced beet root, sugar-marinated salmon with mustard-cream sauce, and a symphony of fish with saffron sauce and new potatoes. A filling lunch platter of assorted house specialties is offered for 275DKK ($46/£23).

Esplanaden 21. ✆ **33-15-60-29.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 175DKK–275DKK ($35–$55/£18–£28); 3-course fixed-price lunch 275DKK ($55/£28); 5-course fixed-price dinner 545DKK ($109/£55). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri 11:30am–10pm; Sat 5–10pm. Bus: 1, 6, or 9.

Custom House ★★ DANISH/JAPANESE/ITALIAN The Terence Conran group from England has moved into Copenhagen opening a restaurant complex, including bars, in a renovated ferry terminal overlooking the harbor. It's a unique dining adventure. Bacino serves some of the best specialties from the Italian kitchen, including a range of antipasti, succulent pastas and risottos, as well as freshly caught fish and various meat dishes, especially tender veal such as a braised shank in Barolo wine sauce and truffles, artichokes, and polenta. The Custom House Bar & Grill specializes in a flavor-filled Danish and continental cuisine, everything from lobster to roast pork. Specialties are rack of lamb and filet of salmon in a choice of sauces including roasted garlic butter. In a minimalist but elegant atmosphere, Ebisu serves a traditional Japanese cuisine with specialties often turned out on a large charcoal grill. The grilled duck breast teriyaki with a pear sauce is one of the best dishes in this complex.

Havnegade 44. ✆ **33-31-01-30.** Reservations recommended. Bacino main courses 105DKK–345DKK ($21–$69/£11–£35); The Custom House Bar & Grill main courses 145DKK–295DKK ($30–$59/£15–£30); Ebisu main courses 95DKK–160DKK ($19–$32/£10–£16). AE, DC, MC, V. Bacino Mon–Sat 11:30am–midnight; The Custom House Bar & Grill daily 11:30am–midnight; Ebisu Tues–Sat 5:30–11pm. Bus: 1A, 6A, or 29.

Restaurant Els DANISH/FRENCH With its original 1854 decor and murals by the famous 19th-century Danish artist, Christian Hitsch, this is one of the most respected and traditional restaurants of Copenhagen, attracting such clients as Hans Christian Andersen. If you're dropping in for lunch, you might make an entire meal out of those delectable open-faced Danish sandwiches, but in the evening the market-fresh menu is based on an expanded, mainly French-inspired repertoire. You'll feast on dishes made with prime ingredients, including breast of wild duck with blackberry sauce and other tasty delights.

Store Strandstraede 3, off Kongens Nytorv. ☎ **33-14-13-41.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 78DKK–125DKK ($16–$25/£8–£13) lunch; 185DKK–275DKK ($37–$55/£19–£28) dinner. AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat noon–3pm; daily 5:30–10pm. Bus: 1, 6, or 10.

Inexpensive

Ida Davidsen ★ Kids SANDWICHES This restaurant has flourished since 1888, when the forebears of its present owner, Ida Davidsen, established a sandwich shop. Today, five generations later, the matriarch and namesake is known as the "smørrebrød queen of Copenhagen." Her restaurant sells a greater variety of open-faced sandwiches (250 kinds) than any other in Denmark. The fare has even been featured at royal buffets at Amalienborg Castle. You select by pointing to your choice in a glass-fronted display case; a staff member carries it to your table. The vast selection includes salmon, lobster, smoked duck with braised cabbage and horseradish, liver pâté, ham, and boiled egg. Two of them, perhaps with a slice of cheese, make a worthy lunch. If you are in doubt, a member of the service team, or perhaps Ida's charming husband, Adam Siesbye, will offer suggestions.

Store Kongensgade 70. ☎ **33-91-36-55.** Reservations recommended. Sandwiches 50DKK–120DKK ($10–$24/£5–£12). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri 10am–4pm. Bus: 6, 9, or 15.

NEAR RÅDHUSPLADSEN & TIVOLI

Moderate

Copenhagen Corner Kids SCANDINAVIAN In the very heart of Copenhagen, this restaurant opens onto Rådhuspladsen, around the corner from the Tivoli Gardens. It offers well-prepared, unpretentious, and reasonably priced meals. The menu features the Danes' favorite dishes, beginning with three kinds of herring or freshly peeled shrimp with dill and lemon. The fish is fresh and beautifully prepared, especially the steamed Norwegian salmon with a "lasagna" of potatoes, and baked halibut with artichokes. Meat and poultry courses, although not always equal to the fish, are tasty and tender, especially the veal liver Provençal.

H. C. Andersens Blvd. 1A. ☎ **33-91-45-45.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 165DKK–255DKK ($33–$51/£17–£26); 3-course fixed-price menu 385DKK ($77/£39). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 11:30am–11pm. Bus: 1, 6, or 8.

Søren K ★ MODERN/EUROPEAN Named after Denmark's most celebrated philosopher, this is an artfully minimalist dining room that's on the ground floor of the newest addition to the Royal Library. Opened in 1999, it has big-windowed views that stretch out over the sea. Menu items change frequently but might include carpaccio of veal, foie gras, oyster soup, and main courses such as veal chops served with lobster sauce and a half-lobster, and venison roasted with nuts and seasonal berries and a marinade of green tomatoes. The restaurant virtually never cooks with butter, cream, or high-cholesterol cheeses, making a meal here a dietetic as well as a savory experience.

On the ground floor of the Royal Library's Black Diamond Wing, 1 Søren Kierkegaards Plads. ☎ **33-47-49-49.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 75DKK–130DKK ($15–$26/£7.50-£13) lunch, 220DKK–250DKK ($44–$50/£22–£25) dinner; 3-course fixed-price dinner 425DKK ($85/£43). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat noon–midnight. Bus: 1, 2, 5, 6, or 8.

Inexpensive

Axelborg Bodega DANISH Across from the Benneweis Circus and near Scala and the Tivoli, this 1912 cafe has outdoor tables where you can enjoy a brisk Scandinavian evening. Order the *dagens ret* (daily special). Typical Danish dishes are featured, including *frikadeller* (meatballs) and pork chops. A wide selection of club sandwiches is also available. Although the atmosphere is somewhat impersonal, this is a local favorite; diners enjoy recipes that seem drawn from Grandma's kitchen.

Axeltorv 1. ☎ **33-11-06-38.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 95DKK–148DKK ($19–$30/£10–£15). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 11am–9pm; bar daily 11am–2am. Bus: 1 or 6.

Domhus Kælderen DANISH/INTERNATIONAL The good food at this bustling, old-fashioned emporium of Danish cuisine draws a mixed crowd from City Hall's courtrooms across the square as well as visiting foreigners. The half-cellar room holds memorabilia from its 50 years as a restaurant (before that, it was a butcher shop). Lunch tends to be more conservative and more Danish than dinner. It might include frikadeller and heaping platters of herring, cheeses, smoked meats and fish, and salads. Dinner could be pickled salmon; prime rib of beef with horseradish; and fine cuts of beef, served with béarnaise or pepper sauce. Also look for the catch of the day, prepared just about any way you like. You get no culinary surprises here, but you're rarely disappointed.

Nytorv 5. ☎ **33-14-84-55.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 68DKK–148DKK ($14–$30/£7–£15) lunch, 128DKK–198DKK ($26–$40/£13–£20) dinner; fixed-price menus 225DKK–275DKK ($45–$55/£23–£28). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 11am–4pm and 5–10pm. Bus: 5.

NEAR ROSENBORG SLOT

Very Expensive

Skt. Gertruds Kloster ★ INTERNATIONAL Near Nørreport Station and south of Rosenborg Castle, this is the most romantic restaurant in town. There's no electricity in the labyrinth of 14th-century underground vaults, and the 1,500 flickering candles, open grill, iron sconces, and rough-hewn furniture create an elegant medieval ambience. The food is equally impressive. Try the fresh homemade foie gras with black truffles; lobster served in turbot bouillon; scallops sautéed with herbs in sauterne; venison with green asparagus and truffle sauce; or fish and shellfish terrine studded with chunks of lobster and salmon.

Hauser Plads 32. ☎ **33-14-66-30.** Reservations required. Main courses 188DKK–328DKK ($38–$66/£19–£33); fixed-price menus 299DKK–615DKK ($60–$123/£30–£62). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 4pm–midnight (until 11pm on Sun). Closed Dec 25–Jan 1. Bus: 4E, 7E, 14, or 16. Metro: Norreport.

AT GRÅBRØDRETORV

Moderate

Bøf & Ost DANISH/FRENCH "Beef & Cheese" is housed in a 1728 building, and its cellars come from a medieval monastery. In summer, a pleasant outdoor terrace overlooks Gray Friars Square. Although the menu changes monthly, specialties can include lobster soup, fresh Danish bay strips, a cheese plate with six selections, and some of the best grilled tenderloin in town. One local diner confided: "The food is not worthy of God's own table, but it's so good I come here once a week."

Gråbrødretorv 13. ☎ **33-11-99-11.** Reservations required. Main courses 159DKK–225DKK ($32–$45/£16–£23); fixed-price lunch 98DKK–138DKK ($20–$28/£10–£14). DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat 11:30am–10:30pm. Closed Jan 1 and Dec 24–25. Bus: 5.

Peder Oxe's Restaurant/Vinkælder Wine Bar DANISH/ASIAN This romantic building dates from the 1700s, with its original wooden floors and Portuguese tiles, and the crowd is young, fun, and value conscious. The salad bar is 30DKK ($6/£3) when accompanied by a main course. It's so tempting that many prefer to enjoy it alone for 75DKK ($15/£7.50) per person. Dishes include lobster soup, Danish bay shrimp, fresh asparagus, open-faced sandwiches, hamburgers, and fresh fish. Specialties influenced by Asia have recently been added to the menu, including such delights as tuna tartare with avocado and mango.

Gråbrødretorv 11. ☎ **33-11-00-77.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 179DKK–225DKK ($36–$45/£18–£23); fixed-price lunch 138DKK ($28/£14). DC, MC, V. Daily 11:30am–midnight. Bus: 5.

Inexpensive

Pasta Basta *Value* ITALIAN/INTERNATIONAL This restaurant's main attraction is an enormous buffet (sometimes called the "Pasta Basta Table") loaded with cold antipasti and salads. With more than nine selections, it's one of the best deals in town at 80DKK ($16/£8). The restaurant is divided into half a dozen cozy dining rooms decorated in the style of ancient Pompeii, with faded frescoes patterned after originals from Italy. It's on a historic cobblestone street off the main shopping street, Strøget. Menu choices include at least 15 kinds of pasta (all made fresh on the premises); a platter with three kinds of Danish caviar (whitefish, speckled trout, and vendace, served with chopped onions, lemon, toast, and butter); fresh mussels cooked in dry white wine with pasta and creamy saffron sauce; thinly sliced salmon with a cream-based sauce of salmon roe; and sliced Danish suckling lamb with fried spring onions and tarragon.

Valkendorfsgade 22. ☎ **33-11-21-31.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 98DKK–169DKK ($20–$34/£10–£17). DC, MC, V. Sun–Thurs 11:30am–3am; Fri–Sat 11:30am–5am. Bus: 5.

AT CHRISTIANSBORG

Very Expensive

Krogs Fiskerestaurant ★ SEAFOOD A short walk from Christiansborg Castle, the most famous restaurant in the district was built in 1789 as a fish shop. The canalside plaza where fishers once moored their boats is now the site of the restaurant's outdoor dining terrace. The restaurant serves fresh seafood in a single large room decorated in antique style, with old oil paintings. The well-chosen menu includes lobster soup, bouillabaisse, oysters, mussels steamed in white wine, and poached salmon trout with saffron sauce. Each dish is impeccably prepared and flavorful. A selection of meat dishes is available, but the fish is better.

Gammel Strand 38. ☎ **33-15-89-15.** Reservations required. Main courses 345DKK–850DKK ($69–$170/£35–£85); 5-course fixed-price menu 750DKK ($150/£75), 1,200DKK ($240/£120). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat noon–4pm and 5:30–10:30pm. Bus: 1, 2, 10, 16, or 29.

Inexpensive

Cafeen Nikolaj DANISH This place makes no pretense of being more than it is: a simple cafe that prepares good-tasting food with fresh ingredients at fair prices. The cafe, which evokes Greenwich Village in the 1950s, lies on the site where Hans Tausen, a father of the Danish Reformation, delivered thundering sermons in the 16th century. No one is thundering now—they're ordering an array of typical Danish lunches, including a tasty variety of open-faced sandwiches and homemade soups. You can always count on various types of herring. Danish sliced ham on good homemade bread is a perennial favorite, and there is also a selection of Danish cheeses.

Nikolaj Plads 12. ☎ **70-26-64-64.** Main courses 55DKK–148DKK ($11–$30/£5.50–£15); 2-course meal 198DKK ($40/£20); 3-course fixed-price menu 348DKK–395DKK ($70–$79/£35–£40). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat 11:30am–5pm. Bus: 2, 6, 8, or 10.

IN VESTERBRO

Copenhagen Food Consulting Company ("Cofoco") ★★ DANISH/FRENCH In the trendy Vesterbro area, this haven of haute cuisine is in a minimalist Danish style and offers one of the best value fixed-price menus in town. Each day brings something new and market-fresh to the menu. The cuisine is based on fresh seafood and local farm products from the Danish countryside, and they are skillfully handled by well-trained Danish and continental chefs. You're likely to revel in such dishes as cod with apple and mint or else duck cooked in yogurt served with beets and horseradish. Their soups are among the best in town, and they serve tender veal dishes accompanied by fresh spinach. For desert, savor their crème brûlée.

Abel Cathrines gade 7. ✆ **33-31-70-55.** Reservations required. Fixed-price menu 250DKK ($50/£25). AE, MC, V. Mon–Sat 5:30pm–midnight. Bus: 6A.

IN TIVOLI

Food prices inside Tivoli are about 30% higher than elsewhere. Try skipping dessert at a restaurant and picking up a less expensive treat at one of the many stands. Take bus no. 1, 6, 8, 16, 29, 30, 32, or 33 to reach the park and either of the following restaurants. ***Note:*** These restaurants are only open May to mid-September.

Very Expensive

La Crevette ★★ SEAFOOD/CONTINENTAL For one really big splurge meal before you leave Copenhagen, reserve a table at this classic restaurant housed in a 1909 pavilion with an outdoor terrace in the middle of the Tivoli Gardens. Some of the freshest and best seafood in Copenhagen is served at this restaurant by chefs who dare to be innovative while still adhering to classic culinary principles. Most dishes here are "sure bets," including such Danish delights as marinated slices of salmon with oyster flan and egg cream with chives or grilled sea bass and scampi on crispy spinach and sautéed eggplant.

Vesterbrogade 3, Tivoli Gardens. ✆ **33-14-60-03.** Reservations required. Main courses 255DKK–325DKK ($51–$65/£26–£33); 4-course fixed-price dinner 475DKK ($95/£48). AE, DC, MC, V. Apr 15–Sept 23 daily noon–10pm.

Moderate

Færgekroen DANISH In a cluster of trees at the edge of the lake, this restaurant resembles a pink half-timbered Danish cottage. In warm weather, try to snag a table on the outside terrace. The menu offers drinks, snacks, and full meals. Meals might include omelets, beef with horseradish, fried plaice (a flounderlike fish) with melted butter, pork chops with red cabbage, curried chicken, or fried meatballs. If you like honest and straightforward fare, without fancy trimmings, and don't like to spend a lot of money, this is the place for you. A pianist provides singalong music every evening starting at 8pm.

Vesterbrogade 3, Tivoli. ✆ **33-12-94-12.** Main courses 168DKK–215DKK ($34–$43/£17–£22); fixed-price lunch 148DKK–179DKK ($30–$36/£15–£18). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 11am–midnight (hot food until 9:45pm).

EXPLORING COPENHAGEN

SIGHTSEEING SUGGESTIONS FOR FIRST-TIME VISITORS

If You Have 1 Day Take a walking tour through the heart of the old city, which will give you time to recover from jet lag. Spend the late afternoon at **Christiansborg Palace** on Slotsholmen Island, where the queen of Denmark receives guests. Early in the evening, head to the Tivoli.

If You Have 2 Days On day 2, visit **Amalienborg Palace,** the queen's residence. Try to time your visit to witness the changing of the guard. Continue beyond the palace to ***The Little Mermaid* statue.** In the afternoon, see the **art treasures** of Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek. At night, seek out a local tavern.

If You Have 3 Days On the morning of the third day, journey to **Rosenborg Castle,** summer palace of King Christian IV, and then wander through the park and gardens. Have lunch at one of the restaurants lining the canal at Nyhavn, the traditional seamans' quarter of Copenhagen. In the afternoon, go to **Rundetårn (Round Tower)** for a panoramic view of the city, and if time remains, stop in at the **National Museum** and **Denmark's Fight for Freedom Museum.**

If You Have 4 Days Head north to **Louisiana,** the modern-art museum, and continue on to Helsingør to visit **Kronborg Castle,** famously associated with Shakespeare's *Hamlet.* Return by train to Copenhagen in time for a stroll along the Strøget, Europe's longest walking street. For dinner, visit the village of Dragør.

If You Have 5 Days On the fifth day, visit **Frilandsmuseet,** at Lyngby, a half-hour train ride from Copenhagen. Have lunch at the park. Return to Copenhagen and take a walking tour along its canals. If time remains, tour the **Carlsberg brewery.** Pay a final visit to the Tivoli to cap your adventure in the Danish capital.

THE TIVOLI GARDENS

Tivoli Gardens ★★ Kids Since it opened in 1843, this 8-hectare (20-acre) garden and amusement park in the center of Copenhagen has been a resounding success, with its thousands of flowers, a merry-go-round of tiny Viking ships, games of chance and skill (pinball arcades, slot machines, shooting galleries), and a Ferris wheel of hot-air balloons and cabin seats. There's even a playground.

An Arabian-style fantasy palace, with towers and arches, houses more than two dozen restaurants in all price ranges, from a lakeside inn to a beer garden. Take a walk around the edge of the tiny lake, with its ducks, swans, and boats.

A parade of the red-uniformed Tivoli Boys Guard takes place on weekends at 5:30 and 7:30pm, and their regimental band gives concerts Saturday at 3pm on the open-air stage. The oldest building at Tivoli, the Chinese-style Pantomime Theater, with its peacock curtain, stages pantomimes in the evening.

Vesterbrogade 3. ☎ **33-15-10-01.** www.tivoli.dk. Admission 225DKK ($45/£23) adults (12 and older), 125DKK ($25/£13) children 3–11; multiride ticket 200DKK ($40/£20). May to mid-Sept daily 11am–midnight. Partial Christmastime opening from mid-Nov until Christmas Eve (reduced admission). Closed mid-Sept to Apr. Bus: 1 or 16.

THE TOP MUSEUMS

Don't worry about not understanding the explanations in the museums; virtually all have write-ups in English.

Amalienborg Palace ★★ These four 18th-century French-inspired rococo mansions are the home of the Danish royal family, a position they have held since 1794, when the original royal palace burned. Visitors flock to witness the changing of the guard at noon when the royal family is in residence. A swallowtail flag at mast signifies that the queen is in Copenhagen. The Royal Life Guard in black bearskin busbies leaves Rosenborg Castle at 11:30am and marches to Amalienborg. After the event, the guard, still accompanied by the band, returns to Rosenborg Castle.

Copenhagen's *Little Mermaid*

The one statue *everybody* wants to see is the life-size bronze of ***Den Lille Havfrue*** ★, inspired by Hans Christian Andersen's "The Little Mermaid," one of the world's most famous fairy tales. The statue, unveiled in 1913, was sculpted by Edvard Eriksen and rests on rocks right off the shore. The mermaid has been attacked more than once, losing an arm in one misadventure, decapitated as recently as January 6, 1998. The latest attack occurred in the early morning hours in September 2003 when explosives may have been used to topple the statue from its stone base. The much-abused statue is based on a mythical sea king's mermaid daughter who, according to the Hans Christian Andersen tale, falls in love with a prince and must wait 300 years to become human.

All year, a 2½-hour **City and Harbor Tour** of Copenhagen makes a significant stop at the *Little Mermaid* and costs 175DKK ($35/£18) adults, 90DKK ($18/£9) children. For more information, call Copenhagen Excursions at ✆ **32-54-06-06.** In summer, a special "Mermaid Bus" leaves from Rådhuspladsen (Vester Voldgade) at 9am and then at half-hour intervals until 5:30pm. On the "Langelinie" bus there's a 20-minute stop at *The Little Mermaid.* If you want more time, take bus no. 1, 6, or 9.

In 1994, some of the official and private rooms in Amalienborg were opened to the public for the first time. The rooms, reconstructed to reflect the period 1863 to 1947, belonged to members of the reigning royal family, the Glücksborgs, who ascended the throne in 1863. The highlight is the period devoted to the long reign (1863–1906) of King Christian IX and Queen Louise.

Christian VIII's Palace. ✆ **33-92-64-51.** Admission 50DKK ($10/£5) adults, 30DKK ($6/£3) students and seniors, 15DKK ($3/£1.50) children 5–12, free for children 4 and under. Oct–May Tues–Sun 11am–4pm; June–Aug daily 7am–4pm; Sept daily 11am–4pm. Closed Dec 14–25. Bus: 1, 6, 9, or 10.

Christiansborg Palace ★ This granite-and-copper palace on the Slotsholmen—a small island that has been the center of political power in Denmark for more than 800 years—houses the Danish parliament, the Supreme Court, the prime minister's offices, and the Royal Reception Rooms. A guide will lead you through richly decorated rooms, including the Throne Room, banqueting hall, and Queen's Library. Before entering, you'll be asked to put on soft overshoes to protect the floors. Under the palace, visit the well-preserved ruins of the 1167 castle of Bishop Absalon, founder of Copenhagen.

Christiansborg Slotsplads. ✆ **33-92-64-92.** Royal Reception Rooms 60DKK ($12/£6), 25DKK ($5/£2.50) students, seniors, and ages 4–17; parliament free; castle ruins 40DKK ($8/£4) adults, 15DKK ($3/£1.50) children. Reception rooms guided tours May–Sept daily at 11am, 1pm, and 3pm; Oct–Apr Tues–Sun at 3pm. Parliament English-language tours daily—call for appt. Ruins May–Sept daily 10am–4pm; Oct–Apr Tues–Sun 10am–4pm.

Den Hirschsprungske Samling (The Hirschsprung Collection) This collection of 19th- and early-20th-century Danish art is in Ostre Anlaeg, a park in the city center. Tobacco merchant Heinrich Hirschsprung (1836–1908) created the collection, and it has been growing ever since. The emphasis is on the Danish golden age, with such artists as Eckersberg, Købke, and Lundbye, and on the Skagen painters, P. S. Krøyer, and Anna and Michael Ancher. Some furnishings from the artists' homes are exhibited.

Stockholmsgade 20. ✆ **35-42-03-36.** www.hirschsprung.dk. Admission 50DKK ($10/£5) adults, 40DKK ($8/£4) students and seniors, free for children 15 and under. Wed–Mon 11am–4pm. Bus: 6A, 14, 40, 42, 43, 150S, 184, or 185.

Erotica Museum ★ This is the only museum in the world where you can learn about the sex lives of Freud, Marilyn Monroe, Hugh Hefner, Nietzsche, and Duke Ellington. Founded by Ole Ege, a well-known Danish photographer of nudes, it's within walking distance of the Tivoli and the Central Railroad Station. In addition to revealing a glimpse into the sex lives of the famous, it presents a survey of erotica around the world and through the ages. The exhibits range from Etruscan drawings and Chinese paintings to Greek vases depicting sexual activity.

Købmagergade 24. ✆ **33-12-03-11.** www.museumerotica.dk. Admission 109DKK ($22/£11). May–Sept daily 10am–11pm; Oct–Apr Sun–Thurs 11am–8pm, Fri–Sat 10am–10pm. S-tog: Nørreport. Those aged 16–18 must be accompanied by an adult. No one under 16 admitted.

Frihedsmuseet (Museum of Danish Resistance, 1940–45) The horrors of the Nazi occupation of Denmark live on here. On display are relics of torture and concentration camps, the equipment used by the Danish resistance for forbidden wireless communications and the production of illegal propaganda films, British propaganda leaflets, satirical caricatures of Hitler, information about both Danish Jews and Danish Nazis, and the paralyzing nationwide strikes. Also look for an armed car used for drive-by shootings of Danish Nazi informers and collaborators.

Churchillparken. ✆ **33-47-39-21.** www.nationalmuseet.dk. Free admission. May–Sept Tues–Sat 10am–4pm, Sun 10am–4pm; Oct–Apr Tues–Sat 10am–3pm, Sun 10am–4pm. Bus: 1 or 6.

Frilandsmuseet (Open-Air Museum) ★ This reconstructed village in Lyngby, on the fringe of Copenhagen, captures Denmark's one-time rural character. The "museum" is nearly 36 hectares (89 acres); a 3.2km (2-mile) walk around the compound reveals a dozen authentic buildings—farmsteads, windmills, fishers' cottages. Exhibits include a half-timbered 18th-century farmstead from one of the tiny windswept Danish islands, a primitive longhouse from the remote Faroe Islands, thatched fishers' huts from Jutland, tower windmills, and a mid-19th-century potter's workshop.

Kongevejen 100. ✆ **33-13-44-11.** www.nationalmuseet.dk. Free admission. Easter–Oct 23 Tues–Sun 10am–5pm. Closed Oct 24–Easter. S-tog: Copenhagen Central Station to Sorgenfri (trains leave every 20 min.). Bus: 184 or 194.

Nationalmuseet (National Museum) ★★★ A gigantic repository of anthropological artifacts, this museum features objects from prehistory, the Middle Ages, and the Renaissance in Denmark, including Viking stones, helmets, and fragments of battle gear. Especially interesting are the "lur" horn, a Bronze Age musical instrument among the oldest in Europe, and the world-famous Sun Chariot, an elegant Bronze Age piece of pagan art. The Royal Collection of Coins and Medals contains various coins from antiquity. There are also outstanding collections of Egyptian and classical antiquities.

Ny Vestergade 10. ✆ **33-13-44-11.** www.nationalmuse.dk. Free admission. Tues–Sun 10am–5pm. Wed free entry to permanent exhibitions. Closed Dec 24, 25, and 31. Bus: 1, 5, 6, 8, or 10.

Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek ★★★ The Glyptotek, behind the Tivoli, is one of Scandinavia's most important art museums. Founded by 19th-century art collector Carl Jacobsen, the museum holds modern art and antiquities. The modern section has both French and Danish art, mainly from the 19th century; sculpture, including works by Rodin; and works of the Impressionists and related artists, including van Gogh's *Landscape from St-Rémy.* Antiquities include Egyptian, Greek, Roman, and Etruscan works. The Egyptian collection is outstanding; the prize is a prehistoric rendering of a hippopotamus. A favorite of ours is the Etruscan art display. In 1996, the Ny Glyptotek added a French Masters' wing, where you'll find an extensive collection of masterpieces.

Dantes Plads 7. ☎ **33-41-81-41.** www.glyptoteket.dk. Admission 50DKK ($1/50p) adults, free for ages 18 and under; free for all Wed and Sun. Tues–Sun 10am–4pm. Bus: 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, or 10.

Rosenborg Castle ★★★ This red-brick Renaissance-style castle houses everything from narwhal-tusk and ivory coronation chairs to Frederik VII's baby shoes—all from the Danish royal family. Its biggest draws are the dazzling crown jewels and regalia in the basement Treasury, where a lavishly decorated coronation saddle from 1596 is also shown. Try to see the Knights Hall (room no. 21), with its coronation seat, three silver lions, and relics from the 1700s. Room no. 3 was used by founding father Christian IV, who died in this bedroom decorated with Asian lacquer art and a stucco ceiling.

Øster Voldgade 4A. ☎ **33-15-32-86.** www.rosenborgslot.dk. Admission 65DKK ($13/£6.50) adults, 40DKK ($8/£4) students and seniors, free 17 and under. Palace and treasury (royal jewels) Jan 2–Apr 30 Tues–Sun 11am–4pm; May 1–Oct 31 daily 10am–4pm; Nov 1–Dec 18 Tues–Sun 11am–4pm; Dec 27–Dec 30 daily 11am–4pm. Closed Jan 1, Dec 19–26, and Dec 31. S-tog: Nørreport. Bus: 5, 10, 14, 16, 31, 42, 43, 184, or 185. Metro: Norreport.

Statens Museum for Kunst (Royal Museum of Fine Arts) ★★ This well-stocked museum, one of the best in Scandinavia, houses painting and sculpture from the 13th century to the present. There are Dutch golden-age landscapes and marine paintings by Rubens, plus portraits by Frans Hals and Rembrandt. Eckersberg, Købke, and Hansen represent the Danish golden age. French 20th-century art includes 20 works by Matisse. In the Royal Print Room are 300,000 drawings, prints, lithographs, and other works by such artists as Dürer, Rembrandt, Matisse, and Picasso.

A major expansion in 1998 added a concert hall, a Children's Art Museum, and a glass wing designed for temporary exhibits.

Sølvgade 48–50. ☎ **33-74-84-94.** www.smk.dk. Admission 80DKK($16/£8) adults, 50DKK ($10/£5) students, free for children 15 and under. Higher admission for special exhibitions only. Tues–Sun 10am–5pm (until 8pm Wed). Bus: 6A, 14, 40, 42, 43, 150S, 184, or 185.

Tøjhusmuseet (Royal Arsenal Museum) This museum features a fantastic display of weapons used for hunting and warfare. On the ground floor is the Canon Hall, the longest vaulted Renaissance hall in Europe, stocked with artillery equipment dating from 1500 up to the present day. Above the Canon Hall is the impressive Armory Hall, which houses one of the world's finest collections of small arms, colors, and armor.

Tøjhusgade 3. ☎ **33-11-60-37.** www.thm.dk. Admission 40DKK ($8/£4) adults, 20DKK ($4/£2) students and seniors, free for children 17 and under. Tues–Sun noon–4pm. Closed Jan 1 and Dec 23–26 and 31. Bus: 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 10, 28, 29, 30, 32, 33, or 42.

CHURCHES & OTHER ATTRACTIONS

Botanisk Have (Botanical Gardens) Planted from 1871 to 1874, the Botanical Gardens, across from Rosenborg Castle, are on a lake that was once part of the city's defensive moat. Special features include a cactus house and a palm house, all of which

Tips Native Behavior

If you want to be taken for a real Copenhagener, rent a bike and pedal your way around the city, up and down its streets and along its canals. It's estimated that half the population does the same.

After all that exercise, do as the Danes do and order your fill of smørrebrød for lunch. Sold all over the city, these are open-faced sandwiches on which Danes are known to pile almost anything edible. Our favorite is a mound of baby shrimp, although roast beef topped with pickle is another tasty offering. And to top off the native experience, order aquavit (also called snaps in Denmark) with your lunch, though less reliable stomachs may opt instead for a Carlsberg or Tuborg beer.

Whatever you do, though, don't tell any Dane that you eat pancakes for breakfast. In Denmark, a pancake is strictly a dessert.

And finally, greet everyone you encounter with a *"God dag"* ("Good day"). If you do, you'll no doubt end up having one yourself.

appear even more exotic in the far northern country of Denmark. An alpine garden contains mountain plants from all over the world.

Gothersgade 140. ☎ **35-32-22-40.** Free admission. May–Sept daily 8:30am–6pm; Oct–Apr Tues–Sun 8:30am–4pm. S-tog: Nørreport. Bus: 5A, 14, 40, 42, or 43.

Frederikskirke This 2-centuries-old church, with its green copper dome—one of the largest in the world—is a short walk from Amalienborg Palace. After an unsuccessful start during the neoclassical revival of the 1750s in Denmark, the church was finally completed in Roman baroque style in 1894. In many ways, it's more impressive than Copenhagen's cathedral.

Frederiksgade 4. ☎ **33-15-01-44.** Free admission to church; dome 35DKK ($7/£3.50) adults, 10DKK ($2/£1) children. Church Mon, Tues, Thurs 10am–5pm; Wed 10am–6pm; Fri–Sun noon–5pm. Dome June–Sept 1 daily 1–3pm; Sept 2–May Sat–Sun 1–3pm. Bus: 1, 6, or 9.

Rådhus (Town Hall) and World Clock ★ Built in 1905, the Town Hall has impressive statues of H. C. Andersen and Niels Bohr, the Nobel Prize–winning physicist. Jens Olsen's famous **World Clock** is open for viewing Monday through Friday from 8:30am to 4:30pm and Saturday 10am to 1pm. The clockwork is so exact that the variation over 300 years is 0.4 second. Climb the tower for an impressive view.

Rådhuspladsen. ☎ **33-66-25-82.** Rådhus 20DKK ($4/£2); clock 10DKK ($2/£1) adults, 5DKK ($1/50p) children. Guided tour 30DKK ($6/£3) adults or children. Rådhus Mon–Fri 3pm, Sat 10 and 11am; tower Mon–Sat noon. Bus: 1, 6, or 8.

Rundetårn (Round Tower) ★ This 17th-century public observatory, attached to a church, is visited by thousands who climb the spiral ramp (no steps) for a panoramic view of Copenhagen. The tower is one of the crowning architectural achievements of the Christian IV era. Peter the Great, in Denmark on a state visit, galloped up the ramp on horseback.

Købmagergade 52A. ☎ **33-73-03-73.** www.rundetaarn.dk. Admission 25DKK ($5/£2.50) adults, 5DKK ($1/50p) children (5–15). Tower Sept 1–May 31 Mon–Sat 10am–5pm, Sun noon–5pm; June 1–Oct 31 Mon–Sat 10am–8pm, Sun noon–8pm. Observatory Oct 15–Mar 22 Tues–Wed 7–10pm; June 20–Aug 10 Sun 1–4pm. Bus: 5, 7E,14, 16, or 42. Metro: Norreport.

Vor Frue Kirke (Copenhagen Cathedral) This early-19th-century Greek Revival–style church, near Copenhagen University, features Bertel Thorvaldsen's white marble neoclassical works, including *Christ and the Apostles.* The funeral of H. C. Andersen took place here in 1875, and that of Søren Kierkegaard in 1855.

Nørregade 8. ✆ **33-14-21-28.** Free admission. Mon–Fri 9am–5pm; Sat 8:30am–5pm; Sun noon–4:30pm. Bus: 5.

ORGANIZED TOURS

BUS & BOAT TOURS For orientation, try the 1½-hour **City Tour** (2½ hr. with a visit to a brewery) that covers major scenic highlights like *The Little Mermaid,* Rosenborg Castle, and Amalienborg Palace. On workdays, tours also visit the Carlsberg brewery. Tours depart daily April 8 to May 14 daily at 11:30am; May 15 to September 30 daily at 9:30am, 11:30am, and 1:30pm; October 1 to October 15 at 11:30am; and cost 130DKK ($26/£13) adults and 65DKK ($13/£6.50) children.

The **City and Harbor Tour,** a 2-hour-and-15-minute trip by launch and bus, departs from Town Hall Square. The boat tours the city's main canals, passing *The Little Mermaid* and the Old Fish Market. It operates from April 8 to December 17. Tours cost 175DKK ($35/£18) adults and 80DKK ($16/£8) children 11 and under.

Shakespeare buffs will be interested in an afternoon excursion to the castles of North Zealand. The 7-hour English-language tour explores the area north of Copenhagen, including a visit to Kronborg (Hamlet's Castle); a brief trip to Fredensborg, the queen's residence; and a stopover at Frederiksborg Castle and the National Historical Museum. Tours depart from the Town Hall Square May 2 through October 16, Wednesday, Saturday, and Sunday at 9:30am; November to April, Wednesday to Sunday at 9:30am. The cost is 450DKK ($90/£45) adults, 225DKK ($45/£23) for children.

For more information about these tours, contact **Sightseeing DK** (✆ **32-66-00-00;** www.sightseeing.dk).

GUIDED WALKS THROUGH COPENHAGEN Licensed Danish tour guides conduct 2-hour guided walking tours of the city Monday to Saturday at 10:30am, between May and September. The price is 100DKK ($20/£10) for adults, 30DKK ($6/£3) for children. For information, contact **Copenhagen Walking Tours** (✆ **40-81-12-17;** www.copenhagen-walkingtours.dk).

THE SHOPPING SCENE

Royal Copenhagen, Amagertorv 6 (✆ **33-13-71-81;** www.royalcopenhagen.com; bus no. 1, 2, 6, 8, 28, 29, or 41 for the retail outlet, 1 or 15 for the factory), was founded in 1775. Royal Copenhagen's trademark, three wavy blue lines, has come to symbolize quality in porcelain throughout the world.

In the Royal Copenhagen retail center, legendary **Georg Jensen,** Amagertorv 6 (✆ **33-11-40-80;** www.georgjensen.com; bus no. 1, 6, 8, 9, or 10), is known for its fine silver. For the connoisseur, there's no better address—this is the largest and best collection of Jensen holloware in Europe. Jewelry in traditional and modern design is also featured. One department specializes in seconds produced by various porcelain and glassware manufacturers.

Customers refer to the two owners of **The Amber Specialist,** Frederiksberggade 28 (✆ **33-11-88-03;** bus no. 28, 29, or 41), as "The Amber Twins." These blonde-haired ladies specialize in "the gold of the north." This stone—really petrified resin—originated in the large coniferous forests that covered Denmark some 35 million years ago.

The elegant **Magasin,** Kongens Nytorv 13 (✆ **33-11-44-33;** bus no. 1, 6, 9, or 10), is the biggest department store in Scandinavia. It offers an assortment of Danish designer fashion, glass and porcelain, and souvenirs. Goods are shipped abroad tax-free.

COPENHAGEN AFTER DARK

In Copenhagen, a good night means a late night. On warm weekends hundreds of rowdy revelers crowd Strøget until sunrise, and jazz clubs, traditional beer houses, and wine cellars are routinely packed. The city has a more serious cultural side as well, exemplified by excellent theaters, operas, and ballets. **Half-price tickets** for some concerts and theater productions are available the day of the performance from the ticket kiosk opposite the Nørreport rail station, at Nørrevoldgade and Fiolstræde; it's open Monday through Friday from noon to 7pm and Saturday from noon to 3pm. On summer evenings outdoor concerts are held in Faelled Park near the entrance, near Frederik V's Vej; inquire about dates and times at the Copenhagen tourist office.

THE PERFORMING ARTS

Copenhagen Opera House ★★★ Opened by Queen Margrethe, this $441 million, 1,700-seat opera house is the luxurious home of the Royal Danish Opera. Designed by Danish architect Henning Larsen, the opera house uses precious stones and metals, including 105,000 sheets of gold leaf, and chandeliers which out-sparkle and outshine anything in Las Vegas. In addition to the international artists, the opera house also showcases the works of such Danish composers as Carl Nielsen and Poul Ruders. You can dine at the on-site **Restauranten** before curtain time, with a three-course menu costing 445DKK ($89/£45). In addition, there is an **Opera Café**, serving sandwiches, salads, and light Danish specialties. The season runs from mid-August until the beginning of June. During that period, tours of the building are offered daily on a frequently changing schedule, which usually requires a phone call as a means of hammering out the schedule.

Ekuipagemesteruej 10. ✆ **33-69-69-33.** Tickets standing-room space 80DKK ($16/£8); seats 90DKK ($18/£9). Box office ✆ **33-69-69-69;** Mon–Sat noon–6pm.

Det Kongelige Teater (Royal Theater), Kongens Nytorv (✆ **33-69-69-69;** www.kgl-teater.dk; bus no. 1, 6, 9, or 10), dates from 1748, and is a venue for cultural events. Because the arts are state subsidized in Denmark, ticket prices are comparatively low, and some seats may be available at the box office the day before a performance. We recommend making reservations in advance. The season runs from August to May. Tickets are 90DKK to 540DKK ($18–$108/£9–£54), half price for seniors 67 and over and those under 26 (1 week before a show begins). The box office is open Monday through Saturday from 1 to 8pm; phone hours are Monday through Friday from 1 to 8pm, Saturday from 10am to 8pm, and Sunday 3 hours before a performance (performances are usually at 3pm).

LIVE-MUSIC CLUBS

In the very heart of the city, **Club Cat Walk,** H. C. Andersens Blvd. 7 (✆ **33-12-20-32;** bus no. 28 or 30), with its lively atmosphere, is a good place for people-watching and dancing, if you can stand the scrutiny (you'll be admitted only after being inspected through a peephole). The club is open Friday and Saturday from 9pm to 8am. There's a 75DKK to 90DKK ($15–$18/£7.50–£9) cover.

Copenhagen JazzHouse, Niels Hammingsensgade 10 (✆ **33-15-26-00;** S-tog: Nørreport), plays host to more non-Danish jazz artists than just about any other jazz bar in town. Live music tends to begin around 8:30pm and usually finishes reasonably early. Around midnight on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, the venue shifts from a live concert hall into a dance club. Cover is 75DKK to 300DKK ($15–$60/ £7.50–£30); closed Monday.

Mojo Blues Bar, Løngangsstraede 21C (✆ **33-11-64-53;** bus no. 2, 8, or 30), is a candlelit drinking spot that offers blues music, mostly performed by Scandinavian groups. It's open daily from 8pm to 5am. There's no cover from Sunday to Thursday, a cover of 55DKK to 70DKK ($11–$14/£5.50–£7) Friday and Saturday.

In the trendy western neighborhood of Vesterbro, **Boutique Lize**, Enghave Plads 6 (✆ **33-31-15-60**), is a bar with music that ranges from punk to electro to hip-hop. Drawing an artsy crowd under 35, the bar is in the Danish minimalism style of wood plank floors and exposed bricks. Open daily from 11am to midnight; take bus 10 to this western part of the city.

BARS & CELLARS

Det Lille Apotek, Stor Kannikestraede 15 (✆ **33-12-56-06;** bus no. 2, 5, 8, or 30), is a good spot for English-speaking foreign students to meet their Danish contemporaries. Though the menu varies, keep an eye out for the prawn cocktail and tenderloin. The main courses run about 189DKK to 238DKK ($38–$48/£19–£24) at dinner. It's open daily from 11am to midnight.

Frequented by celebrities and royalty, the **Library Bar,** in the Sofitel Plaza, Bernstorffsgade 4 (✆ **33-14-92-62;** bus no. 6), was rated by the late Malcolm Forbes as one of the top five bars in the world. In a setting of antique books and works of art, you can order everything from a cappuccino to a cocktail. It's open daily 4pm to midnight.

Nyhavn 17, Nyhavn 17 (✆ **33-12-54-19;** bus no. 1, 6, 27, or 29; Metro: Kongens Nytorv), is the last of the honky-tonks that used to make up the former sailors' quarter. This cafe is a short walk from the Kongens Nytorv and d'Angleterre hotels. In summer you can sit outside. In the evening there's free entertainment from a solo guitarist or guitar duet. The cafe is open Sunday through Thursday from 10am to 2am and Friday and Saturday from 10am until 3am. Built in 1670, **Hviids Vinstue,** Kongens Nytorv 19 (✆ **33-15-10-64;** bus no. 1, 6, 9, or 10), is a wine cellar that's a dimly lit safe haven for an eclectic crowd, many patrons—both theatergoers and actors and dancers—drawn from the Royal Theater across the way. It's open Sunday to Thursday from 10am to 1am, Friday and Saturday 10am to 2pm.

A leading nightlife venue, popular with gay men and women, is **Oscar Bar & Café,** 77 Radhuspladsen (✆ **33-12-09-99**), which operates a good restaurant serving an international cuisine and also has a cruisy bar. It's an all-around rendezvous point for many of the capital's gay men and women, also attracting foreign visitors looking for action. The crowd is trendy and hip, and the bar is also frequented by straight people for its music and atmosphere. The bar and cafe is open daily from noon to 2am, the restaurant daily from noon to 10pm. Happy hour is from 5 to 9pm.

2 Day Trips from Copenhagen

DRAGØR ★★

Visit the past in this old seafaring town on the island of Amager, 5km (3 miles) south of Copenhagen's Kastrup Airport. It's filled with well-preserved, half-timbered, ocher-and-pink 18th-century cottages with steep red-tile or thatch roofs, many of them under the protection of the National Trust.

Dragør (pronounced *Drah*-wer) was a busy port on the herring-rich Baltic Sea in the early Middle Ages, but when fishing fell off, it became just another sleepy waterfront village. After 1520, Amager Island and its villages—Dragør and Store Magleby—were inhabited by the Dutch, who brought their own customs, Low-German language, and agricultural expertise, especially their love of bulb flowers. In Copenhagen, you still see wooden-shoed Amager islanders selling their hyacinths, tulips, daffodils, and lilies in the streets.

A rich trove of historic treasures is in the **Amager Museum,** Hovedgaden 4–12, Store Magleby (✆ **32-53-93-07;** bus no. 30, 33, or 350S), outside Dragør. The exhibits reveal the affluence achieved by the Amager Dutch, with rich textiles, fine embroidery, and amenities like carved silver buckles and buttons. The interiors of a Dutch house are especially interesting. Admission is 30DKK ($6/£3) adults, free ages 17 and under. The museum is open May 1 to September 30, Tuesday daily noon to 4pm; October through April 30, Wednesday and Sunday noon to 4pm.

The exhibits at the harborfront **Dragør Museum,** Havnepladsen 2–4 (✆ **32-53-41-06;** bus no. 30, 36, 73E, or 350S), show how the Amager Dutch lived from prehistoric times to the 20th century. Farming, goose breeding, seafaring, fishing, ship piloting, and ship salvage are delineated through pictures and artifacts. Admission is 20DKK ($4/£2) adults, 10DKK ($2/£1) for ages 18 and under. It's open May to September, Tuesday to Sunday noon to 4pm; closed October to April.

LOUISIANA

Established in 1958, the **Louisiana Museum of Modern Art** ★★★, Gl. Strandvej 13 (✆ **49-19-07-19;** www.louisiana.dk), is idyllically situated in a 19th-century mansion on the Danish Riviera, surrounded by a sculpture park opening directly onto the Øresund. Paintings and sculptures by modern masters, such as Giacometti and Henry Moore, as well as the best and most controversial works of modern art, are displayed. The museum's name came from the estate's first owner, Alexander Brun, who had three wives, each named Louise. Admission is 90DKK ($18/£9) adults, 80DKK ($16/£8) students and seniors, free 18 and under. It's open Thursday to Tuesday 10am to 5pm, Wednesday 10am to 10pm; closed December 24, 25, and 31.

Getting There **Humlebaek,** the nearest town to Louisiana, may be reached by train from Copenhagen (København-Helsingør). Two trains an hour leave from the main station in Copenhagen (trip time: 40 min.). Once you're at Humlebaek, follow signs to the museum, a 15-minute walk.

HELSINGØR (ELSINORE) ★

Helsingør is visited chiefly for "Hamlet's Castle." Aside from its literary associations, the town has a certain charm: a quiet market square, medieval lanes, and old half-timbered and brick buildings, remains of its once-prosperous shipping industry. The **Tourist Office,** Havnepladsen 3 (✆ **49-21-13-33;** www.visithelsingor.dk), is open September to June 19, Monday to Friday from 10am to 4pm and Saturday from 10am to 1pm; June 20 to August 31, Monday to Thursday 10am to 5pm, Friday 10am to 6pm, and Saturday 10am to 3pm.

There's no evidence Shakespeare ever saw this sandstone-and-copper Dutch Renaissance–style castle, full of intriguing secret passages and casemates, but he made **Kronborg Slot** ★★★, Kronborg (✆ **49-21-30-78**), famous in *Hamlet.* According to 12th-century historian Saxo Grammaticus, though, if Hamlet had really existed, he would have lived centuries before Kronborg was erected (1574–85). Over the years, some famous productions of *Hamlet* have been staged here, the castle's bleak atmosphere providing a good foil to the drama.

During its history, the castle has been looted, bombarded, gutted by fire, and used as a barracks (1785–1922). The starkly furnished Great Hall is the largest in northern Europe. The church, with its original oak furnishings, and the royal chambers are also worth exploring. Admission to the castle is 50DKK ($10/£5) adults, 15DKK ($3/£1.50) children 6 to 14. May to September, it's open daily 10:30am to 5:30pm; October and April, hours are Tuesday to Sunday 10:30am to 5pm; November to March, it's open Tuesday to Sunday 11am to 4pm (closed Christmas). The castle is 1km (⅔ mile) from the rail station.

Getting There Once you reach Helsingør, 40km (25 miles) north of Copenhagen, you'll be deposited in the center of town and can cover all the major attractions on foot. There are frequent trains from Copenhagen, taking about 1 hour. A one-way ticket is 62DKK ($12/£6). Buses leave Copenhagen daily via the town of Klampeborg for the 90-minute trip to Helsingør.

6

England

by Darwin Porter & Danforth Prince

London is the most happening city in Europe—lively, fast paced, and teeming with action. London touts its fascinating contradictions: it's both an overwhelming jumble of antiquity and a world leader in the latest music, fashion, and food. As stimulating as the city is, however, you'll want to tear yourself away to visit legendary Stonehenge, Oxford University, and the classic city of Bath.

1 London

Samuel Johnson said, "When a man is tired of London, he is tired of life; for there's in London all that life can afford." We'll survey a segment of that life: ancient monuments, literary shrines, museums, walking tours, Parliament debates, royal castles, waxworks, palaces, cathedrals, and parks.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **By Plane** The major airport for arrivals from North America is **Heathrow** (LHR), outside London. This is the hub of most airlines, including British Airways and American carriers, and has the best transportation links to London. It takes 45 to 50 minutes by the Underground (Tube) and costs £4 ($8) to make the 24km (15-mile) trip from Heathrow to the center of London. A taxi is likely to cost from £50 to £70 ($100–$140). For more information about Tube or bus connections, call ✆ **020/7222-1234** or go to www.tfl.gov.uk.

The British Airport Authority now operates **Heathrow Express** (✆ **0845/600-1515;** www.heathrowexpress.com), a 161 kmph (100-mph) train service running every 15 minutes daily from 5:10am until 11:40pm between Heathrow and Paddington Station in the center of London. Trips cost £15 ($30) each way in economy class, rising to £46 ($92) in first class. Children younger than 15 pay £7.20 ($14) in economy, £23 ($46) in first class. You can save £1 ($2) by booking online or by phone. The trip takes 15 minutes each way between Paddington and Terminals 1, 2, and 3; 23 minutes from Terminal 4. The trains have special areas for wheelchairs. From Paddington, passengers can connect to other trains and the Underground, or you can hail a taxi. You can buy tickets on the train with a £2 ($4) surcharge, or at self- service machines at Heathrow Airport. (Tickets are also available from travel agents.)

While Heathrow still dominates, more and more scheduled flights land at relatively remote Gatwick (✆ **0870/574-7777;** www.baa.co.uk), located some 40km (25 miles) south of London in West Sussex but only a 30-minute train ride away. From Gatwick, the fastest way to get to London is via the **Gatwick Express** trains (✆ **0845/850-1530;** www.gatwickexpress.co.uk), which depart approximately every 15 minutes, daily between 4:35am and 1:35am. The round-trip fare between Gatwick and Victoria Rail Station is £27 ($54) for adults and £13 ($26) for children age 10 and younger. The travel time each way is 30 minutes Monday to Saturday, and 35 minutes on Sunday.

A taxi from Gatwick Airport to central London costs from £95 ($190). Fares vary according to a printed price list that defines the fare from Gatwick to whichever neighborhood of London you're traveling to. For further transportation information pertaining to either Gatwick or any other location within London, call ☎ **020/7222-1234.**

By Train Each of London's train stations is connected to the city's vast bus and Underground network, and each has phones, restaurants, pubs, luggage storage areas, and Transport for London Information Centres.

St. Pancras International (http://stpancras.eurostar.com) is the new London hub for Eurostar, replacing Waterloo Station as the arrival point from the continent. Restored and opened in 2007, it is the point where the high-speed Eurostar pulls into London, connecting England with Belgium and France through the Channel Tunnel.

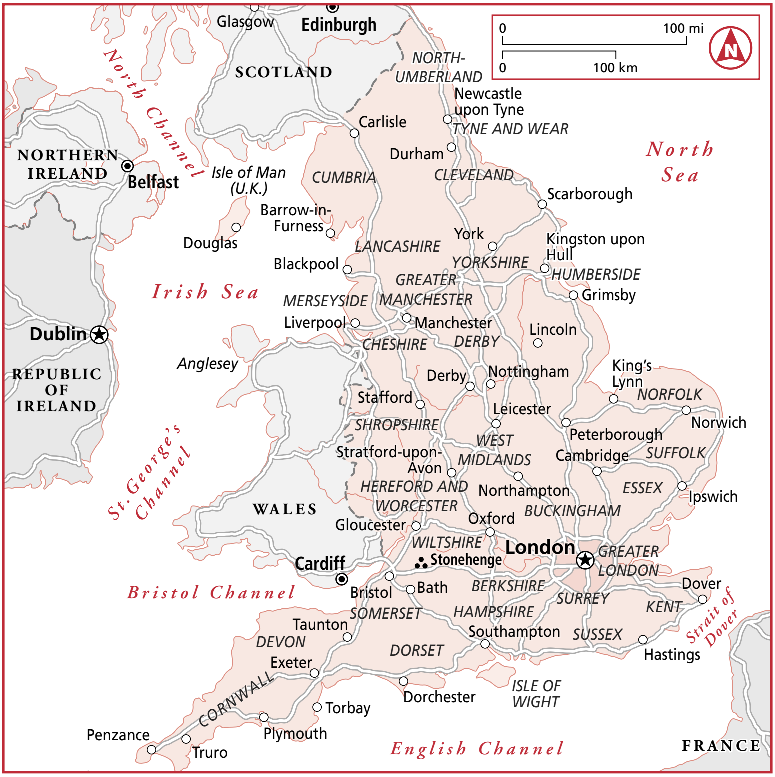
Along with some of the world's fastest trains, the station boasts Europe's longest champagne bar, a daily farmer's market, all the Wi-Fi you'll ever need, plus dozens of boutiques. It's served by six underground tubes, including Victoria, Northern, Piccadilly, Circle, Hammersmith & City, and Metropolitan, as well as seven other rail companies. With such a vast network of transport, you can head virtually anywhere in Greater London.

By Car Once you arrive on the English side of the channel, the M20 takes you directly into London. Remember to drive on the left. Two roadways encircle London: The A406 and A205 form the inner beltway; the M25 rings the city farther out. Determine which part of the city you want to enter and follow signposts.

We suggest you confine driving in London to the bare minimum, which means arriving and parking. Because of parking problems and heavy traffic, getting around London by car is not a viable option. Once there, leave your car in a garage and rely on public transportation or taxis. Before arrival in London, call your hotel and inquire whether it has a garage (and what the charges are), or ask the staff to give you the name and address of a garage nearby.

VISITOR INFORMATION **Tourist Offices** The London Tourist Board's **London Visitor Centre,** 1 Lower Regent St., London SW1Y 4XT (☎ **8701/566-366;** www.visitlondon.com; Tube: Piccadilly Circus), can help you with almost anything. Located within a 10-minute walk from Piccadilly Circus, it deals chiefly with procuring accommodations in all price categories through an on-site travel agency (www.LastMinute.com), which can also book transit on British Rail or with bus carriers throughout the U.K. There's a kiosk for procuring theater or group tour tickets, a book shop loaded with titles dealing with travel in the British Isles, a souvenir shop, and a staff that's pleasant, helpful, and friendly. It's open year-round Monday 9:30am to 6:30pm, Tuesday to Friday 9am to 6:30pm, and Sunday 9am to 5pm. Between October and May, Saturday hours are 10am to 4pm, and between June and September, Saturday hours are 9am to 5pm.

The **London Information Centre,** at Leicester Square W1 (☎ **020/7292-2333;** www.londoninformationcentre.com; Tube: Leicester Sq.), can also help with visitors' questions. You should know that it's a privately owned, commercially driven organization that may have a vested interest in steering you toward a particular venue.


England

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Durham
North Sea
Isle of Man (U.K.)
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CLEVELAND
Scarborough
Barrow-in-Furness
York
Douglas
LANCASHIRE
Kingston upon Hull
YORKSHIRE
Blackpool
HUMBERSIDE
GREATER MANCHESTER
Irish Sea
MERSEYSIDE
Grimsby
Manchester
Liverpool
Lincoln
Dublin
CHESHIRE
DERBY
Anglesey
REPUBLIC OF IRELAND
Derby
Nottingham
King's Lynn
NORFOLK
Stafford
Leicester
Norwich
SHROPSHIRE
Peterborough
WEST MIDLANDS
St. George's Channel
Stratford-upon-Avon
Cambridge
SUFFOLK
HEREFORD AND WORCESTER
Northampton
ESSEX
Ipswich
WALES
BUCKINGHAM
Oxford
Gloucester
WILTSHIRE
London
GREATER LONDON
Stonehenge
Cardiff
Bristol Channel
Bristol
Bath
BERKSHIRE
Dover
SURREY
SOMERSET
HAMPSHIRE
KENT
Strait of Dover
Taunton
Southampton
SUSSEX
DEVON
DORSET
Hastings
Exeter
CORNWALL
Dorchester
ISLE OF WIGHT
Torbay
Penzance
Plymouth
Truro
English Channel
FRANCE

Call ✆ **0800/LONDON** for city information and to book sometimes discounted rates for London hotels, theaters, sightseeing tours, and airport transfers. A sales staff is available daily from 8am to midnight.

Websites Tap into a wealth of information at **www.visitbritain.com**, which lets you order brochures online, provides trip-planning hints, and even allows e-mail questions for prompt answers. All of Great Britain is covered. The site is run by the British Tourist Authority and targets U.S. visitors in particular.

Go to **www.baa.com** for a guide and terminal maps for Heathrow, Gatwick, Stansted, and several other airports in the U.K., including flight arrival times, duty-free shops, airport restaurants, and info on getting from the London airports to downtown London. Getting around London can be confusing, so you may want to visit **www.tfl.gov.uk** for up-to-the-minute info. For the latest on London's theater scene, consult **www.officiallondontheatre.co.uk**. At **www.multimap.com**, you can access detailed street maps for the whole United Kingdom—just key in the location or even just its postal code, and a map of the area with the location circled appears. For directions to specific places in London, consult **www.streetmap.co.uk**.

CITY LAYOUT For our purposes, London begins at Chelsea, on the north bank of the Thames, and stretches north through Kensington to Hampstead, and then east and south to Tower Bridge. Within this area, you'll find all the hotels and restaurants and nearly all the sights that are usually of interest to visitors.

The logical, though not geographical, center of this area is Trafalgar Square. Stand here facing the steps of the imposing National Gallery; you're looking northwest. That's the direction of Piccadilly Circus—the real core of tourist London—and the maze of streets that makes up Soho. Farther north runs Oxford Street, London's gift to moderately priced shopping, and still farther northwest lie Regent's Park and the zoo.

At your back (south from Trafalgar Square) runs Whitehall, which houses or skirts nearly every British government building, including the official residence of the prime minister at 10 Downing St. A bit farther south stand the Houses of Parliament and Westminster Abbey. Flowing southwest from Trafalgar Square is the table-smooth Mall, flanked by parks and mansions and leading to Buckingham Palace, the queen's residence. Farther along in the same direction lie Belgravia and Knightsbridge, the city's plushest residential areas; and south of them are chic Chelsea and King's Road (an upscale boulevard for shopping).

Due west from Trafalgar Square stretches the superb and high-priced shopping area bordered by Regent Street and Piccadilly. Farther west lie the equally elegant shops and even more elegant homes of Mayfair. Then comes Park Lane, with its deluxe hotels. Beyond is Hyde Park, the biggest park in central London and one of the largest in the world.

Charing Cross Road runs north from Trafalgar Square, past Leicester Square, and intersects with Shaftesbury Avenue. This is London's Theaterland. A bit farther along, Charing Cross Road turns into a browser's paradise, lined with shops selling new and secondhand books. At last, it funnels into St. Giles Circus. Beyond is Bloomsbury, site of the University of London, the British Museum, and erstwhile stamping ground of the famed "Bloomsbury group," led by Virginia Woolf. Northeast from Trafalgar Square lies Covent Garden, known for its Royal Opera House; today it's a major shopping, restaurant, and cafe district.

Follow The Strand eastward from Trafalgar Square and you'll come to Fleet Street. From the 19th century through most of the 20th century, this area was the most concentrated newspaper district in the world. Temple Bar stands where The Strand becomes Fleet Street, and only here do you enter the actual City of London, or "the City." Its focal point and shrine is the Bank of England on Threadneedle Street, with the Stock Exchange next door and the Royal Exchange across the street. In the midst of all the hustle and bustle rises St. Paul's Cathedral, Sir Christopher Wren's monument to beauty and tranquility. At the far eastern fringe of the City looms the Tower of London, shrouded in legend, blood, and history and permanently besieged by battalions of visitors.

GETTING AROUND **By Public Transportation** The **London Underground** and the city's buses operate on the same system of six fare zones. The fare zones radiate in rings from the central zone 1, which is where most visitors spend the majority of their time. Zone 1 covers the area from Liverpool Street in the east to Notting Hill in the west, and from Waterloo in the south to Baker Street, Euston, and King's Cross in the north. To travel beyond zone 1, you need a multizone ticket. Note that all single one-way, round-trip, and 1-day pass tickets are valid only on the day of purchase. Tube and bus maps should be available at any Underground station. You can download them before your trip from the excellent London Transport (LT) website www.tfl.gov.uk/tfl.

Discount Passes for Public Transportation

If you plan to use public transportation a lot, investigate the range of fare discounts available. **Travelcards** offer unlimited use of buses, Underground, Docklands Light Railway, and National Rail services in Greater London for any period ranging from a day to a year. Travelcards are available from Underground ticket offices, LT Information Centres, main post offices in the London area, many newsagents, and some newsstands. Children younger than age 11 generally travel free on the Tube and buses.

The 1-Day Travelcard allows you to go anywhere throughout Greater London. For travel anywhere within zones 1 and 2, the cost is £6.80 ($14) for adults or £3.40 ($6.80) for children 5 to 15. The Off-Peak 1-Day Travelcard, which is valid after 9:30am on weekdays is even cheaper. For two zones, the cost is £5.30 ($11) for adults and £3.30 ($6.60) for children 5 to 15.

The system now features a 3-Day Travel Card, allowing adults to travel within zones 1 and 2 for £17 to £22 ($34–$44), and allowing children to go for £8.70 to £9.50 ($17–$19).

1-Week Travelcards cost adults £24 ($48) and children £12 ($24) for travel in zones 1 and 2.

Also consider purchasing the **Oyster Card** (www.oystercard.com). You can prepay for single fares, which cost considerably less than a paper ticket—usually about half the price. Oysters are valid on the Tube, DLR, tram, and National Rail services within your chosen zones and across the entire London bus network. For 24-hour information, call the Oyster hotline at ☎ **0871/2301100.** The card has a daily price cap, meaning you never pay more than £3 ($6) regardless of how many trips you make in 1 day. You can buy an Oyster Card at any ticket office.

There are also **LT Information Centres** at several major Tube stations: Euston, King's Cross, Oxford Circus, St. James's Park, Liverpool Street Station, and Piccadilly Circus, as well as in the British Rail stations at Euston and Victoria and in each of the terminals at Heathrow Airport. Most of them are open daily (some close Sun) from at least 9am to 5pm. A 24-hour public-transportation information service is also available at ☎ **020/7222-1234.**

The bus system is almost as good as the Underground, and you'll have a better view of the city. To find out about current routes, pick up a free bus map at one of London Transport's Travel Information Centres, listed above. The map is available in person only, not by mail. You can also obtain a map at www.tfl.gov.uk.

As with the Underground, fares vary according to distance traveled. Generally, bus fares are £2 to £3 ($4–$6). If you want your stop called out, simply ask the conductor or driver. To speed up bus travel, passengers have to purchase tickets before boarding. Drivers no longer collect fares on board. Some 300 roadside ticket machines serve stops in central London—in other words, it's "pay as you board." You'll need the exact fare, however, as ticket machines don't make change.

Buses generally run 24 hours a day. A few night buses have special routes, running once an hour or so; most pass through Trafalgar Square. Keep in mind that night buses are often so crowded (especially on weekends) that they are unable to pick up passengers after a few stops. You may find yourself waiting a long time. Consider taking a taxi. Call the 24-hour hot line (✆ **020/7222-1234**) for schedule and fare information.

By Taxi London cabs are among the most comfortable and best designed in the world. You can pick one up either by heading for a cab stand or by hailing one in the street. (The taxi is available if the yellow taxi sign on the roof is lit.) To call a cab, phone ✆ **0871/871-8710.**

The meter starts at £2.20 ($4.40), with increments of £2 ($4) per mile thereafter, based on distance or time. Surcharges are imposed after 8pm and on weekends and public holidays. All these tariffs include VAT: tip 10% to 15%.

If you call for a cab, the meter starts running when the taxi receives instructions from the dispatcher, so you could find that the meter already reads a few pounds more than the initial drop of £2.20 ($4.40) when you step inside.

If you have a complaint about taxi service or if you leave something in a cab, contact the **Public Carriage Office,** 15 Penton St., N1 9PU (Tube: Angel Station). If it's a complaint, you must have the cab number, which is displayed in the passenger compartment. Call ✆ **0845/602-7000** or 020/7222-1234 with complaints.

By Car Rent a car only if you plan to take excursions into the environs. Because of traffic and parking difficulties, it's virtually impossible to see London by car.

By Bicycle One of the most popular bike-rental shops is **On Your Bike,** 52–54 Tooley St., London Bridge, SE1 (✆ **020/7378-6669;** www.onyourbike.com; Tube: London Bridge), open Monday to Friday 7:30am to 7pm, Saturday 10am to 6pm, and Sunday 11am to 5pm. The first-class mountain bikes, with high seats and low-slung handlebars, cost £12 ($24) for the first day and £8 ($16) for each day thereafter, or £35 ($70) per week, and require a 1p deposit on a credit card, so they will have your credit card number.

FAST FACTS: London

American Express There are outlets at Heathrow Airport including at Terminal 4 (✆ **020/8897-0134**) and at Terminal T3 (✆ 020/8759-6845. There is also an American Service Express Travel Service at 78 Brompton Rd., Knightsbridge, SW3 (✆ 020/761-7905). In Wales, the AmEx office is at 3 Queen St. (✆ 02920/649305).

Currency The basic unit of currency is the pound sterling (£), which is divided into 100 pence (p). The rate of exchange used in this chapter is £1 = $2. Keep in mind that exchange rates fluctuate daily.

Dentists & Doctors If you need a doctor, your hotel can recommend one, or you can contact your embassy or consulate. Outside London, dial ✆ **100** and ask the operator for the local police, who will give you the name, address, and telephone number of a doctor in your area. ***Note:*** U.S. visitors who become ill while theyre in Britain are eli gible only for free emergency care. For other treatment, including follow-up care, you'll be asked to pay.

Embassies & High Commissions The U.S. Embassy is at 24 Grosvenor Sq., W1 (✆ **020/7499-9000;** www.usembassy.org.uk; Tube: Bond St.). Hours are Monday to Friday 8am to 5:30pm, Saturday 10am to 4pm. However, for passport and visa information, go to the U.S. Passport and Citizenship Unit, 55-56 Upper Grosvenor St., London, W1 (✆ 020/7894-0563; Tube: marble Arch or Bond St.). Passport and Citizenship Unit hours are Monday to Friday 8:30am to 12:30pm.

The Canadian High Commission, Macdonald house, 38 Grosvenor St., W1 (✆ 020/7258-6600; www.defait-maeci.gc.ca/london; Tube: Bond St.), handles visas for Canada. Hours are Monday to Friday 8 to 11am for immigration services.

The Australian High Commission is at Australia House, the Strand, WC2 (✆ 020/7379-4334; www.australia.org.uk; Tube: Charing Cross or Aldwych). Hours are Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm, 9 to 11am for immigration services, passports 9:30am to 3:30pm.

The New Zealand High Commission is at New Zealand House, 80 Haymarket at Pall Mall, SW1 (✆ 020/7930-8422; www.nzembassy.com; Tube: Charing Cross or Piccadilly Circus). Hours are Monday to Friday 10am to 4pm.

The Irish Embassy is at 17 Grosvenor Place, SW1 (✆ 020/7235-2171; http://Ireland.embassyhomepage.com; Tube: Hyde Park Corner). Hours are Monday to Friday 9:30am to 1pm and 2 to 5pm.

Emergencies In London, for police, fire, or an ambulance, dial ✆ **999.**

Hospitals Emergency care 24 hours a day, with the first treatment free under the National Health Service, is offered by Royal Free Hospital, Pond Street, NW10 (✆ **020/7794-0500;** Tube: Belsize Park); and by University College Hospital, 25 Grafton Way, WC1E 3DB (✆ **020/7387-9300;** Tube: Warren St.). Many other London hospitals also have accident and emergency departments.

Internet Access It's hard nowadays to find a city that doesn't have a few cybercafes. Although there's no definitive directory for cybercafes—these are independent businesses, after all—two places to start looking are at www.cybercaptive.com and www.cybercafe.com.

London, of course, has the greatest Internet access. If you've brought your laptop, the quest will be easier, since many hotels are wired; rates run from £10 to £20 ($20–$40) a day, although £12 ($24) is probably the average. Countless Internet cafes and coin-operated kiosks can be found around town. Libraries are reserved for residents, so you can't rely on them. The most common Internet cafe chain is **easyInternetcafe** (www.easyinternetcafe.com). Fifteen locations are around town, with West End locations in Burger King's basement at Piccadilly Circus (46 Regent St., W1; Tube: Piccadilly Circus; 358 Oxford St., W1; Tube: Bond St.; 9-16 Tottenham Court Rd., W1; Tube: Tottenham Court Rd.; and east of Trafalgar Sq., 456-459 Strand, WC2; Tube: Charing Cross).

Post Office The **Main Post Office,** 24–28 William IV St., WC2N (✆ **020/7484-9307;** Tube: Charing Cross), operates as three separate businesses: inland and international postal service and banking; philatelic postage stamp sales; and the post shop, selling greeting cards and stationery. All are open Monday through Friday from 8:30am to 6:30pm and Saturday 9am to 5:30pm.

Telephone The **country code** for the United Kingdom is **44.** London's city code is **020.**

For directory assistance in London, dial ✆ **118212;** for the rest of Britain, ✆ 118118.

There are three types of public pay phones: those taking only coins, those accepting only phone cards (called Cardphones), and those taking both phone cards and credit cards. At coin-operated phones, insert your coins before dialing. The minimum charge is 10p (20¢).

Phone cards are available in four values—£2 ($4), £4 ($8), £10 ($20), and £20 ($40)—and are reusable until the total value has expired. Cards can be purchased from newsstands and post offices.

To make an international call from Britain, dial the international access code (00), then the country code, then the area code, and finally the local number. Or call through one of the following long-distance access codes: AT&T USA Direct (✆ 1800/CALL-ATT), Canada Direct (✆ 0800/890016), Australia (✆ 0800/890061), and New Zealand (✆ 0800/890064). Common country codes are: USA and Canada, 1; Australia, 61; New Zealand, 64; and South Africa, 27.

MAYFAIR

Expensive

Brown's Hotel ★★ Almost every year a hotel sprouts up trying to evoke an English country-house ambience with Chippendale and chintz; this quintessential townhouse hotel watches these competitors come and go, and it always comes out on top. Brown's was founded by James Brown, a former manservant to Lord Byron, who knew the tastes of well-bred gentlemen and wanted to create a dignified, clublike place for them. He opened its doors in 1837, the same year Queen Victoria took the throne.

Brown's occupies 14 historic houses just off Berkeley Square. Its completely renovated guest rooms vary considerably in decor, but all show restrained taste in decoration and appointments; even the wash basins are antiques. Accommodations range in size from small to extra spacious; some suites have four-poster beds.

30 Albemarle St., London W1S 4BP. ✆ **020/7493-6020.** Fax 020/7493-9381. www.brownshotel.com. 117 units. £450 ($900) double; from £1,400 ($2,800) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Off-site parking £53 ($106). Tube: Green Park. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; health club; spa; business center; room service; laundry service; same-day dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

The Selfridge ★ The location, right next door to Selfridge's food hall off Oxford Street, is wonderful, especially for shoppers. In fact, the hotel's seven floors look as if they are part of Selfridge's itself. This mammoth hotel is a member of the Thistle hotel chain and caters to an even mix of business and leisure travelers. Ignore the drab entrance; the hotel brightens considerably in the second-floor reception room, with its wingback chairs, antique art, pine-paneled walls, and a rustic bar whose half-timbered decor was brought and installed piece by piece from an English barn that stood in the Middle Ages. The rooms are hardly the finest in this part of town, but they are usually affordable, especially if you snag one of the promotional offerings. Accommodations are well maintained, nicely decorated, tranquil, and generally spacious. ***Tip:*** Try for a room facing Orchard Street, as these are larger. Also, the best rooms are the premium units on floors three to five.

Orchard St., London W1H 6JS. ✆ **0870/333-9117.** Fax 0870/333-9217. www.thistle.co.uk. 294 units. £139–£162 ($278–$324) double; from £229 ($458) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking £35 ($70). Tube: Bond St. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; room service; babysitting; laundry service; same-day dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, TV, coffeemaker, hair dryer, safe (in some).

MARYLEBONE

Moderate

House Hotel ★ *Kids* Hart House is a long-enduring favorite with Frommer's readers. In the heart of the West End, this well-preserved historic building (one of a group of Georgian mansions occupied by exiled French nobles during the French Revolution) lies within easy walking distance of many theaters. The rooms—done in a combination of furnishings, ranging from Portobello antique to modern—are spic-and-span, each one with a different character. Favorites include no. 7, a triple with a big bathroom and shower. Ask for no. 11, on the top floor, if you'd like a brightly lit aerie. Housekeeping rates high marks here, and each bedroom is comfortably appointed with chairs, an armoire, a desk, and a large chest of drawers. Hart House has long been known as a good, safe place for traveling families. Many of its rooms are triples. Larger families can avail themselves of special family accommodations with connecting rooms.

51 Gloucester Place, Portman Sq., London W1U 8JF. ✆ **020/7935-2288.** Fax 020/7935-8516. www.harthouse.co.uk. 15 units. £125 ($250) double; £145 ($290) triple; £175 ($350) quad. Rates include English breakfast. MC, V. Tube: Marble Arch or Baker St. **Amenities:** Babysitting. *In room:* TV, coffeemaker, hair dryer.

Inexpensive

Edward Lear Hotel This popular hotel, situated 1 block from Marble Arch, is made all the more desirable by the bouquets of fresh flowers in its public rooms. It occupies a pair of brick town houses dating from 1780. The western house was the London home of 19th-century artist and poet Edward Lear, famous for his nonsense verse, and his illustrated limericks adorn the walls of one of the sitting rooms. Steep stairs lead up to cozy rooms which range from spacious to broom-closet size. Bedrooms are looking better than ever following a wholesale renovation in 2007. If you're looking for classiness, know that the bacon on your plate came from the same butcher used by the queen. One major drawback to the hotel: This is a very noisy part of town. Rear rooms are quieter.

28–30 Seymour St., London W1H 7JB. ✆ **020/7402-5401.** Fax 020/7706-3766. www.edlear.com. 32 units, 18 with bathroom. £80 ($160) double without bathroom; £83 ($166) double with shower only; £85 ($170) double with bathroom; £72–£85 ($144–$170) triple without bathroom, £74–£99 ($148–$198) triple with shower only. Rates include English breakfast and tax. AE, MC, V. Tube: Marble Arch. *In room:* TV, coffeemaker.

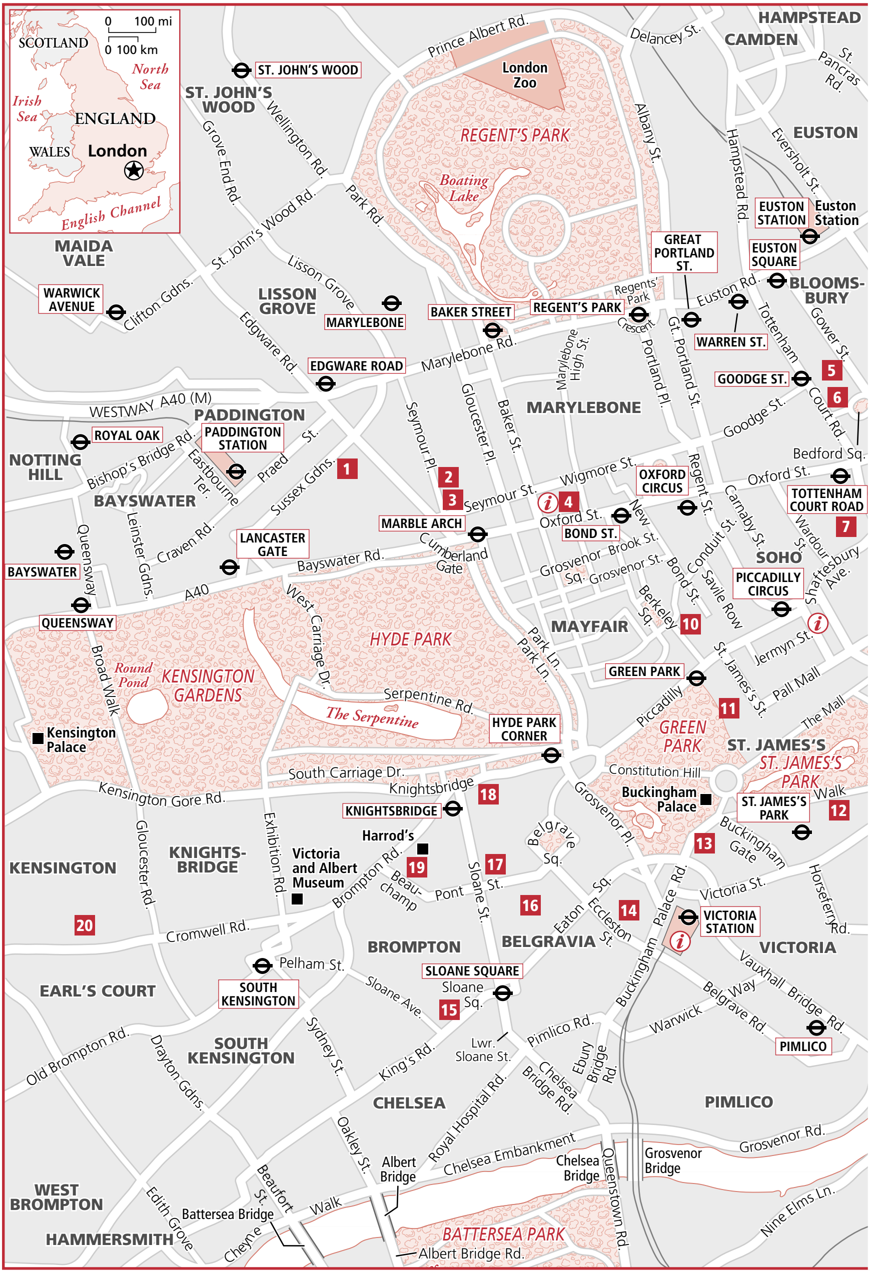
ST. JAMES'S

Expensive

Dukes Hotel ★★★ Dukes provides elegance without ostentation, catering to those looking for charm, style, and tradition in a hotel. It stands in a quiet courtyard off St. James's Place; turn-of-the-20th-century gas lamps help put you into the proper mood before entering the front door. Each well-furnished guest room is decorated in the style of a particular English period, ranging from Regency to Edwardian.

35 St. James's Place, London SW1A 1NY. ✆ **800/381-4702** in the U.S., or 020/7491-4840. Fax 020/7493-1264. www.dukeshotel.co.uk. 90 units. £300–£420 ($600–$840) double; from £660 ($1,320) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking £55 ($110). Tube: Green Park. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; health club; spa; tour desk; business services; room service; babysitting; laundry service; same-day dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

London Accommodations


SCOTLAND
North Sea
Irish Sea
ENGLAND
WALES
London
English Channel
0 100 mi
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HAMPSTEAD
CAMDEN
EUSTON
BLOOMSBURY
MAIDA VALE
ST. JOHN'S WOOD
LISSON GROVE
PADDINGTON
NOTTING HILL
BAYSWATER
MARYLEBONE
SOHO
MAYFAIR
ST. JAMES'S
KENSINGTON
KNIGHTSBRIDGE
BROMPTON
BELGRAVIA
VICTORIA
EARL'S COURT
SOUTH KENSINGTON
CHELSEA
PIMLICO
WEST BROMPTON
HAMMERSMITH
REGENT'S PARK
London Zoo
Boating Lake
HYDE PARK
KENSINGTON GARDENS
Round Pond
The Serpentine
GREEN PARK
ST. JAMES'S PARK
BATTERSEA PARK
Kensington Palace
Buckingham Palace
Harrod's
Victoria and Albert Museum
Euston Station
ST. JOHN'S WOOD
WARWICK AVENUE
MARYLEBONE
EDGWARE ROAD
BAKER STREET
REGENT'S PARK
GREAT PORTLAND ST.
WARREN ST.
EUSTON STATION
EUSTON SQUARE
GOODGE ST.
ROYAL OAK
PADDINGTON STATION
OXFORD CIRCUS
TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD
BOND ST.
MARBLE ARCH
LANCASTER GATE
BAYSWATER
QUEENSWAY
PICCADILLY CIRCUS
GREEN PARK
HYDE PARK CORNER
KNIGHTSBRIDGE
ST. JAMES'S PARK
VICTORIA STATION
SLOANE SQUARE
SOUTH KENSINGTON
PIMLICO
Prince Albert Rd.
Delancey St.
St. Pancras Rd.
Albany St.
Hampstead Rd.
Eversholt St.
Wellington Rd.
Grove End Rd.
Park Rd.
St. John's Wood Rd.
Lisson Grove
Clifton Gdns.
Edgware Rd.
Regents Park Crescent
Euston Rd.
Tottenham Court Rd.
Gower St.
Marylebone Rd.
Marylebone High St.
Portland Pl.
Gt. Portland St.
WESTWAY A40 (M)
Seymour Pl.
Gloucester Pl.
Baker St.
Goodge St.
Bedford Sq.
Bishop's Bridge Rd.
Eastbourne Ter.
Praed St.
Sussex Gdns.
Wigmore St.
Seymour St.
Oxford St.
Regent St.
Carnaby St.
Wardour St.
Queensway
Leinster Gdns.
Craven Rd.
Cumberland Gate
New Bond St.
Brook St.
Grosvenor Sq.
Grosvenor St.
Conduit St.
Savile Row
Shaftesbury Ave.
Bayswater Rd.
A40
West Carriage Dr.
Berkeley Sq.
Bond St.
Park Ln.
Jermyn St.
St. James's St.
Pall Mall
Broad Walk
Serpentine Rd.
Piccadilly
The Mall
Constitution Hill
South Carriage Dr.
Knightsbridge
Kensington Gore Rd.
Grosvenor Pl.
Belgrave Sq.
Walk
Buckingham Gate
Gloucester Rd.
Exhibition Rd.
Brompton Rd.
Beauchamp
Pont St.
Sloane St.
Victoria St.
Horseferry Rd.
Eaton Sq.
Eccleston St.
Palace Rd.
Buckingham
Cromwell Rd.
Pelham St.
Sloane Ave.
Sloane Sq.
Vauxhall Bridge Rd.
Belgrave Rd.
Warwick Way
Old Brompton Rd.
Drayton Gdns.
Sydney St.
King's Rd.
Lwr. Sloane St.
Pimlico Rd.
Chelsea Bridge Rd.
Ebury Bridge Rd.
Royal Hospital Rd.
Oakley St.
Albert Bridge
Chelsea Embankment
Chelsea Bridge
Queenstown Rd.
Grosvenor Bridge
Grosvenor Rd.
Beaufort St.
Edith Grove
Battersea Bridge
Cheyne Walk
Albert Bridge Rd.
Nine Elms Ln.
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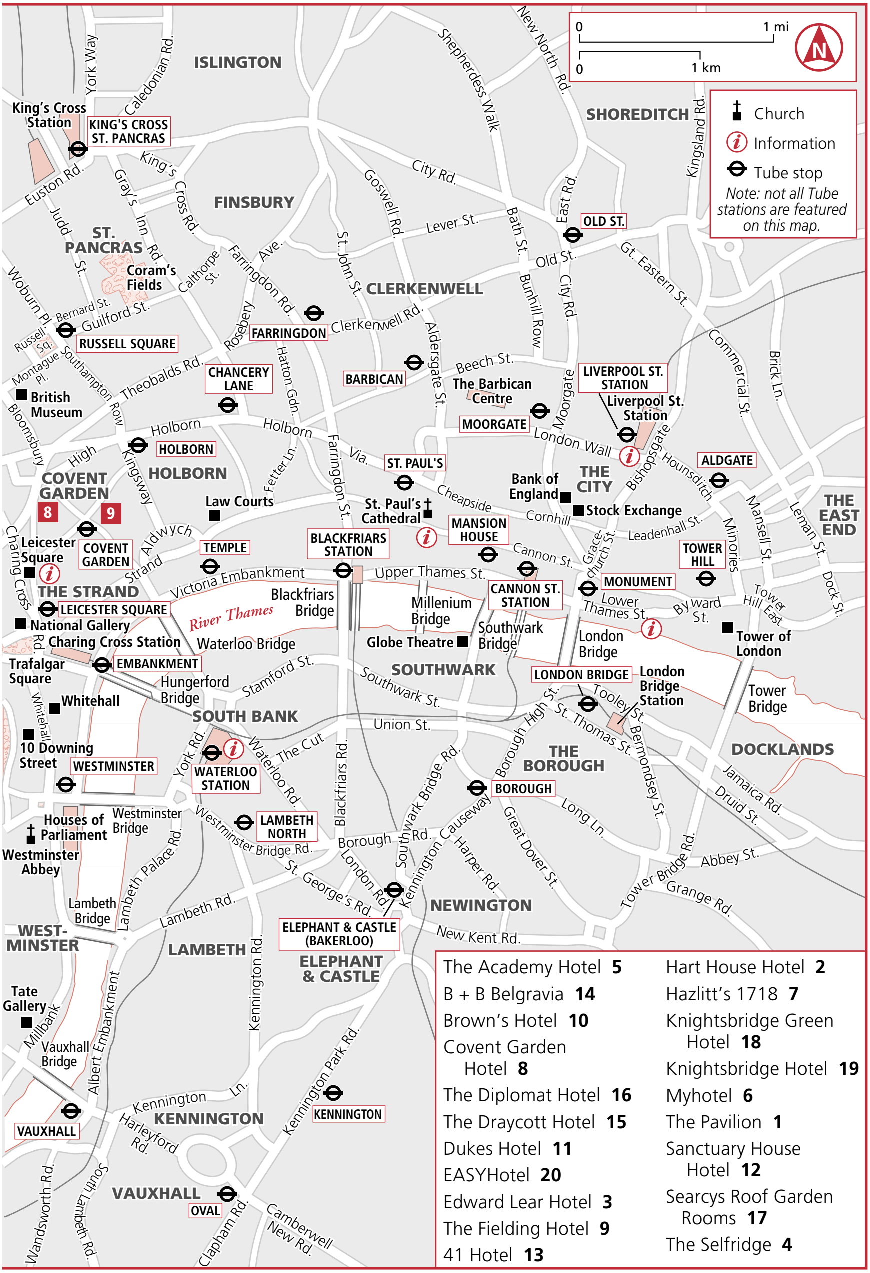
0
1 mi
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Church
Information
Tube stop
Note: not all Tube stations are featured on this map.
ISLINGTON
SHOREDITCH
FINSBURY
ST. PANCRAS
CLERKENWELL
HOLBORN
COVENT GARDEN
THE CITY
THE EAST END
THE STRAND
SOUTHWARK
SOUTH BANK
THE BOROUGH
DOCKLANDS
NEWINGTON
LAMBETH
ELEPHANT & CASTLE
WEST-MINSTER
KENNINGTON
VAUXHALL
King's Cross Station
KING'S CROSS ST. PANCRAS
York Way
Caledonian Rd.
New North Rd.
Shepherdess Walk
Kingsland Rd.
City Rd.
Goswell Rd.
Euston Rd.
King's Cross Rd.
Gray's Inn Rd.
Judd St.
Lever St.
Bath St.
East Rd.
OLD ST.
Old St.
Gt. Eastern St.
Coram's Fields
Calthorpe St.
Farringdon Rd.
Ave.
St. John St.
Bunhill Row
City Rd.
Woburn Pl.
Bernard St.
Guilford St.
Russell Sq.
RUSSELL SQUARE
Montague Pl.
Southampton Row
Rosebery
FARRINGDON
Clerkenwell Rd.
Aldersgate St.
Commercial St.
Brick Ln.
British Museum
Bloomsbury
Theobalds Rd.
CHANCERY LANE
Hatton Gdn.
BARBICAN
Beech St.
The Barbican Centre
Moorgate
LIVERPOOL ST. STATION
Liverpool St. Station
Holborn
Holborn
MOORGATE
London Wall
High
Kingsway
HOLBORN
Fetter Ln.
Farringdon St.
Via.
ST. PAUL'S
Bishopsgate
Houndsditch
ALDGATE
8
9
Law Courts
St. Paul's Cathedral
Cheapside
Bank of England
Stock Exchange
Cornhill
Leadenhall St.
Mansell St.
Leman St.
Charing Cross Rd.
Leicester Square
COVENT GARDEN
Aldwych
Strand
TEMPLE
BLACKFRIARS STATION
MANSION HOUSE
Cannon St.
Gracechurch St.
TOWER HILL
Minories
Dock St.
Victoria Embankment
Upper Thames St.
CANNON ST. STATION
MONUMENT
Lower Thames St.
Byward St.
Tower Hill East
LEICESTER SQUARE
National Gallery
River Thames
Blackfriars Bridge
Millennium Bridge
Southwark Bridge
London Bridge
Tower of London
Charing Cross Station
Waterloo Bridge
Globe Theatre
Trafalgar Square
EMBANKMENT
Hungerford Bridge
Stamford St.
Southwark St.
LONDON BRIDGE
London Bridge Station
Tower Bridge
Whitehall
Whitehall
Tooley St.
High St.
St. Thomas St.
Union St.
10 Downing Street
WESTMINSTER
York Rd.
WATERLOO STATION
Waterloo Rd.
The Cut
Blackfriars Rd.
Southwark Bridge Rd.
Borough
Bermondsey St.
Jamaica Rd.
Druid St.
BOROUGH
Long Ln.
Houses of Parliament
Westminster Bridge
Westminster Abbey
Westminster Bridge Rd.
LAMBETH NORTH
Borough Rd.
London Rd.
Southwark Rd.
Causeway
Kennington
Harper Rd.
Great Dover St.
Tower Bridge Rd.
Abbey St.
Grange Rd.
Lambeth Palace Rd.
St. George's Rd.
Lambeth Bridge
Lambeth Rd.
ELEPHANT & CASTLE (BAKERLOO)
New Kent Rd.
Kennington Rd.
Tate Gallery
Millbank
Albert Embankment
Vauxhall Bridge
Kennington Park Rd.
KENNINGTON
Kennington Ln.
VAUXHALL
Harleyford Rd.
Wandsworth Rd.
South Lambeth Rd.
OVAL
Clapham Rd.
Camberwell New Rd.

The Academy Hotel	**5**
B + B Belgravia	**14**
Brown's Hotel	**10**
Covent Garden Hotel	**8**
The Diplomat Hotel	**16**
The Draycott Hotel	**15**
Dukes Hotel	**11**
EASYHotel	**20**
Edward Lear Hotel	**3**
The Fielding Hotel	**9**
41 Hotel	**13**
Hart House Hotel	**2**
Hazlitt's 1718	**7**
Knightsbridge Green Hotel	**18**
Knightsbridge Hotel	**19**
Myhotel	**6**
The Pavilion	**1**
Sanctuary House Hotel	**12**
Searcys Roof Garden Rooms	**17**
The Selfridge	**4**

SOHO

Expensive

Hazlitt's 1718 ★★ *Finds* This gem, housed in three historic homes on Soho Square, is one of London's best small hotels. Built in 1718, the hotel is named for William Hazlitt, who founded the Unitarian Church in Boston and wrote four volumes on the life of his hero, Napoleon.

Hazlitt's is a favorite with artists, actors, and models. It's eclectic and filled with odds and ends picked up around the country at estate auctions. Some find its Georgian decor a bit spartan, but the 2,000 original prints hanging on the walls brighten it considerably. Many bedrooms have four-poster beds; some of the floors dip and sway, and there's no elevator, but it's all part of the charm. It has just as much character as the Fielding Hotel (see below) but is a lot more comfortable. Some rooms are a bit small, but most are spacious, all with state-of-the-art appointments. Accommodations in the back are quieter but perhaps too dark, and only those on the top floor have air-conditioning.

6 Frith St., London W1D 3JA. ✆ **020/7434-1771.** Fax 020/7439-1524. www.hazlittshotel.com. 23 units. £265 ($530) double; £300 ($600) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Tube: Leicester Sq. or Tottenham Court Rd. **Amenities:** Room service; babysitting; laundry service; same-day dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C (in some), TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

BLOOMSBURY

Expensive

The Academy Hotel ★ The Academy is in the heart of London's publishing district. If you look out your window, you see where Virginia Woolf and other literary members of the Bloomsbury Group passed by every day. Many original architectural details were preserved when these three 1776 Georgian row houses were joined. The hotel was substantially upgraded in the 1990s, with a bathroom added to every bedroom (whether there was space or not). Grace notes include glass panels, colonnades, and intricate plasterwork on the facade. With overstuffed armchairs and half-canopied beds, rooms sometimes evoke English country-house living, but that of the poorer relations. Guests who have been here before always request rooms opening on the garden in back and not those in front with ducted fresh air, though the front units have double-glazing to cut down on the noise. ***Warning:*** The hotel has four floors and no elevator.

21 Gower St., London WC1E 6HG. ✆ **020/7631-4115.** Fax 020/7636-3442. www.theetoncollection.com. 49 units. £140–£165 ($280–$330) double; £180 ($360) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Tube: Tottenham Court Rd., Goodge St., or Russell Sq. **Amenities:** Bar; room service; laundry service; same-day dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, beverage maker, hair dryer, iron, trouser press, safe.

Myhotel ★ *Finds* Creating shock waves among staid Bloomsbury hoteliers, Myhotel is a London row house on the outside with an Asian modern–style interior. It is designed according to feng shui principles—the ancient Chinese art of placement that utilizes the flow of energy in a space. The rooms have mirrors, but they're positioned so you don't see yourself when you first wake up—feng shui rule number one (probably a good rule, feng shui or no feng shui). Rooms are havens of comfort, taste, and tranquillity, with excellent beds. Tipping is discouraged, and each guest is assigned a personal assistant responsible for that guest's happiness. Aimed at today's young, hip traveler, Myhotel lies a short walk from Covent Garden and the British Museum.

11–13 Bayley St., Bedford Sq., London WC1B 3HD. ✆ **020/7667-6000.** Fax 020/7667-6044. www.myhotels.co.uk. 78 units. £189–£265 ($378–$530) double; from £319 ($638) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Tube: Tottenham Court Rd. or Goodge

St. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; exercise room; car at discounted rate; room service; babysitting; laundry service; same-day dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, beverage maker, hair dryer, trouser press (in some), safe.

COVENT GARDEN

Very Expensive

Covent Garden Hotel ★★★ This former hospital building lay neglected for years until it was reconfigured in 1996 into one of London's most charming boutique hotels in one of the West End's hippest shopping neighborhoods. *Travel and Leisure* called this hotel one of the 25 hottest places to stay in the world. It remains so. Behind a bottle-green facade reminiscent of a 19th-century storefront, the hotel has a welcoming lobby outfitted with elaborate inlaid furniture and elegant draperies, plus a charming restaurant. Upstairs, accessible via a dramatic stone staircase, soundproof bedrooms are furnished in English style with Asian fabrics, many adorned with hand-embroidered designs. The hotel has a decorative trademark—each room has a clothier's mannequin.

10 Monmouth St., London WC2H 9HB. ✆ **800/553-6674** in the U.S., or 020/7806-1000. Fax 020/7806-1100. www.firmdale.com. 58 units. £275–£320 ($550–$640) double; £375–£995 ($750–$1,990) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Tube: Covent Garden or Leicester Sq. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; small exercise room; tour desk; business services; salon; room service; massage; babysitting; laundry service; same-day dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms; video library. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Moderate

The Fielding Hotel ★ *Finds* One of London's more eccentric hotels, this rickety walk-up is cramped, quirky, and quaint. The hotel is named after novelist Henry Fielding of Tom Jones fame, who lived in Broad Court. It lies on a pedestrian street still lined with 19th-century gas lamps. The Royal Opera House is across the street, and the pubs, shops, and restaurants of lively Covent Garden are just beyond the front door. Rooms are small but charmingly old-fashioned and traditional. Some units are redecorated or at least "touched up" every year, though floors dip and sway, and the furnishings and fabrics, though clean, have known better times. With a location like this, in the heart of London, the Fielding keeps guests coming back; in fact, some love the hotel's claustrophobic charm. Children younger than 13 are not welcome; occasionally the staff makes adult patrons feel the same.

4 Broad Court, Bow St., London WC2B 5QZ. ✆ **020/7836-8305.** Fax 020/7497-0064. www.the-fielding-hotel.co.uk. 24 units. £105–£125 ($210–$250) double. AE, DC, MC, V. Tube: Covent Garden. *In room:* TV, coffeemaker.

WESTMINSTER/VICTORIA

Expensive

41 Hotel ★★★ *Finds* This relatively unknown but well-placed gem offers the intimate atmosphere of a private club combined with a high level of personal service. Completely self-contained, it occupies the fifth (top) floor of the building whose lower floors contains an also-recommended hotel, the Rubens at the Palace Hotel. 41 Hotel is best suited to couples or those traveling alone—especially women. Public areas feature an abundance of mahogany, antiques, fresh flowers, and rich fabrics. Read, relax, or watch TV in the library-style lounge, where a complimentary continental breakfast and afternoon snacks are served each day. Guest rooms are individually sized, but all feature elegant black-and-white color schemes and magnificent beds with Egyptian-cotton linens.

41 Buckingham Palace Rd., London SW1W OPS. ✆ **877/955-1515** in the U.S. and Canada, or 020/7300-0041. Fax 020/7300-0141. www.41hotel.com. 30 units. £295–£345 ($590–$690) double; £495–£695 ($990–$1390) suite. Rates include continental breakfast, afternoon snacks, and evening canapés. Special Internet packages and discounts

available. AE, DC, MC, V. Tube: Victoria. **Amenities:** Lounge; bar; access to nearby health club; massage; business center; room service; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms; 1 room for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, beverage maker, hair dryer, iron, safe.

Moderate

Sanctuary House Hotel ★ Only in the new London, where hotels are bursting into bloom like daffodils, would you find a hotel so close to Westminster Abbey. And a pub hotel, no less, with rooms on the upper floors above the tavern. Accommodations have a rustic feel, but they have first-rate beds. Downstairs, a pub/restaurant, part of the Sanctuary, offers old-style British meals that have ignored changing culinary fashions. "We like tradition," one of the perky staff members told us. "Why must everything be trendy? Some people come to England nostalgic for the old. Let others be trendy." Actually, the food is excellent if you appreciate the roast beef, Welsh lamb, and Dover sole that pleased the palates of Churchill and his contemporaries. Naturally, there's always plenty of brew on tap.

33 Tothill St., London SW1H 9LA. ✆ **020/7799-4044.** Fax 020/7799-3657. www.fullershotels.com. 34 units. £99–£175 ($198–$350) double. AE, DC, MC, V. Tube: St. James's Park. **Amenities:** Restaurant; pub; room service; laundry service; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, coffeemaker, hair dryer, trouser press.

KNIGHTSBRIDGE

Expensive

Knightsbridge Hotel ★★ *Value* The Knightsbridge Hotel attracts visitors from all over the world seeking a small, comfortable hotel in a high-rent district. It's fabulously located, sandwiched between fashionable Beauchamp Place and Harrods, with many of the city's top theaters and museums close at hand. Built in the early 1800s as a private town house, this place sits on a tranquil, tree-lined square, free from traffic. Two of London's premier hoteliers, Kit and Tim Kemp, who have been celebrated for their upmarket boutique hotels, have gone more affordable with a revamp of this hotel in the heart of the shopping district. All the Kemp "cult classics" are found here, including such luxe touches as granite-and-oak bathrooms, the Kemps' famed honor bar, and Frette linens. The hotel has become an instant hit. Most bedrooms are spacious and furnished with traditional English fabrics. The best rooms are nos. 311 and 312 at the rear, each with a pitched ceiling and a small sitting area.

10 Beaufort Gardens, London SW3 1PT. ✆ **020/7584-6300.** Fax 020/7584-6355. www.firmdalehotels.com. 44 units. £195–£280 ($390–$560) double; from £330 ($660) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Tube: Knightsbridge. **Amenities:** Self-service bar; room service; babysitting; laundry service; same-day dry cleaning. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Moderate

Knightsbridge Green Hotel ★ Repeat guests from around the world view this dignified 1890s structure as their home away from home. In 1966, when it was converted into a hotel, the developers kept its wide baseboards, cove moldings, high ceilings, and spacious proportions. Even without kitchens, the well-furnished suites come close to apartment-style living. Most rooms are spacious, with adequate storage space. Bedrooms are decorated with custom-made colors and are often individualized—one has a romantic sleigh bed. This is a solid choice for lodging, just around the corner from Harrods.

159 Knightsbridge, London SW1X 7PD. ✆ **020/7584-6274.** Fax 020/7225-1635. www.theKGHotel.co.uk. 28 units. £150–£175 ($300–$350) double; from £175 ($350) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Tube: Knightsbridge. **Amenities:** Limited room service; laundry service; same-day dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, TV, beverage maker, hair dryer, trouser press, safe.

Searcys Roof Garden Rooms ★ *Finds* Searcy's, one of London's best catering firms, operates this recycled surprise: an old pumping station that has been turned into a hotel that's close to Harrods and the boutiques of Sloane Street. At this Knightsbridge oasis, you press a buzzer and are admitted to a freight elevator that carries you to the third floor. Upstairs, you'll encounter handsomely furnished rooms with antiques, tasteful fabrics, comfortable beds (some with canopies), and often a sitting alcove. Some of the tubs are placed right in the room instead of in a separate unit. Check out the rooftop garden.

30 Pavilion Rd., London SW1X 0HJ. ✆ **020/7584-4921.** Fax 020/7823-8694. www.30pavilionroad.co.uk. 10 units. £180 ($360) double. Rates include continental breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Tube: Knightsbridge. **Amenities:** Room service; laundry service; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, Wi-Fi.

CHELSEA

Expensive

The Draycott Hotel ★★★ Everything about this place, radically upgraded into a government five-star rating, reeks of British gentility, style, and charm. So attentive is the staff that past clients, who have included John Malkovich, Pierce Brosnan, and Gerard Depardieu, are greeted when they enter by a staff that manages to be both hip and cordial. The hotel took its present-day form when a third brick-fronted townhouse was added to a pair of interconnected townhouses that had been functioning as a five-star hotel since the 1980s. That—coupled with tons of money spent on English antiques, rich draperies, and an upgrade of those expensive infrastructures you'll never see, including security—has transformed this place into a gem. Bedrooms are outfitted differently, each with haute English style and plenty of fashion chic.

26 Cadogan Gardens, London SW3 2RP. ✆ **800/747-4942** or 020/7730-6466. Fax 020/7730-0236. www.draycotthotel.com. 35 units. £230–£290 ($460–$580) double; £370 ($740) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Tube: Sloane Sq. **Amenities:** Complimentary tea daily at 4pm; complimentary champagne daily at 6pm; complimentary hot chocolate at 9:30pm; room service; bar; bar snacks; laundry service/dry cleaning; access to nearby spa and fitness club; Internet station. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar.

BELGRAVIA

Expensive

The Diplomat Hotel ★ *Finds* Part of the Diplomat's charm is that it is a small and reasonably priced hotel located in an otherwise prohibitively expensive neighborhood. Only minutes from Harrods Department Store, it was built in 1882 as a private residence by noted architect Thomas Cubbitt. The registration desk is framed by the sweep of a partially gilded circular staircase; above it, cherubs gaze down from a Regency-era chandelier. The staff is helpful, well mannered, and discreet. The high-ceilinged guest rooms are tastefully done in Victorian style. You get good—not grand—comfort here. Rooms are a bit small and usually furnished with twin beds.

2 Chesham St., London SW1X 8DT. ✆ **020/7235-1544.** Fax 020/7259-6153. www.thediplomathotel.co.uk. 26 units. £125–£170 ($250–$340) double. Rates include English buffet breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Tube: Sloane Sq. or Knightsbridge. **Amenities:** Snack bar; business services; babysitting; laundry service; same-day dry cleaning. *In room:* TV, coffeemaker, hair dryer, trouser press.

Inexpensive

B + B Belgravia ★★ In 2005, this elegant town house won a top Gold Award as "the best B&B in London." It richly deserves it. The prices are also reasonable, the atmosphere in this massively renovated building is stylish, and the location grand: just a 5-minute walk from Victoria Station. The good-size bedrooms are luxuriously furnished.

On nippy nights, you can curl up in front of a fire on a comfy sofa in the guest lounge. There is also a DVD library, and tea and coffee are served 24 hours a day. The full English breakfast is one of the finest in the area.

64–66 Ebury St., Belgravia, London SW1W 9QD. ✆ **020/7259-8570.** Fax 020/7259-8591. www.bb-belgravia.com. 17 units. £107 ($214) double; £147 ($294) family room. Rates include full English breakfast. AE, MC, V. Tube: Victoria Station. **Amenities:** Communal lounge; breakfast room. *In room:* TV.

KENSINGTON

Inexpensive

EASYHotel *Value* This hotel runs on the principle that guests would rather have smaller hotel rooms and pay less. If you're claustrophobic, this hotel is definitely not for you. The rooms are 6 to 7 sq. m (65–75 sq. ft.), with most of the space taken up by standard double beds. Get a room with a window if you can—it makes a big difference. Just off Cromwell Road between South Kensington and Earls Court, Easy offers all doubles with cramped bathrooms containing a shower. There are flatscreen TVs in every unit, but a £5 ($10) fee is assessed to use the set. As management jokingly says, "Our rooms come in three sizes: small, very small, and tiny." One staff member is permanently on-site, but no services are offered. Other than a staffed reception desk, there is no common public area. All EASYHotel bookings are taken by credit card through its website.

14 Lexham Gardens, Kensington, London W8 5JE. www.easyhotel.com. 34 units. £30–£50 ($60–$100) double. MC, V. Tube: South Kensington or Earls Court. **Amenities:** Reception desk; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, no phone.

PADDINGTON

Moderate

The Pavilion ★ *Finds* Until the early 1990s, this was an ordinary-looking B&B. Then a team of entrepreneurs with ties to the fashion industry took over and redecorated the rooms with sometimes wacky themes, turning it into an idiosyncratic little hotel. The result is a theatrical and often outrageous decor that's appreciated by the many fashion models and music-industry folks who regularly make this their temporary home in London. Rooms are, regrettably, rather small, but each has a distinctive style. Examples include a kitschy 1970s room ("Honky-Tonk Afro"), an Asian bordello–themed room ("Enter the Dragon"), and even rooms with 19th-century ancestral themes. One Edwardian-style room, a gem of emerald brocade and velvet, is called "Green with Envy."

34–36 Sussex Gardens, London W2 1UL. ✆ **020/7262-0905.** Fax 020/7262-1324. www.pavilionhoteluk.com. 30 units. £100 ($200) double; £120 ($240) triple. Rates include continental breakfast. AE, MC, V. Parking £10 ($20). Tube: Edgeware Rd. *In room:* TV, beverage maker.

WHERE TO DINE

All restaurants and cafes in Britain are required to display the prices of their food and drink in a place that the customer can see before entering the eating area. Charges for service and any minimum charge or cover must also be made clear. Most restaurants add a 10% to 15% service charge to your bill, but if nothing has been added, leave a 12% to 15% tip.

MAYFAIR

Very Expensive

Gordon Ramsay at Claridge's ★★★ EUROPEAN Gordon Ramsay is the hottest chef in London today. He now rules at the staid, traditional hotel of Claridge's, legendary since 1860 when Queen Victoria stopped by for tea with the Empress Eugenie. The famed Art Deco dining room still retains many of its original architectural features, but the cuisine is hardly the same. Most definitely Victoria wasn't served an *amuse-bouche* of pumpkin soup dribbled with truffle oil and studded with truffles.

Although the menu changes frequently, it might include such starters as crispy Gloucester pork belly with sautéed langoustines, purée of Savoy cabbage, and quail's eggs. Whoever thought celeriac risotto with toasted pine nuts and Parmesan Reggiano could taste so good? Main dishes, including steamed line-caught sea bass with roasted salsify and vanilla jus or braised Cornish turbot with Oscietra caviar and coriander sauce, are always inventive. A rich, meaty dish—perhaps to be appreciated by a budding Henry VIII—is West Country pork cheeks cooked in honey and cloves and served with braising juices. Desserts are similarly surprising—peanut butter parfait with milk mousse and cherry sauce or assiette of pineapple three ways (ravioli, bavarois, and Tatin).

Brook St., W1. ☎ **020/7499-0099.** Reservations required as far in advance as possible. Fixed-price lunch £30 ($60); a la carte menu £65 ($130); 6-course fixed-price dinner £75 ($150). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri noon–2:45pm, 5:45–11pm; Sat noon–3pm and 5:45–11pm; Sun noon–3pm and 6–10:30pm. Tube: Bond St.

Le Gavroche ★★★ FRENCH Although challengers come and go, this luxurious "gastro-temple" remains the number-one choice in London for classical French cuisine. There's always something special coming out of the kitchen of Michel Roux, Jr., the son of the chef who founded the restaurant in 1966. The service is faultless, and the ambience formally chic without being stuffy. The menu changes constantly, depending on the fresh produce that's available and the current inspiration of the chef. But it always remains classically French, though not of the "essentially old-fashioned bourgeois repertoire" that some critics suggest. Signature dishes honed over years of unswerving practice include the town's grandest cheese soufflé (Soufflé Suissesse); warm foie gras with crispy, cinnamon-flavored crêpes; and Scottish filet of beef with port wine sauce and truffled macaroni. Depending on availability, game is often served as well. A truly Gallic dish is the cassoulet of snails with frog thighs or the mousseline of lobster in a champagne sauce.

43 Upper Brook St., W1. ☎ **020/7408-0881.** Fax 020/7491-4387. Reservations required as far in advance as possible. Main courses £30–£50 ($60–$100); fixed-price lunch £48 ($96); Le Menu Exceptional £95 ($190) without wine, £150 ($300) with wine. AE, MC, V. Mon–Fri noon–2pm and 6:30–11pm; Sat 6:30–11pm. Tube: Marble Arch.

The Square ★★★ FRENCH Hip, chic, casual, sleek, and modern, The Square still doesn't scare Le Gavroche as a competitor for first place on London's dining circuit, but it is certainly a restaurant to visit on a serious London gastronomic tour. Chef Philip Howard delivers the goods at this excellent restaurant. You get creative, personalized cuisine in a cosseting atmosphere with abstract modern art on the walls. The chef has a magic touch, with such concoctions as a starter of terrine of partridge with smoked foie gras and pear with cider jelly or else a lasagna of Cornish crab with a champagne foam. For a main course we urge you to try the peppered aged rib eye of Ayrshire beef with smoked shallots, Tuscan snails, and a red wine sauce, or else the roast saddle of hare with port-glazed endive. The fish dishes such as steamed turbot with buttered langoustine claws and poached oysters are always fresh, and Bresse pigeon is as good as it is in its hometown in France.

6–10 Bruton St., W1. ☎ **020/7495-7100.** Reservations required. Fixed-price lunch £25–£30 ($50–$60); dinner £65 ($130). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri noon–3pm; Mon–Sat 6:30–10:45pm; Sun 6:30–10pm. Tube: Bond St. or Green Park.

Expensive

Nobu ★★ JAPANESE/SOUTH AMERICAN London's innovative restaurant, a celebrity haunt, owes much to its founders, actor Robert de Niro and Chef Nobu Matsuhisa. The kitchen staff is brilliant and as finely tuned as their New York counterparts. The sushi chefs create gastronomic pyrotechnics. Those on the see-and-be-seen circuit don't seem to mind the high prices that go with these incredibly fresh dishes. Elaborate preparations lead to perfectly balanced flavors. Where else can you find an excellent sea urchin tempura? Salmon tartare with caviar is a brilliant appetizer. Follow with a perfectly done filet of sea bass in a sour bean paste or soft-shell crab rolls. The squid pasta is sublime, as is sukiyaki; the latter dish is incredibly popular and with good reason. Cold sake arrives in a green bamboo pitcher.

In the Metropolitan Hotel, 19 Old Park Lane, W1. ✆ **020/7447-4747.** Reservations required 1 month in advance. Main courses £15–£24 ($30–$48); sushi and sashimi £5–£11 ($10–$22) per piece; fixed-price lunch menu £25 ($50); fixed-price dinner menu £70 ($140). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri noon–2:15pm; Sat–Sun 12:30–2:30pm; Mon–Thurs 6–10:15pm; Fri–Sat 6–11pm; Sun 6–9:45pm. Tube: Hyde Park Corner.

PICCADILLY & LEICESTER SQUARE

Expensive

The Ivy ★★ MODERN ENGLISH/INTERNATIONAL Effervescent and sophisticated, the Ivy is the dining choice of visiting theatrical luminaries and has been intimately associated with the theater district ever since it opened in 1911. With its ersatz 1930s look and tiny bar near the entrance, this place is fun and hums with the energy of London's glamour scene. The kitchen has a solid appreciation for fresh ingredients and a talent for preparation. Some appetizers may be a bit much, like wild rabbit salad with black pudding, whereas others are more appealing, such as Bang Bang chicken. The crispy duck and watercress salad is another favorite. For years, the 14-ounce Dover sole has been enjoyed by celebrities and wannabes alike. Mains feature a char-grilled fish of the day, and carnivores take to the sautéed veal kidneys or the escalope of veal Holstein. The Ivy hamburger continues to appear on the menu. Desserts are familiar, including chocolate pudding soufflé or rhubarb sponge pudding with custard.

1–5 West St., WC2. ✆ **020/7836-4751.** Reservations required. Main courses £8–£40 ($16–$80); Sat–Sun fixed-price lunch £27 ($54). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat noon–3pm; Sun noon–3:30pm; daily 5:30pm–midnight (last order). Tube: Leicester Sq.

Moderate

Cork & Bottle Wine Bar ★★ *Value* INTERNATIONAL Don Hewitson, a connoisseur of fine wines for more than 30 years, presides over this trove of blissful fermentation. The ever-changing wine list features an excellent selection of Beaujolais Crus from Alsace, 30 selections from Australia, 30 champagnes, and a good selection of California labels. If you want something to wash down, the most successful dish is a raised cheese-and-ham pie, with a cream cheese–like filling and crisp well-buttered pastry—not your typical quiche. There's also chicken and apple salad, black pudding, Mediterranean prawns with garlic and asparagus, lamb in ale, and a Thai chicken wings platter.

44–46 Cranbourn St., WC2. ✆ **020/7734-7807.** Reservations not accepted after 6:30pm. Fixed-price menu £11–£14 ($22–$28); main courses £8–£13 ($16–$26). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat 11am–11:30pm; Sun noon–10:30pm. Tube: Leicester Sq.

SOHO

Expensive

Lindsay House ★★ MODERN ENGLISH Irish-born Chef Richard Corrigan is one of our all-time favorites in London. As in an old-fashioned speakeasy, you ring the doorbell for admittance to a Regency town house deep in Soho. Unfolding before you are gilded mirrors and bare wooden floors. The staircase delivers you to one of two floors. Corrigan is one of the most inventive chefs in London, with creative offerings changing daily based on market availability. What inspires Corrigan at the market is what will end up on your plate at night. You might start with smoked eel and foie gras terrine or else crispy frog's legs and watercress. For your main course, expect such delights as loin of rabbit roasted and stuffed with chorizo or else stuffed pig's trotters with sweetbreads and morels. Desserts are also a pleasant surprise, including Irish apple tart with single malt cream or a lime soufflé with Mascarpone sorbet.

21 Romilly St., W1. ✆ **020/7439-0450.** Reservations recommended. 3-course lunch £56 ($112); tasting menu with wine £68 ($136); vegetarian menu £68 ($136). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri noon–2:30pm; Mon–Sat 6–11pm. Tube: Leicester Sq.

Moderate

The Criterion Brasserie ★ FRENCH/MODERN ENGLISH Designed by Thomas Verity in the 1870s, this palatial neo-Byzantine mirrored marble hall is a glamorous backdrop for a superb cuisine, served under a golden ceiling, with theatrical peacock-blue draperies. The menu is wide ranging, offering everything from Paris brasserie food to "nouvelle-classical," a combination of classic French cooking techniques with some of the lighter, more experimental leanings of modern French cuisine. The food is excellent but falls short of sublime. Start with beef carpaccio in a mustard dressing or else spaghetti with clams and chili, to be followed by such fish as wild sea bass with a shellfish fondue or else roast suckling pig in apple sauce.

224 Piccadilly, W1. ✆ **020/7930-0488.** Main courses £16–£25 ($32–$50); 2-course fixed-price lunch £15 ($30), 3-course fixed-price lunch £18 ($36). AE, MC, V. Mon–Sat noon–2:30pm and 5:30–11:30pm; Sun noon–3:30pm and 5:30–10:30pm. Tube: Piccadilly Circus.

Hakkasan ★ *Finds* CHINESE Asian mystique and pastiche are found in this offbeat restaurant in a seedy alley off Tottenham Court Road. This is another London venture created by Alan Yau, who became a city-wide dining legend because of his Wagamama noodle bars. Designer Christian Liaigre created a dining room encapsulated in a lattice wood "cage" evocative of antique Chinese doors. The leather sofas are emblazoned with dragons, and a bar runs the length of the restaurant. Come here for great dim sum and tantalizing cocktails. Feast on such dishes as *har gau* (steamed prawn dumplings) and strips of tender barbecued pork. The spring roll is refreshing with the addition of fried mango and a delicate prawn-and-scallop filling. Steamed scallop *shumai* (dumplings) with tobiko caviar are fresh and meltingly soft. Desserts in most of London's Chinese restaurants are hardly memorable, but the offerings here are an exception to that rule, especially the layered banana sponge cake with chocolate cream.

8 Hanway Place. ✆ **020/7927-7000.** Reservations recommended. Main courses £10–£68 ($20–$136). AE, MC, V. Lunch Mon–Fri noon–3pm, Sat noon–5pm; dinner Mon–Wed 6–11:30pm, Thurs–Sat 6–11:30pm, Sun 6–11pm. Tube: Tottenham Court Rd.

Randall & Aubin ★ *Finds* SEAFOOD Past the sex boutiques of Soho you stumble upon this real discovery, whose consultant is TV chef Ed Baines, an ex-Armani model who turned this butcher shop into a cool, hip champagne-and-oyster bar. It's an ideal place to take a lover for a Sex and the City type of meal and some champagne or a bottle of wine. You're never rushed here. The impressive shellfish display of the night's goodies is the "bait" used to lure you inside. Chances are you won't be disappointed.

Loch Fyne oysters, lobster with chips, pan-fried fresh scallops—the parade of seafood we've sampled here has in each case been genuinely excellent. The *soupe de poisson* (fish soup) is the best in Soho, or else you might want one of the hors d'oeuvres such as delightful Japanese-style fish cakes or fresh Cornish crab. Yes, they still have Sevruga caviar for lotto winners. For meat eaters, there is a limited array of dishes such as a perfectly spit-roasted chicken flavored with fresh herbs. The lemon tart with crème fraîche rounds out a perfect meal.

16 Brewer St., W1. ✆ **020/7287-4447.** Reservations not accepted. Main courses £8–£12 ($16–$24). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 10am–11pm. Tube: Piccadilly Circus or Leicester Sq.

BLOOMSBURY

Moderate

Back to Basics ★★ SEAFOOD Ursula Higgs's bistro draws discerning palates seeking some of the freshest seafood in London. When the weather's fair, you can dine outside. Otherwise, retreat inside to a vaguely Parisian setting with a blackboard menu and checked tablecloths. The fish is served in large portions, and you can safely forgo an appetizer unless you're ravenous. More than a dozen seafood dishes are offered; the fish can be broiled, grilled, baked, or poached, but frying is not permitted. In other words, this is no fish and chippie. Start with a bowl of tasty, plump mussels or sea bass flavored with fresh basil and chile oil. Brill appears with green peppercorn butter, and plaice is jazzed up with fresh ginger and soy sauce. For the meat eater, there is a T-bone steak or roast chicken. Also try the pastas and the vegetarian dishes. Freshly made salads accompany most meals, and an excellent fish soup is offered daily. For dessert, try the bread pudding or the freshly made apple pie.

21A Foley St., W1. ✆ **020/7436-2181.** Reservations recommended. Main courses £11–£17 ($22–$34). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat noon–3pm and 6–10:30pm. Tube: Oxford Circus or Goodge St.

Inexpensive

Wagamama JAPANESE This noodle joint, in a basement just off New Oxford Street, is noisy and overcrowded, and you'll have to wait in line for a table. It calls itself a "nondestination food station" and caters to some 1,200 customers a day. Many dishes are built around ramen noodles with your choice of chicken, beef, or salmon. Try the tasty gyoza, light dumplings filled with vegetables or chicken. Vegetarian dishes are available, but skip the so-called Korean-style dishes.

4 Streatham St., WC1. ✆ **020/7323-9223.** Reservations not accepted. Main courses £7–£11 ($14–$22). AE, MC, V. Mon–Sat noon–11pm; Sun noon–10pm. Tube: Tottenham Court Rd.

COVENT GARDEN & THE STRAND

Expensive

Rules ★ TRADITIONAL ENGLISH If you're looking for London's most quintessentially British restaurant, eat here. London's oldest restaurant was established in 1798 as an oyster bar; today, the antler-filled Edwardian dining rooms exude nostalgia. You can order such classic dishes as Irish or Scottish oysters, jugged hare, and mussels. Game and fish dishes are offered from mid-August to February or March, including wild Scottish salmon; wild sea trout; wild Highland red deer; and game birds such as grouse, snipe, partridge, pheasant, and woodcock. As a finale, the "great puddings" continue to impress.

35 Maiden Lane, WC2. ✆ **020/7836-5314.** Reservations recommended. Main courses £17–£30 ($34–$60). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat noon–11:30pm; Sun noon–10:30pm. Tube: Covent Garden.

Moderate

Belgo Centraal BELGIAN Chaos reigns supreme in this cavernous basement, where mussels marinières with fries, plus 100 Belgian beers, are the raison d'être. Take a freight elevator past the busy kitchen and into a converted cellar, divided into two large eating areas. One section is a beer hall seating about 250; the menu here is the same as in the restaurant, but you don't need reservations. The restaurant side has three nightly seatings: 5:30, 7:30, and 10pm. Between 5:30 and 8pm you can choose one of three fixed-price menus. Although heaps of fresh mussels are the big attraction, you can opt for fresh Scottish salmon, roast chicken, a perfectly done steak, or one of the vegetarian specialties. Gargantuan plates of wild boar sausages arrive with *stoemp*—Belgian mashed spuds and cabbage. Belgian stews, called waterzooï, are also served.

50 Earlham St., WC2. ☎ **020/7813-2233.** Reservations required for the restaurant. Main courses £9–£18 ($18–$36). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Thurs noon–11pm; Fri–Sat noon–11:30pm; Sun noon–10:30pm. Closed Christmas. Tube: Covent Garden.

Porters English Restaurant ★★ *Kids* TRADITIONAL ENGLISH The seventh earl of Bradford serves "real English food at affordable prices." He succeeds notably—and not just because Lady Bradford turned over her carefully guarded recipe for banana-and-ginger steamed pudding. This comfortable, two-storied restaurant is family friendly, informal, and lively. Porters specializes in classic English pies, including Old English fish pie, lamb and apricot, and, of course, bangers and mash. The overwhelming favorite is steak, Guinness, and mushroom pie. Main courses are so generous—and accompanied by vegetables and side dishes—that you hardly need appetizers. They have also added grilled English fare to the menu, with sirloin and lamb steaks and marinated chicken. Porters is famous for its mouthwatering puddings. Where can you find a good spotted dick these days? It's a steamed syrup sponge cake with sultanas (raisins). Another favorite is a dark chocolate chip pudding made with steamed chocolate sponge cake, chocolate chips, and chocolate custard. Even the ice cream is homemade. The bar does quite a few exotic cocktails, as well as beers, wine, or English mead. A traditional English tea is served from 2:30 to 5:30pm. Who knows? You may even bump into His Lordship.

17 Henrietta St., WC2. ☎ **020/7836-6466.** Reservations recommended. Main courses £11–£17 ($22–$34); fixed-price lunch and pretheater menu £12 ($24); fixed-price menu £23 ($46). AE, MC, V. Mon–Sat noon–11:30pm; Sun noon–10:30pm. Tube: Covent Garden or Leicester Sq.

WESTMINSTER

Moderate

Rex Whistler ★★ *Value* MODERN ENGLISH The Tate Britain's restaurant is particularly attractive to wine fanciers. It offers what may be the best bargains for superior wines anywhere in Britain. Bordeaux and burgundies are in abundance, and the management keeps the markup between 40% and 65%, rather than the 100% to 200% added in most restaurants. In fact, the prices here are lower than they are in most wine shops. Wine begins at £15 ($30) per bottle, or £4 ($8) per glass. Oenophiles frequently come for lunch. The restaurant offers an English menu that changes about every month. Dishes might include pheasant casserole, pan-fried skate with black butter and capers, and vegetarian selections. One critic found the staff and diners as traditional "as a Gainsborough landscape." Access to the restaurant is through the museum's main entrance on Millbank.

Tate Britain, Millbank, SW1. ✆ **020/7887-8825.** Reservations recommended. Main courses £15 ($30); breakfast from £4.75 ($9.50); afternoon tea £6.95 ($14). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri 11:30am–3pm; Sat–Sun 10–3pm; daily 3:30–5pm for afternoon tea. Tube: Pimlico. Bus: 77 or 88.

KNIGHTSBRIDGE

Expensive

Amaya ★ INDIAN This chic restaurant, a hot dining ticket, is credited with introducing the small-plates concept to Indian food. Dishes are shared, preferably with a party of friends. This is no mere curry house, but an ambitious restaurant with skilled chefs standing over grills and tandoor ovens, in the eye-catching open kitchen. After devouring the rock oysters in a ginger-studded coconut sauce, we knew we were in for a special meal. Our table shared grilled baby eggplant sprinkled with mango powder, fork-tender lamb chops, and beautifully spiced lobster. Chicken tikka is one of the signature dishes. Vegetarians delight in the tandoor-cooked broccoli in a yogurt sauce or artichoke biryani baked in a pastry-sealed pot. For dessert, try the fresh pomegranate granita, which is sugar-free.

Halkin Arcade, Motcomb St., Knightsbridge SW1. ✆ **020/7823-1166.** Reservations required. Main courses £9.50–£28 ($19–$56); set lunch £17 ($34); set dinner £25 ($50). AE, DC, MC, V. Lunch daily 12:30–2:15pm, Sun 12:45–2:45pm; dinner Mon–Sat 6–11:15pm, Sun 6–10:30pm. Tube: Knightsbridge.

Moderate

Drones ★ CONTINENTAL Britain's wonder chef Marco Pierre White took this once-famous but stale restaurant and has turned it into a chic dining venue, decorated with black-and-white photographs of the famous people lining the wall. Redesigned by David Collins, it is now referred to as "the Ivy of Belgravia." The food and Art Deco ambience are delightful, as is the staff. Food is fresh and delicately prepared, including such favorites as cauliflower cream soup with truffles and sea scallops, or smoked haddock and rice pudding. All the delectable meat and fish dishes are prepared with consummate care and served with a certain finesse. Always expect some unusual flavor combination, such as oxtail en daube with a rutabaga purée and a bourguignon garnish. For dessert, a summer specialty is gelée of red fruits with a raspberry syrup drizzle.

1 Pont St., SW1. ✆ **020/7235-9555.** Reservations required. Main courses £14–£25 ($28–$50); 2-course fixed-price menu £15 ($30); 3-course fixed-price menu £18 ($36). MC, V. Mon–Sat noon–2:30pm and 6–11pm; Sun noon–4pm. Tube: Knightsbridge.

CHELSEA

Moderate

Admiral Codrington ★ *Finds* MODERN BRITISH/CONTINENTAL Once a lowly pub, this stylish bar and restaurant is all the rage nowadays. The old "Cod," as it is affectionately known, offers plush dining with a revitalized decor by Nina Campbell, and a glass roof that rolls back on sunny days. The bartenders still offer a traditional pint, but the sophisticated menu features such delectable fare as homemade tortellini of pumpkin and Parmesan cheese, or caramelized breast of duckling with sweet potato. A real palate pleaser is the monkfish spring roll with fresh herbs and thyme salsa. Stars of the menu are the grilled breast-of-chicken salad with bean sprouts, apple slices, and cashews; and the grilled tuna with a couscous salad and eggplant "caviar."

17 Mossop St., SW3. ✆ **020/7581-0005.** Reservations recommended. Main courses £6–£16 ($11–$29). MC, V. Mon–Sat 11:30am–11pm. Tube: South Kensington.

Moments

Where to Have a Cuppa

The pair of tea salons known as **St. James Restaurant** and **The Fountain Restaurant** (181 Piccadilly, W1; St. James **020/7734-8040,** ext. 2241; The Fountain ✆ **020/7973-4140**) functions as a culinary showplace for London's most prestigious grocery store, Fortnum & Mason. The more formal of the two, the St. James, on the store's fourth floor, is a pale green-and-beige homage to formal Edwardian taste. More rapid and less formal is the Fountain Restaurant, on the street level, where a sense of tradition and manners is very much a part of the dining experience, but in a less opulent setting. There is no longer an "official" afternoon tea at the Fountain, but you can order pots of tea plus food from an a la carte menu that includes sandwiches, scones, and the like.

A flood of visitors is gracefully herded into the high-volume but nevertheless elegant **Georgian Restaurant,** on the fourth floor of Harrods, 87–135 Brompton Rd., SW1 (✆ **020/7255-6800;** Tube: Knightsbridge), in a room so long its staff refers to its shape and size as the "Mississippi River." The list of teas available—at least 50—is sometimes so esoteric the experience might remind you of choosing among vintages in a sophisticated wine cellar. Served Monday through Saturday from 3:15 to 5:30pm (last order), high tea runs £20 ($40) per person; reservations are recommended.

The Orangery, in the gardens just north of Kensington Palace, W8 (✆ **020/7376-0239;** Tube: High St. Kensington or Queensway), occupies a long and narrow garden pavilion built in 1704 by Queen Anne as a site for her tea parties. Tea is still served (daily 3pm–5pm) amid rows of potted orange trees basking in sunlight from soaring windows. Reservations are not accepted. A pot of tea costs £1.95 to £2.25 ($3.90–$4.50), and summer cakes and puddings run £2.50 to £6 ($5–$12).

KENSINGTON & SOUTH KENSINGTON

Very Expensive

Tom Aikens ★★★ CONTINENTAL The amazingly skilled Tom Aikens is one of the truly top-flight Gallic chefs of London. Aikens certainly was trained well, working in Paris under Joël Robuchon during the time he was proclaimed as France's greatest chef. Aikens also ran the prestigious Pied-à-Terre in London. In elegant surroundings in chic Knightsbridge, the food is basically a modern interpretation of high French cuisine, with a great deal of flourish and some very elaborately worked dishes. Regardless of the contrast in ingredients, main courses show harmony and cohesion, as exemplified by the poached sea bass with saffron risotto and a bouillabaisse sauce. A more voluptuous choice might be braised suckling pig with roasted fresh almonds, apple purée, and a pork lasagna. Everything sounds like an unlikely combination, but the end result is most satisfying.

43 Elystan St., Knightsbridge, SW3. ✆ **020/7584-2003.** Reservations required. Fixed-price lunch £29 ($58); fixed-price dinner £65 ($130); tasting menu £80 ($160); AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri noon–2:30pm and 6:45–11pm. Tube: South Kensington.

Expensive

Bibendum/The Oyster Bar ★ FRENCH/MEDITERRANEAN In trendy Brompton Cross, this still-fashionable restaurant occupies two floors of a garage that's now an Art Deco masterpiece. Though its heyday came in the early 1990s, the white-tiled room with stained-glass windows, lots of sunlight, and a chic clientele is still an extremely pleasant place. The eclectic cuisine, known for its freshness and simplicity, is based on what's available seasonally. Dishes might include roast pigeon with celeriac purée and apple sauté, rabbit with artichoke and parsley sauce, or grilled lamb cutlets with a delicate sauce. Some of the best dishes are for splitting between two people, including Bresse chicken flavored with fresh tarragon, and grilled veal chops with truffle butter. Simpler meals and cocktails are available in the Oyster Bar on the building's street level. The bar-style menu stresses fresh shellfish presented in the traditional French style, on ice-covered platters adorned with strands of seaweed. It's a crustacean-lover's dream.

81 Fulham Rd., SW3. ✆ **020/7581-5817.** Reservations required in Bibendum; not accepted in Oyster Bar. Main courses £18–£25 ($36–$50); 2-course fixed-price lunch £24 ($48); 3-course fixed-price lunch £29 ($58); cold seafood platter in Oyster Bar £57 ($114) for 2. AE, DC, MC, V. Bibendum Mon–Fri noon–2:30pm and 7–11:30pm, Sat–Sun 12:30–3pm, Sat 7–11:30pm, Sun 7–10:30pm; Oyster Bar Mon–Sat noon–11pm, Sun noon–11:30pm. Tube: South Kensington.

MARYLEBONE

Expensive

Orrery ★★ FRENCH/INTERNATIONAL With ingredients imported from France, this is one of London's classic French restaurants. Sea bass from the shores of Montpellier, olive oil from Maussane-les-Alpilles, mushrooms from the fields of Calais, and poultry from Bresse—they all turn up on a highly refined menu created by Chef Andre Garret. On the second floor of the Conran Shop in Marylebone, Orrey changes its menu seasonally to take advantage of the best produce. Garret is a purist in terms of ingredients. Our favorites among his first-rate dishes are Bresse pigeon with savoy cabbage and mushroom ravioli, or duckling with an endive tatin and cèpe (flap mushrooms) sauce. Everything has a brilliant, often whimsical touch, as evoked by the sautéed leeks in pumpkin oil. We ended with a cheese plate featuring a Banton goat cheese from Provence so fresh that it oozed onto the plate (those with a sweet tooth might prefer the blueberry soufflé). Enjoy lazy summer evenings on a fourth-floor terrace while drinking and ordering light fare from the bar menu.

55 Marylebone High St., W1. ✆ **020/7616-8000.** Reservations required. Main courses £27–£56 ($54–$112); 3-course fixed-price lunch £25 ($50). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily noon–3pm; Sun–Wed 6:30–10:30pm; Thurs–Sat 6:30–11pm. Tube: Baker St.

Moderate

Assaggi ★ *Finds* ITALIAN You wouldn't think of heading to the second floor of a very ordinary pub in Bayswater for fine Italian cuisine, but we urge you to do so in this case to sample Chef Nino Sassu's take on Italian classics, especially those from the south. Serious London foodies have discovered its low-key venue, and flock here for food prepared with flair and passion, using market-fresh and top-quality ingredients.

The chef sets out to prove that straightforward dishes can often be the best when simply handled. Grilled Mediterranean vegetables in virgin olive oil and fresh herbs are an always winning appetizer, followed by such mains as grilled sea bass or filet of pork with black truffles. The menu is short but long on flavor if you try such dishes as a butter and sage ravioli, tender calf's liver, or panna cotta.

39 Chepstow Place, W2. ✆ **020/7792-9033.** Reservations required. Main courses £18–£24 ($36–$48). AE, MC, V. Mon–Sat 12:30–2:30pm and 7:30–11pm. Tube: Bayswater.

NOTTING HILL GATE

Moderate

The Cow ★ *Finds* MODERN ENGLISH You don't have to be a young fashion victim to enjoy the superb cuisine served here (although many of the diners are). Tom Conran (son of entrepreneur Sir Terence Conran) holds forth in this increasingly hip Notting Hill watering hole. It looks like an Irish pub, but the accents you'll hear are "trustafarian" rather than street-smart Dublin. With a pint of Fuller's or London Pride, you can linger over the modern European menu, which changes daily but is likely to include ox tongue poached in milk; mussels in curry and cream; or a mixed grill of lamb chops, calf's liver, and sweetbreads. The seafood selections are delectable. "The Cow Special"—a half-dozen Irish rock oysters with a pint of Guinness or a glass of wine for £11 ($22)—is the star of the show. A raw bar downstairs serves other fresh seafood choices. To finish, skip the filtered coffee served upstairs (it's wretched) and opt for an espresso downstairs.

89 Westbourne Park Rd., W2. ✆ **020/7221-0021.** Reservations required. Main courses £16–£20 ($32–$40). MC, V. Daily noon–midnight. Tube: Westbourne Grove.

THE CITY

Expensive

Prism ★★ MODERN ENGLISH In the financial district, called The City, this restaurant attracts London's movers and shakers, at least those with demanding palates. In the former Bank of New York, Harvey Nichols—known for his chic department store in Knightsbridge—took this 1920s neo-Grecian hall and installed Mies van der Rohe chairs in chrome and lipstick-red leather. In this setting, traditional English dishes from the north are given a light touch—try the tempura of Whitby cod, or cream of Jerusalem artichoke soup with roasted scallops and truffle oil. For a first course, you may opt for a small, seared calf's liver with a mushroom risotto, or try a salad composed of flecks of Parmesan cheese seasoning, savoy cabbage, and Parma ham. The menu reveals the chef has traveled a bit—note such dishes as Moroccan spiced chicken livers, lemon and parsley couscous, and a zesty chile sauce.

147 Leadenhall St., EC3. ✆ **020/7256-3875.** Reservations required. Main courses £18–£24 ($36–$48). AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Mon–Fri 11:30–3pm and 6–10pm. Tube: Bank or Monument.

Inexpensive

Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese *Kids* TRADITIONAL ENGLISH The foundation of this carefully preserved building was laid in the 13th century, and it holds the most famous of the old City chophouses and pubs. Established in 1667, it claims to be the spot where Dr. Samuel Johnson (who lived nearby) entertained admirers with his acerbic wit. Charles Dickens and other literary lions also patronized the place. Later, many of the ink-stained journalists and scandalmongers of 19th- and early-20th-century Fleet Street made it their watering hole. You'll find five bars and two dining rooms here. The house specialties include "Ye Famous Pudding" (steak, kidney, mushrooms, and game) and Scottish roast beef with Yorkshire pudding and horseradish sauce. Sandwiches, salads, and standby favorites such as steak and kidney pie are also available, as are dishes such as Dover sole. The Cheshire is the best and safest venue to introduce your children to an English pub.

Wine Office Court, 145 Fleet St., EC4. ✆ **020/7353-6170.** Main courses £8–£10 ($16–$20). AE, DC, MC, V. Meals: Mon–Fri noon–10pm; Sat noon–2:30pm and 6–9:30pm; Sun noon–2:30pm. Drinks and bar snacks: Mon–Sat 11am–11pm; Sun noon–6pm. Tube: St. Paul's or Blackfriars.

SEEING THE SIGHTS

London isn't a city to visit hurriedly. It is so vast, so stocked with treasures, that it would take a lifetime to explore it thoroughly. But even a quick visit will give you a chance to see what's creating the hottest buzz in shopping and nightlife as well as the city's time-tested treasures.

SIGHTSEEING SUGGESTIONS FOR FIRST-TIME VISITORS

If You Have 1 Day No first-time visitor should leave London without visiting **Westminster Abbey.** See **Big Ben** and the **Houses of Parliament;** then walk over to see the **Changing of the Guard** at Buckingham Palace if it's being held. Have dinner in Covent Garden, perhaps at **Porter's English Restaurant.** For your nightcap, head over to the **Red Lion,** 2 Duke of York St. (✆ **020/7321-0782**), in Mayfair, quite a Victorian pub.

If You Have 2 Days Devote a good part of your second day to exploring the **British Museum,** one of the world's largest and best museums. Spend the afternoon visiting the **Tower of London** and seeing the crown jewels (but expect slow-moving lines). Cap your day by boarding one of the **London Launches** to experience the city from the river. Go to one of London's landmark restaurants such as **Rules,** 35 Maiden Lane (see p. 236).

If You Have 3 Days In the morning of your third day, go to the **National Gallery** on Trafalgar Square. Then enjoy an afternoon at **Madame Tussauds.** Take some time to stroll through **St. James's** and try to catch a cultural performance at the **South Bank Centre,** site of the Royal Festival Hall, or a play or musical in the West End.

If You Have 4 Days In the morning of your fourth day, head for the City, the financial district. Tour **St. Paul's Cathedral.** Spend a few hours strolling the City and visit a few of its many attractions. In the late afternoon, head down **King's Road** in Chelsea to shop the many and varied boutiques.

If You Have 5 Days On your fifth day, explore the **Victoria and Albert Museum** in the morning, and then head to the **Tate Britain Restaurant** for lunch. Finally, see where history was made during the dark days of World War II in the **Cabinet War Rooms** at Clive Steps, where Churchill directed the British operations against the Nazis. In the evening, attend the theater.

THE TOP ATTRACTIONS

The British Museum ★★★ This fabled attraction shelters one of the world's most comprehensive collections of art and artifacts. Even on a cursory first visit, be sure to see the Asian collections (the finest assembly of Islamic pottery outside the Islamic world), the Chinese porcelain, the Indian sculpture, and the Prehistoric and Romano-British collections. The overall storehouse is divided into collections of antiquities; prints and drawings; coins and medals; and ethnography. The Assyrian Transept on the ground floor displays the winged and human-headed bulls and lions that once guarded the gateways to the kings' palaces. From here, you can continue into the hall of Egyptian sculpture to see the **Rosetta Stone,** whose discovery led to the deciphering of hieroglyphs. Also on the ground floor are the **Parthenon Sculptures,** which used to be known as the Elgin Marbles. The Anglo-Saxon burial ship Sutton Hoo discovered in Suffolk is, in the words of an expert, "the richest treasure ever dug from English soil." The Portland Vase, one of the most celebrated possessions of the museum, was found in 1582 outside Rome.

The museum's inner courtyard, hidden for 150 years, has been transformed into the Great Court, a 1-hectare (2½-acre) square spanned by a spectacular glass roof. The court houses a center for education, galleries, and more exhibition space. Following the removal of the British Library to St. Pancras, the Reading Room has been restored as a public reference library.

Great Russell St., WC1. ✆ **020/7323-8299.** www.britishmuseum.org. Free admission. Sat–Wed 10am–5:30pm; Thurs–Fri 10am–8:30pm. Tube: Holborn, Tottenham Court Rd., Goodge St., or Russell Sq.

Buckingham Palace ★★ This massively graceful building is the official residence of the queen. You can tell when Her Majesty is at home by the Royal Standard flying over the palace. The staterooms and picture gallery are usually open to the public for 8 weeks in August and September, when the royal family is away on vacation. The tours include the Throne Room and the grand staircase. The queen's picture gallery has some world-class masterpieces rarely on public view.

Buckingham Palace's most famous spectacle is the **Changing of the Guard** (daily Apr–July and on alternating days for the rest of the year). The new guard, marching behind a band, comes from either the Wellington or Chelsea barracks and takes over from the old guard in the forecourt of the palace. The ceremony begins at 11:30am, although it's frequently canceled because of bad weather, state events, and other harder-to-fathom reasons. We think the ceremony is highly overrated; however, few first-time visitors can resist it. If that's you, arrive as early as 10:30am and claim territorial rights to a space in front of the palace. If you're not firmly anchored here, you'll miss much of the ceremony.

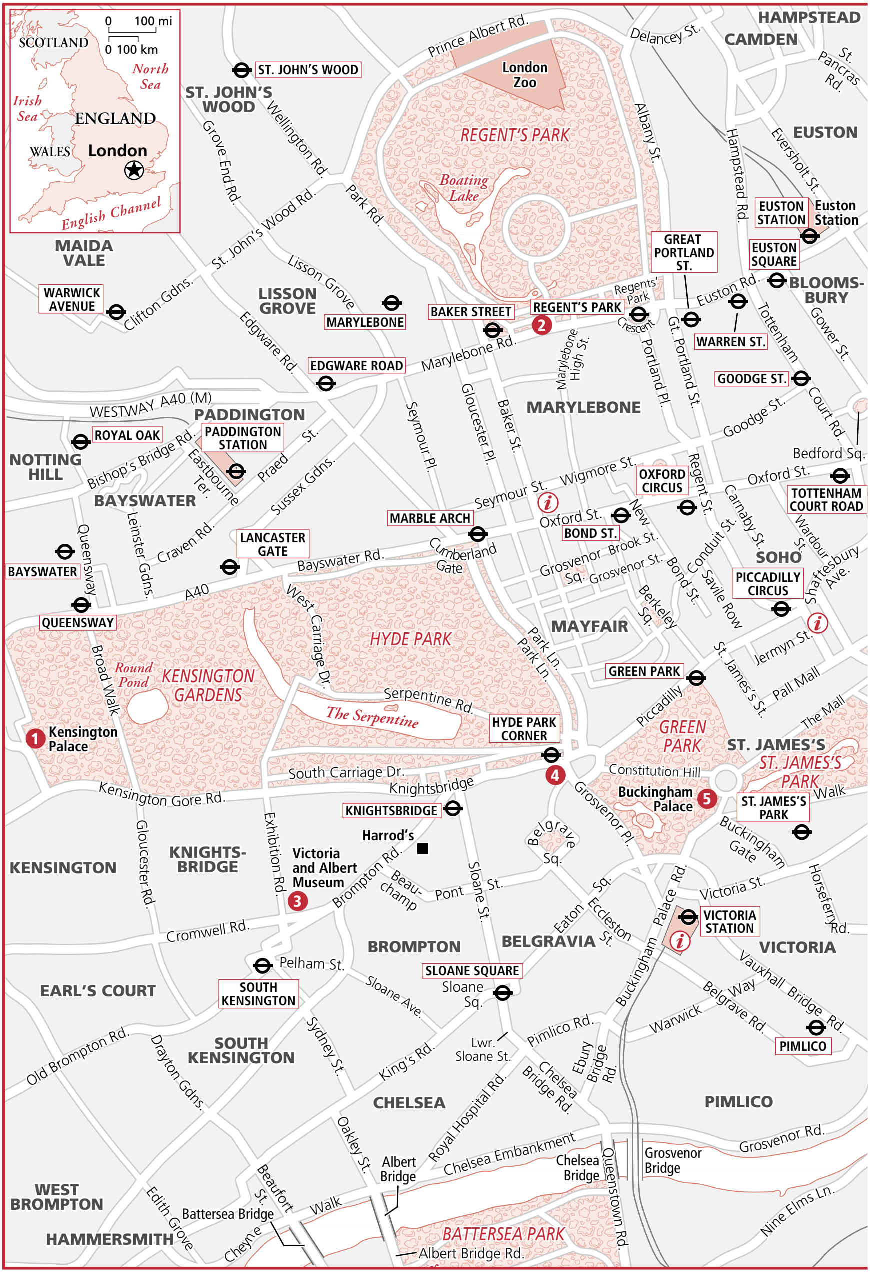
At end of The Mall (on the road running from Trafalgar Sq.). ✆ **020/7766-7300.** www.royalcollection.org.uk. Palace tours £15 ($30) adults, £14 ($28) older than 60 and students, £8.50 ($17) younger than 17, free ages 4 and younger; family ticket £39 ($78); Changing of the Guard free. July 26–Sept 24 (dates can vary), and additional dates may be added. Daily 9:45am–6pm. Changing of the Guard daily Apr–July at 11:30am and alternating days for the rest of the year at 11am. Tube: St. James's Park, Green Park, or Victoria.

Cabinet War Rooms ★ Whitehall ★, the seat of the British government, extends south from Trafalgar Square to Parliament Square. Along it you'll find the Home Office, the Old Admiralty Building, and the Ministry of Defense. Visitors today can see the Cabinet War Rooms, a bombproof bunker suite of rooms, just as they were left by Winston Churchill at the end of World War II. You can see the Map Room with its huge wall maps; the Atlantic map is a mass of pinholes (each hole represents at least one convoy). Next door is Churchill's bedroom-cum-office, which has two BBC microphones on the desk for his broadcasts of those famous speeches that stirred the nation.

Clive Steps at the end of King Charles St., SW1, off Whitehall near Big Ben. ✆ **020/7930-6961.** www.iwm.org.uk/cabinet. Admission £11 ($22) adults, £9 ($18) seniors and students, free for children 15 and under. Daily 9:30am–6pm (last admission 5:15pm). Closed Christmas holidays. Tube: Westminster or St. James's.

Houses of Parliament & Big Ben ★★ These Houses are the stronghold of Britain's democracy. Both Houses (Commons and Lords) are situated in the former royal Palace of Westminster, the king's residence until Henry VIII moved to Whitehall.

London Attractions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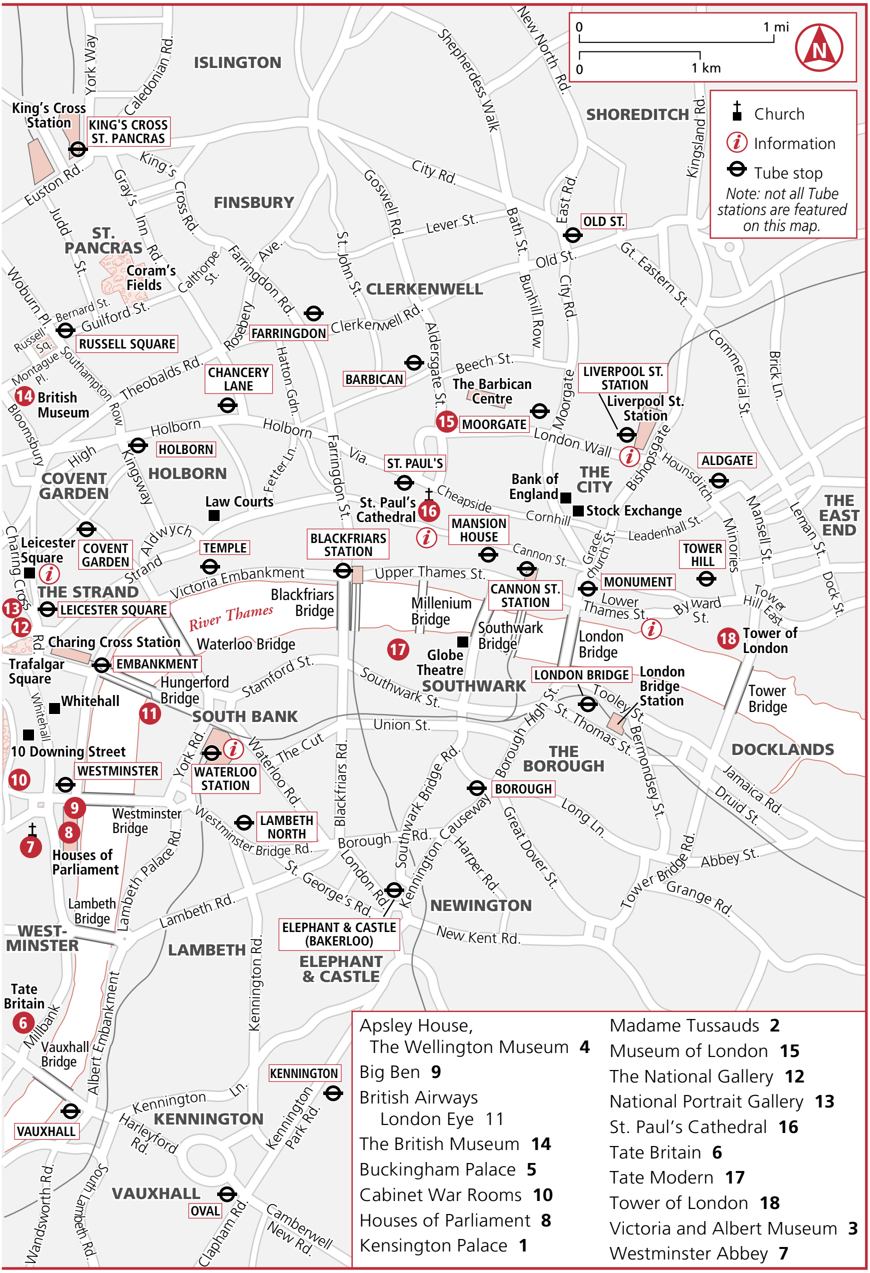
SCOTLAND
North Sea
Irish Sea
ENGLAND
WALES
London
English Channel
HAMPSTEAD
CAMDEN
St. Pancras Rd.
Delancey St.
Prince Albert Rd.
London Zoo
ST. JOHN'S WOOD
ST. JOHN'S WOOD
Wellington Rd.
Grove End Rd.
REGENT'S PARK
Boating Lake
Albany St.
Hampstead Rd.
Eversholt St.
EUSTON
EUSTON STATION
Euston Station
EUSTON SQUARE
GREAT PORTLAND ST.
Park Rd.
St. John's Wood Rd.
MAIDA VALE
WARWICK AVENUE
Clifton Gdns.
Lisson Grove
LISSON GROVE
MARYLEBONE
BAKER STREET
REGENT'S PARK
2
Regents Park Crescent
Euston Rd.
BLOOMS-BURY
Gower St.
Tottenham
WARREN ST.
GOODGE ST.
Court Rd.
Edgware Rd.
EDGWARE ROAD
Marylebone Rd.
Marylebone High St.
Portland Pl.
Gt. Portland St.
Goodge St.
WESTWAY A40 (M)
PADDINGTON
PADDINGTON STATION
ROYAL OAK
NOTTING HILL
Bishop's Bridge Rd.
Eastbourne Ter.
Praed St.
Sussex Gdns.
Seymour Pl.
Gloucester Pl.
Baker St.
MARYLEBONE
Bedford Sq.
Oxford St.
TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD
BAYSWATER
Seymour St.
Wigmore St.
OXFORD CIRCUS
Regent St.
Carnaby St.
Wardour St.
MARBLE ARCH
Oxford St.
New
BOND ST.
Queensway
Leinster Gdns.
Craven Rd.
LANCASTER GATE
Bayswater Rd.
Cumberland Gate
Brook St.
Grosvenor Sq.
Grosvenor St.
Conduit St.
Savile Row
Bond St.
SOHO
Shaftesbury Ave.
PICCADILLY CIRCUS
BAYSWATER
A40
QUEENSWAY
West Carriage Dr.
HYDE PARK
Park Ln.
Park Ln.
MAYFAIR
Berkeley Sq.
Jermyn St.
St. James's St.
Pall Mall
GREEN PARK
Broad Walk
Round Pond
KENSINGTON GARDENS
Serpentine Rd.
The Serpentine
HYDE PARK CORNER
Piccadilly
GREEN PARK
The Mall
1
Kensington Palace
ST. JAMES'S
ST. JAMES'S PARK
Walk
South Carriage Dr.
4
Constitution Hill
Buckingham Palace
5
ST. JAMES'S PARK
Kensington Gore Rd.
Knightsbridge
KNIGHTSBRIDGE
Grosvenor Pl.
Belgrave Sq.
Buckingham Gate
Harrod's
KENSINGTON
KNIGHTS-BRIDGE
Gloucester Rd.
Exhibition Rd.
Victoria and Albert Museum
3
Brompton Rd.
Beau-champ
Pont St.
Sloane St.
Eaton Sq.
Eccleston St.
Palace Rd.
Victoria St.
Horseferry Rd.
VICTORIA STATION
Cromwell Rd.
BROMPTON
BELGRAVIA
VICTORIA
Pelham St.
SLOANE SQUARE
Sloane Sq.
Sloane Ave.
EARL'S COURT
SOUTH KENSINGTON
Buckingham
Vauxhall Bridge Rd.
Belgrave Rd.
Warwick Way
Old Brompton Rd.
Drayton Gdns.
Sydney St.
SOUTH KENSINGTON
King's Rd.
Lwr. Sloane St.
Pimlico Rd.
Chelsea Bridge Rd.
Ebury Bridge Rd.
PIMLICO
CHELSEA
PIMLICO
Royal Hospital Rd.
Oakley St.
Albert Bridge
Chelsea Embankment
Chelsea Bridge
Queenstown Rd.
Grosvenor Bridge
Grosvenor Rd.
WEST BROMPTON
Edith Grove
Beaufort St.
Battersea Bridge
Walk
Cheyne
BATTERSEA PARK
Albert Bridge Rd.
Nine Elms Ln.
HAMMERSMITH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Church
Information
Tube stop
Note: not all Tube stations are featured on this map.
ISLINGTON
SHOREDITCH
FINSBURY
CLERKENWELL
ST. PANCRAS
HOLBORN
COVENT GARDEN
THE CITY
THE EAST END
THE STRAND
SOUTHWARK
SOUTH BANK
THE BOROUGH
DOCKLANDS
WESTMINSTER
LAMBETH
ELEPHANT & CASTLE
NEWINGTON
KENNINGTON
VAUXHALL
King's Cross Station
KING'S CROSS ST. PANCRAS
Coram's Fields
RUSSELL SQUARE
FARRINGDON
BARBICAN
CHANCERY LANE
HOLBORN
The Barbican Centre
MOORGATE
LIVERPOOL ST. STATION
Liverpool St. Station
OLD ST.
ALDGATE
ST. PAUL'S
St. Paul's Cathedral
Bank of England
Stock Exchange
MANSION HOUSE
BLACKFRIARS STATION
TEMPLE
Law Courts
COVENT GARDEN
Leicester Square
LEICESTER SQUARE
Charing Cross Station
EMBANKMENT
Trafalgar Square
Whitehall
10 Downing Street
WESTMINSTER
Westminster Bridge
Houses of Parliament
Lambeth Bridge
Tate Britain
Vauxhall Bridge
VAUXHALL
OVAL
KENNINGTON
WATERLOO STATION
LAMBETH NORTH
ELEPHANT & CASTLE (BAKERLOO)
BOROUGH
LONDON BRIDGE
London Bridge Station
London Bridge
Southwark Bridge
Millennium Bridge
Blackfriars Bridge
Waterloo Bridge
Hungerford Bridge
Globe Theatre
CANNON ST. STATION
MONUMENT
TOWER HILL
Tower of London
Tower Bridge
River Thames
British Museum
York Way
Caledonian Rd.
King's Cross Rd.
Euston Rd.
Gray's Inn Rd.
Judd St.
Woburn Pl.
Bernard St.
Guilford St.
Russell Sq.
Montague Pl.
Southampton Row
Bloomsbury
High Holborn
Kingsway
Theobalds Rd.
Calthorpe St.
Farringdon Rd.
Rosebery Ave.
St. John St.
Goswell Rd.
Shepherdess Walk
New North Rd.
City Rd.
Lever St.
Bath St.
Bunhill Row
East Rd.
Kingsland Rd.
Old St.
Gt. Eastern St.
Commercial St.
Brick Ln.
Clerkenwell Rd.
Aldersgate St.
Beech St.
Moorgate
London Wall
Bishopsgate
Houndsditch
Hatton Gdn.
Holborn
Fetter Ln.
Holborn Via.
Farringdon St.
Cheapside
Cornhill
Leadenhall St.
Gracechurch St.
Cannon St.
Upper Thames St.
Lower Thames St.
Byward St.
Tower Hill East
Minories
Mansell St.
Leman St.
Dock St.
Aldwych
Strand
Victoria Embankment
Charing Cross Rd.
Whitehall
Stamford St.
Southwark St.
Union St.
The Cut
York Rd.
Waterloo Rd.
Westminster Bridge Rd.
Blackfriars Rd.
Southwark Bridge Rd.
Borough High St.
St. Thomas St.
Tooley St.
Bermondsey St.
Borough Rd.
London Rd.
St. George's Rd.
Lambeth Palace Rd.
Lambeth Rd.
Kennington Rd.
Causeway
Harper Rd.
Great Dover St.
Long Ln.
Tower Bridge Rd.
Abbey St.
Grange Rd.
Jamaica Rd.
Druid St.
New Kent Rd.
Millbank
Albert Embankment
Kennington Ln.
Harleyford Rd.
Kennington Park Rd.
Wandsworth Rd.
South Lambeth Rd.
Clapham Rd.
Camberwell New Rd.
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Tips Brown in the Hot Seat

The hottest ticket and most exciting time to visit the Houses of Parliament is during Prime Minister's Question Time, Wednesday from noon to 12:30pm, which must seem like hours to Gordon Brown, who is on the hot seat. It's not quite as thrilling as it was back when Margaret Thatcher exchanged barbs with the MPs (members of Parliament), but still worth a viewing.

The present Houses of Parliament were built in 1840, but the Commons chamber was bombed and destroyed by the Luftwaffe in 1941. The 98m (322-ft.) tower houses Big Ben, the "symbol of London." Except for the Strangers' Galleries, the two Houses of Parliament are closed to tourists. To be admitted to the Strangers' Galleries, join the public line outside the St. Stephen's entrance; often there's a delay before the line is admitted.

Westminster Palace, Old Palace Yard, SW1. House of Commons ☎ **020/7219-4272;** House of Lords ☎ **020/7219-3107.** www.parliament.uk. Free admission. Mid-Oct to Aug Mon–Tues 9am–noon; Wed 9–9:20am; Thurs no tours; Fri 3:30–5pm. Join line at St. Stephen's entrance. Tube: Westminster.

Kensington Palace ★ Kids This mansion dates from 1605 but was redesigned by Sir Christopher Wren in 1689. Since the end of the 18th century, it has been home to various members of the royal family, and the State Apartments are open for tours. The palace was the London home of the late Princess Margaret and was once the home of Diana, princess of Wales, and her two sons. The State Apartments and Ceremonial Dress Collection display *trompe l'oeil* murals by William Kent and ceremonial robes belonging to Queen Mary and George V. Visitors are guided through a series of theme rooms, including a tailor shop stocked with materials used in court dress. Of the 30 rooms, 15, including the restored King's Gallery and the Cupola Room, where Queen Victoria was baptized, are permanently open to the public. In the northwestern corner of Kensington Gardens is the Princess Diana Memorial Playground, dedicated to the late princess in 2000.

The Broad Walk, Kensington Gardens, W8. ☎ **0870/7515-170.** Admission £12 ($24) adults, £10 ($20) seniors and students, £6 ($12) children 5–15, £33 ($66) family ticket. Mar–Oct daily 10am–6pm; Nov–Feb daily 10am–5pm. Tube: Queensway or Notting Hill Gate; High St. Kensington on south side.

Madame Tussauds Overrated Kids In 1770, an exhibition of life-size wax figures was opened in Paris by Dr. Curtius. He was soon joined by his niece, Strasbourg-born Marie Tussaud, who learned the secret of making lifelike replicas of the famous and the infamous. During the French Revolution, the head of almost every distinguished victim of the guillotine was molded by Madame Tussaud or her uncle. An enlarged Grand Hall continues to house years of old favorites, as well as many of today's heads of state and political leaders. In the Chamber of Horrors, you can have the vicarious thrill of walking through a Victorian London street where special effects include the shadowy terror of Jack the Ripper. It's all a bit cheesy, but usually a big hit with kids.

Marylebone Rd., NW1. ☎ **0870/999-0293.** www.madame-tussauds.com. Admission £23 ($46) adults, £20 ($40) seniors, £19 ($38) children younger than 16. **Note:** Admission prices can go higher or lower during the year. Mon–Fri 9:30am–5:30pm; Sat–Sun 9am–6pm. Tube: Baker St.

National Gallery ★★★ This museum houses a comprehensive collection of Western paintings, representing all the major schools from the 13th century to the early

20th century. Of the early Gothic works, the Wilton Diptych is the rarest treasure; it depicts Richard II being introduced to the Madonna and Child by John the Baptist and the Saxon king, Edward the Confessor. The 16th-century Venetian masters and the northern European painters are well represented.

North side of Trafalgar Sq., WC2. ☎ **020/7747-2885.** www.nationalgallery.org.uk. Free admission. Thurs–Tues 10am–6pm; Wed 10am–9pm. Tube: Charing Cross or Leicester Sq.

St. Paul's Cathedral ★★★ The old St. Paul's was destroyed during the Great Fire of 1666, making way for a baroque structure designed by Sir Christopher Wren and built between 1675 and 1710. The dome of St. Paul's dominates the City's square mile. The cathedral houses few art treasures but has many monuments, including a memorial chapel to American service personnel who lost their lives in World War II. Encircling the dome is the Whispering Gallery, where vocal discretion is advised. Wren lies in the crypt, along with the duke of Wellington and Lord Nelson. This was where Prince Charles married Lady Diana Spencer in 1981.

St. Paul's Churchyard, EC4. ☎ **020/7246-8350.** www.stpauls.co.uk. Cathedral and galleries £9.50 ($19) adults, £8.50 ($17) seniors and students, £3.50 ($7) children 6–16, £23 ($46) family ticket, free for children 5 and younger; guided tours £3 ($6) adults, £2.50 ($5) students and seniors, £1 ($2) children; recorded tours £3.50 ($7), free for children 5 and younger. Cathedral (excluding galleries) Mon–Sat 8:30am–4pm; galleries Mon–Sat 9:30am–4pm. No sightseeing Sun (services only). Tube: St. Paul's, Mansion House, Cannon St., and Blackfriars.

Tate Britain ★★★ What's now known as Tate Britain was known as the Tate Gallery before the modern works in its collection were moved to the Tate Modern (see below). Fronting the Thames near Vauxhall bridge in Pimlico, the gallery houses the national collection of British art from the 16th century to the present. The works include some of the best of Gainsborough, Reynolds, Stubbs, Blake, Constable, and Hogarth (particularly his satirical *O the Roast Beef of Old England,* known as *The Gate of Calais*). The illustrations of William Blake, the incomparable mystical poet, for such classic works as *The Book of Job, The Divine Comedy,* and *Paradise Lost* are here. The collection of works by J. M. W. Turner is its largest by a single artist; Turner himself willed most of the paintings and watercolors here to the nation. Also on display are the works of many major 19th- and 20th-century painters, including Paul Nash.

Millbank, SW1. ☎ **020/7887-8008.** www.tate.org.uk. Free admission; special exhibitions sometimes incur a charge ranging from £7–£11 ($14–$22). Daily 10:30am–5:50pm. Tube: Pimlico.

Tate Modern ★★★ In a transformed Bankside Power Station in Southwark, this museum draws some two million visitors a year to see the greatest collection of international 20th-century art in Britain. As such, it is one of the three or four most important modern art galleries in the world. Tate Modern is viewer friendly with eye-level hangings. All the big painting stars are here, a whole galaxy ranging from Dalí to Matisse to Rothko to Warhol. The Modern is also a gallery of new and exciting art. Instead of exhibiting art chronologically and by school, the Tate Modern, in a radical break from tradition, takes a thematic approach. This allows displays to cut across movements. You can cross the reopened Millennium Bridge, a pedestrian-only walk from the steps of St. Paul's, over the Thames to the new gallery.

Bankside, SE1. ☎ **020/7887-8888.** www.tate.org.uk. Free admission. Sun–Thurs 10am–6pm; Fri–Sat 10am–10pm. Tube: Southwark and Blackfriars.

Tower of London ★★★ *Kids* This ancient fortress continues to pack in visitors because of its macabre associations with legendary figures who were imprisoned and/or executed here (Sir Walter Raleigh, Anne Boleyn, Lady Jane Grey). The finest structure is the White Tower. Here you can view the Royal Armouries collection of armor and weapons. Instruments of torture and execution are on view in Bowyer Tower. In summer, go early in the day to see the Crown Jewels because long lines often form. Uniformed Yeoman Warders (also known as "Beefeaters") give 1-hour tours at half-hour intervals, starting at 9:30am from the Middle Tower near the main entrance. The tour includes the Chapel Royal of St. Peter ad Vincula (St. Peter in Chains). The last guided walk starts at about 3:30pm in summer, 2:30pm in winter.

Insider's tip: Avoid the Tower's notoriously long lines by purchasing your ticket in the Tube station kiosk before emerging aboveground. Also, go early in the morning. Avoid Sunday between noon and 2pm if you can—crowds are at their worst then.

Tower Hill, EC3. ✆ **0870/751-5175.** www.tower-of-london.org.uk. Admission £16 ($32) adults, £13 ($26) students and seniors, £9.50 ($19) children ages 5–15, 4 and under free. Family ticket £45 ($90). Mar–Oct Tues–Sat 9am–5:30pm, Sun–Mon 10am–5:30pm; Nov–Feb Tues–Sat 9am–4:30pm, Sun–Mon 10am–4:30pm. Tube: Tower Hill.

Westminster Abbey ★★★ In 1065, the Saxon king, Edward the Confessor, founded a Benedictine abbey on this spot overlooking Parliament Square. The first king crowned in the abbey was Harold in 1066. The coronation tradition has continued to the present day, broken only twice (Edward V and Edward VIII). The abbey is the site of state occasions, including the September 1997 funeral of Diana, princess of Wales. The Gothic structure existing today owes more to Henry III's plans than to those of any other sovereign, although many architects, including Wren, have contributed to the abbey. Henry VII Chapel is one of the loveliest in Europe, with its fan vaulting, Knights of Bath banners, and Torrigiani-designed tomb of the king. You can also visit the most hallowed spot in the abbey, the shrine of Edward the Confessor (canonized in the 12th c.). In the saint's chapel is the Coronation Chair, made at the command of Edward I in 1300 to display the Stone of Scone. Another noted spot is the Poets' Corner, to the right of the entrance to the Royal Chapel, with monuments to Chaucer, Shakespeare, "O Rare Ben Johnson" (his name misspelled), Samuel Johnson, the Brontë sisters, Thackeray, Dickens, Tennyson, Kipling, even the American Longfellow.

On Sunday, the Royal Chapels are closed, but the rest of the church is open unless a service is being conducted. For times of services, phone the Chapter Office (✆ **020/7222-5152**). The College Garden is open Tuesday through Thursday, April through September from 10am to 6pm and October through March from 10am to 4pm.

Broad Sanctuary, SW1. ✆ **020/7222-5152.** www.westminster-abbey.org. Admission £10 ($20) adults; £7 ($14) for students, seniors, and children 11–18; £24 ($48) family ticket; free for children younger than 11. Mon–Tues and Thurs–Fri 9:30am–3:45pm; Wed 9:30am–6pm, Sat 9:30am–2:45pm. Tube: Westminster or St. James's Park.

Victoria and Albert Museum ★★★ This museum displays the world's greatest collection of fine and decorative arts. Medieval holdings include many treasures, such as the Eltenberg Reliquary; the Early English Gloucester Candlestick; the Byzantine Veroli Casket, with its ivory panels based on Greek plays; and the Syon Cope, an English embroidery from the early 14th century. Islamic art includes the 16th-century Persian Ardabil carpet. The V&A has the largest collection of Renaissance sculpture outside Italy, including a Donatello marble relief. Raphael's cartoons for tapestries for the Sistine Chapel can also be seen here.

The story of British design from 1500 to 1900 unfolds in the **British Galleries** ★★★. From Chippendale to Morris, all of the top British designers are featured. Star exhibits range from the 5m-high (16-ft.) Melville Bed (1697), with its red silk velvet hangings, to the wedding suite of James II and one of the museum's most prized possessions, the "Great Bed of Ware," mentioned in Shakespeare's Twelfth Night.

In the winter of 2004, V&A opened a suite of five renovated painting galleries that were originally built in 1850. A trio of these galleries focus on British landscapes as seen through the eyes of Turner, Constable, and others. Another gallery showcases masters such as Botticelli, Delacroix, Degas, Tintoretto, and Ingres.

Cromwell Rd., SW7. ✆ **020/7942-2000.** www.vam.ac.uk. Free admission. Temporary exhibitions often £10 ($20). Daily 10am–5:45pm (Wed until 10pm); until 10pm the last Fri of each month. Tube: South Kensington.

MUSEUMS

Apsley House, The Wellington Museum ★ This former town house of the duke of Wellington (1769–1852), who defeated Napoleon at the Battle of Waterloo and later became prime minister, was opened as a public museum in 1952. The building was designed by Robert Adam and constructed from 1771 to 1778. The collection contains some of the finest silver and porcelain pieces in Europe.

149 Piccadilly, Hyde Park Corner, W1. ✆ **020/7499-5676.** Admission £5.30 ($11) adults, £4 ($8) seniors and students, £2.60 ($5.20) children under 16. Apr–Oct Tues–Sun 10am–5pm; Nov–Mar Tues–Sun 10am–4pm. Tube: Hyde Park Corner.

Museum of London ★★ In the Barbican near St. Paul's, the museum traces London's history from prehistoric times through relics, costumes, household effects, maps, and models. Anglo-Saxons, Vikings, Normans—they're all here, displayed on two floors around a central courtyard.

150 London Wall, EC2. ✆ **0870/444-3851.** www.museumoflondon.org.uk. Free admission. Mon–Sat 10am–5:50pm; Sun noon–5:50pm. Tube: St. Paul's or Barbican.

National Portrait Gallery ★★ This museum was founded in 1856 to collect the likenesses of famous British men and women. Today the collection is the most comprehensive of its kind in the world and constitutes a unique record of those who created the history and culture of the nation. A few paintings will catch your eye, including Sir Joshua Reynolds's portrait of Samuel Johnson ("a man of most dreadful appearance"). You'll also see a portrait of William Shakespeare, which is claimed to be the most "authentic contemporary likeness" of its subject, and the portrait of the Brontë sisters, painted by their brother Branwell. The most recent additions to the gallery include portraits of British sports figures, a tribute to athletic icons from the Chariots of Fire athletes of the 1920s to the superstars of today.

In 2000, Queen Elizabeth opened the Ondaatje Wing of the gallery, granting the gallery more than 50% more exhibition space. The most intriguing part of the additional space is the splendid Tudor Gallery, with portraits of Richard III and Henry II, his conqueror in the Battle of Bosworth in 1485, as well as a portrait of Shakespeare first acquired by the gallery in 1856.

St. Martin's Place, WC2. ✆ **020/7306-0055.** www.npg.org.uk. Free admission; fee charged for certain temporary exhibitions. Sat–Wed 10am–6pm; Thurs–Fri 10am–9pm. Tube: Charing Cross or Leicester Sq.

LONDON'S PARKS

London's parklands easily rate as the greatest "green lung" system of any large city. One of the largest is **Hyde Park** ★. With the adjoining Kensington Gardens, it covers 257 hectares (635 acres) of central London with velvety lawn interspersed with ponds, flower beds, and trees. **Kensington Gardens** are home to the celebrated statue

Wheeling Around

The world's largest observation wheel, the **British Airways London Eye** ★, Millennium Jubilee Gardens (✆ **0870/5000-600;** www.ba-londoneye.com; Tube: Westminster or Waterloo), opened in 2000. It is the fourth-tallest structure in London, offering panoramic views that extend for some 40km (25 miles) if the weather's clear. Passengers are carried in 32 "pods" that make a complete revolution every half-hour. Along the way you'll see some of London's most famous landmarks from a bird's-eye view.

The Eye lies close to Westminster Bridge (you can hardly miss it). Tickets for the ride are £13 ($26) for adults, £10 ($20) for seniors and students, £6.50 ($13) for children 5 to 15. Hours are October to May daily 10am to 8pm; June to September daily 10am to 9pm.

of Peter Pan (with the bronze rabbits that toddlers are always trying to kidnap) and to the Princess Diana Memorial Playground. East of Hyde Park, across Piccadilly, stretch **Green Park** ★ and **St. James's Park** ★, forming an almost unbroken chain of landscaped beauty. This is an ideal area for picnics. You'll find it hard to believe this was once a festering piece of swamp near the leper hospital. The classically beautiful **Regent's Park,** north of Baker Street and Marylebone Road, was designed by the 18th-century genius John Nash to surround a palace that never materialized. It's home to an open-air theater and the **London Zoo** ★★.

ORGANIZED TOURS

For the first-timer, the quickest and most economical way to bring the big city into focus is to take a bus tour. One of the most popular is **The Original London Sightseeing Tour,** which passes all the major sights in just about 1½ hours. The tour, which uses a traditional double-decker bus with live commentary by a guide, costs £19 ($38) for adults, £12 ($24) for children younger than 16 (free for those younger than 5). The tour allows you to hop on or off the bus at any point in the tour at no extra charge.

Departures are from convenient points within the city; you can choose your departure point when you buy your ticket. Tickets can be purchased on the bus or at a discount from any London Transport or London Tourist Board Information Centre. Most hotel concierges also sell tickets. For information or phone purchases, call ✆ **020/8877-1722.** It's also possible to book online at www.theoriginaltour.com.

Touring boats operate on the Thames year-round and can take you to various places within Greater London and beyond. Main embarkation points are Westminster Pier, Charing Cross Pier, and Tower Pier, a system that enables you, for instance, to take a "water taxi" from the Tower of London to Westminster Abbey, or a more leisurely cruise from Westminster to Hampton Court Palace or Kew Gardens. Several companies operate motor launches offering panoramic views en route. For information and reservations, contact **Thames River Services,** Westminster Pier, Victoria Embankment, SW1 (✆ **020/7930-4097;** www.westminsterpier.co.uk) for downriver trips from Westminster pier, or **Westminster Passenger Association (Upriver) Ltd.,** Westminster Pier, Victoria Embankment, SW1 (✆ **020/7930-2062** or 020/7930-4721; www.wpsa.co.uk), for upriver trips.

The **Original London Walks,** 87 Messina Ave., P.O. Box 1708, London NW6 4LW (✆ **020/7624-3978;** www.walks.com), the oldest established walking-tour company in London, is run by an Anglo-American journalist/actor couple, David and Mary Tucker. Their hallmarks are variety, reliability, reasonably sized groups, and—above all—superb guides. The renowned crime historian Donald Rumbelow, the leading authority on Jack the Ripper and author of the classic guidebook London Walks, is a regular guide, as are several prominent actors (including classical actor Edward Petherbridge). Walks are regularly scheduled daily and cost £6 ($12) for adults, £5 ($10) for students and seniors; children younger than 15 go free. Call for a schedule; no reservations are needed.

THE SHOPPING SCENE

The Top Shopping Streets & Neighborhoods

THE WEST END The West End includes the Mayfair district and is home to the core of London's big-name shopping. Most of the department stores, designer shops, and multiples (chain stores) have their flagships in this area.

The key streets are **Oxford Street** for affordable shopping (start at Marble Arch Tube station if you're ambitious, or Bond St. station if you just want to see some of it) and **Regent Street,** which intersects Oxford Street at Oxford Circus (Tube: Oxford Circus).

While there are several branches of the private label department store **Marks & Spencer,** their Marble Arch store (on Oxford St.) is the flagship and worth shopping for their high-quality goods. There's a grocery store in the basement and a home-furnishings department upstairs.

Regent Street has fancier shops—more upscale department stores (including the famed Liberty of London), and specialty dealers—and leads all the way to Piccadilly.

In between the two, parallel to Regent Street, is **Bond Street.** Divided into New and Old, Bond Street (Tube: Bond St.) also connects Piccadilly with Oxford Street and is synonymous with the luxury trade. Bond Street has had a revival and is the hot address for all the international designers; Donna Karan has not one, but two shops here. Many international hot shots have digs surrounding hers, from Chanel and Ferragamo to Versace.

Burlington Arcade (Tube: Piccadilly Circus), the famous glass-roofed, Regency-style passage leading off Piccadilly, looks like a period exhibition and is lined with intriguing shops and boutiques. The small, smart stores specialize in fashion, jewelry, Irish linen, cashmere, and more. If you linger in the arcade until 5:30pm, you can watch the beadles in their black-and-yellow livery and top hats ceremoniously put in place the iron grills that block off the arcade until 9am the next morning, at which time they just as ceremoniously remove them to mark the start of a new business day. Also at 5:30pm, a hand bell called the Burlington Bell is sounded, signaling the end of trading.

Just off Regent Street (actually tucked right behind it) is **Carnaby Street** (Tube: Oxford Circus), which is also having a comeback. While it no longer dominates the world of pace-setting fashion as it did in the 1960s, it's still fun for teens who may need cheap souvenirs, a purple wig, or a little something in leather. A convenient branch of Boots the Chemists is also here.

For a total contrast, check out **Jermyn Street,** on the far side of Piccadilly, a tiny 2-block-long street devoted to high-end men's haberdashers and toiletries shops; many have been doing business for centuries. Several hold royal warrants, including Turnbull & Asser, where HRH Prince Charles has his pj's made.

The **West End** leads to the theater district and to two more shopping areas: the still-not-ready-for-prime-time Soho, where the sex shops are slowly being turned into cutting-edge designer shops, and Covent Garden, which is a masterpiece unto itself. The marketplace has eaten up the surrounding neighborhood so that even though the streets run a little higgledy-piggledy and you can easily get lost, it's fun to just wander and shop.

KNIGHTSBRIDGE & CHELSEA This is the second-most famous of London's retail districts and the home of **Harrods** (Tube: Knightsbridge). A small street nearby, **Sloane Street,** is chockablock with designer shops; **Cheval Place,** in the opposite direction, is also lined with designer resale shops.

Walk toward Museum Row, and you'll soon find **Beauchamp Place** (pronounced *Beech*-am; Tube: Knightsbridge). The street is only a block long, but it features the kinds of shops where young British aristos buy their clothing.

Head out at the Harvey Nichols end of Knightsbridge, away from Harrods, and shop your way through the designer stores on Sloane Street (Hermès, Armani, Prada, and the like), then walk past Sloane Square and you're in an altogether different neighborhood: Chelsea.

King's Road (Tube: Sloane Sq.), the main street of Chelsea, which starts at Sloane Square, will forever remain a symbol of London in the Swinging Sixties. Today, the street is still frequented by young people, but with fewer Mohican haircuts, "Bovver boots," and Edwardian ball gowns than before. More and more, King's Road is a lineup of markets and "multistores," large or small conglomerations of indoor stands, stalls, and booths in one building or enclosure.

Chelsea doesn't begin and end with King's Road. If you choose to walk the other direction from Harrods, you connect to a part of Chelsea called **Brompton Cross,** another hip and hot area for designer shops made popular when Michelin House was rehabbed by Sir Terence Conran for the Conran Shop.

Also seek out **Walton Street,** a tiny little snake of a street running from Brompton Cross back toward the museums. About 2 blocks of this 3-block street are devoted to fairy-tale shops for m'lady where you can buy aromatherapy from Jo Malone, needlepoint, or costume jewelry, or meet with your interior designer, who runs a small shop of objets d'art.

Finally, don't forget all those museums right there in the corner of the shopping streets. They all have great gift shops.

KENSINGTON & NOTTING HILL **Kensington High Street** is the new hangout of the classier breed of teen who has graduated from Carnaby Street and is ready for street chic. While a few staples of basic British fashion are on this strip, most of the stores feature items that are very, very short or very, very tight. The Tube station here is High Street Kensington.

From Kensington High Street, you can walk up **Kensington Church Street,** which, like Portobello Road, is one of the city's main shopping avenues for antiques. Kensington Church Street dead-ends into the Notting Hill Gate Tube station, which is where you would arrive for shopping on **Portobello Road.** The dealers and the weekend market are 2 blocks beyond.

The Top Markets

THE WEST END The most famous market in all of England, **Covent Garden Market** (Tube: Covent Garden) offers several different markets daily from 10am to 6pm (we think it's most fun to come on Sun). Apple Market is the fun, bustling market in the courtyard, where traders sell, well, everything. Many of the items are what the English call collectible nostalgia; they include a wide array of glassware and ceramics, leather goods, toys, clothes, hats, and jewelry. This becomes an antiques market on Monday. Meanwhile, out back is Jubilee Market, which is also an antiques market on Monday. Every other day of the week, it's sort of a fancy hippie-ish market with cheap clothes and books. Out front are a few tents of cheap stuff, except again on Monday, when antiques dealers take over here, too.

St. Martin-in-the-Fields Market (Tube: Charing Cross) is good for teens and hipsters who don't want to trek all the way to Camden Market and can be satisfied with imports from India and South America, crafts, and local football souvenirs. It's near Trafalgar Square and Covent Garden; hours are Monday through Saturday from 11am to 5pm, Sunday from noon to 5pm.

NOTTING HILL **Portobello Market** (Tube: Notting Hill Gate) is a magnet for collectors of virtually anything. It's mainly a Saturday happening, from 6am to 5pm. You needn't be here at the crack of dawn; 9am is fine. Once known mainly for fruit and vegetables (still sold here throughout the week), in the past 4 decades Portobello has become synonymous with antiques. But don't take the stallholder's word for it that the fiddle he's holding is a genuine Stradivarius left to him in the will of his Italian great-uncle; it might just as well have been "nicked" from an East End pawnshop.

The market is divided into three major sections. The most crowded is the antiques section, running between Colville Road and Chepstow Villas to the south. (***Warning:*** There's a great concentration of pickpockets in this area.) The second section (and the oldest part) is the "fruit and veg" market, lying between Westway and Colville Road. In the third and final section is a flea market, where Londoners sell bric-a-brac and lots of secondhand goods they didn't really want in the first place. But looking around still makes for interesting fun.

LONDON AFTER DARK

Weekly publications such as *Time Out* and *Where,* available at newsstands, give full entertainment listings and contain information on restaurants, nightclubs, and theaters. You'll also find listings in daily newspapers, notably *The Times* and *The Telegraph.*

THE PERFORMING ARTS

To see specific shows, especially hits, purchase your tickets in advance. The best method is to buy your tickets from the theater's box office, which you can do over the phone using a credit card. You'll pay the theater price and pick up the tickets the day of the show. You can also go to a ticket agent, especially for discount tickets such as those sold by the **Society of London Theatre** (✆ **020/7557-6700;** www.officiallondontheatre.co.uk) on the southwest corner of Leicester Square, open Monday to Saturday 10am to 7pm and Sunday noon to 3pm. A £2 ($4) service fee is charged. You can purchase all tickets here, although the booth specializes in half-price sales for shows that are undersold. These tickets must be purchased in person—not over the phone. For phone orders, you have to call **Ticketmaster** at ✆ **0870/060-2340.**

Tips Fringe Benefits

Some of the best theater in London is performed on at the dozens of so-called fringe theaters that usually attempt more adventurous productions than the established West End theaters; they're also dramatically lower in price. Check *Time Out* for schedules and showtimes.

For tickets and information before you go, try **Keith Prowse,** 234 W. 44th St., Ste. 1000, New York, NY 10036 (☎ **800/669-8687** or 212/398-1468; www.keithprowse.com). Their London office (which operates under the name of both Global Tickets and First Call Tickets) is at the British Visitors Center, 1 Regent St., SW1 Y4XT (☎ **0870/906-3860**). They'll mail your tickets, fax a confirmation, or leave your tickets at the appropriate production's box office. Instant confirmations are immediately available for most shows. A booking and handling fee of up to 20% is added to the price of all tickets.

THEATER One of the world's finest theater companies, the **Royal Shakespeare Company** ★★★ performs at various theaters throughout London. Check its website at www.rsc.org.uk for current shows and venues or call ☎ **0844/800-1110** Monday to Saturday from 9am to 8pm. The theater troupe performs in London during the winter months, naturally specializing in the plays of the Bard. In summer, it tours England and abroad.

Occupying a prime site on the South Bank of the River Thames is the flagship of British theater, the **Royal National Theatre,** South Bank, SE1 (☎ **020/7452-3000;** www.nationaltheatre.org.uk; Tube: Waterloo, Embankment, or Charing Cross). The National houses three theaters. Tickets are £10 to £38 ($20–76).

At the replica of **Shakespeare's Globe Theatre,** New Globe Walk, Bankside, SE1 (☎ **020/7401-9919;** www.shakespeares-globe.org; Tube: Mansion House or Blackfriars), performances are staged, on the theater's original site, as they were in Elizabethan times: without lighting, scenery, or such luxuries as cushioned seats or a roof over the audience. From May to September, the company generally holds performances Tuesday through Saturday at 2 and 7pm. There's a limited winter schedule. In any season, the schedule may be affected by weather, because this is an outdoor theater. Tickets are £5 ($10) for groundlings (patrons who stand in the uncovered yard around the stage), £15 to £32 ($30–$64) for gallery seats.

Sadler's Wells Theatre, Rosebery Avenue, EC1 (☎ **0870/737-7737;** www.sadlers-wells.com; Tube: Northern line to Angel), is London's premier venue for dance. The theater, rebuilt from the detritus of a bulldozed 18th-century theater and reopened in 1998, can change its interior shape, size, mood, and even color for almost any performance. The program for Sadler's for each year is approximately 25 weeks of dance and 10 to 12 weeks of opera. The remaining time will offer a medley of visual theater. The box office is open Monday through Saturday from 10am to 8pm. Tickets are £10 to £50 ($20–$100).

CLASSICAL MUSIC & OPERA The Royal Opera and Royal Ballet both perform at the **Royal Opera House,** Bow Street, Covent Garden, WC2 (☎ **0871/663-2587;** www.royalopera.org; Tube: Covent Garden).

Opera performances are usually sung in the original language with English subtitles; tickets are £6 to £185 ($12–$370). The Royal Ballet performs a repertory with a tilt toward the classics, including works by its earlier choreographer-director, Sir Frederick Ashton, and Sir Kenneth MacMillan.

London Coliseum, St. Martin's Lane, WC2 (✆ **0870/145-0200;** www.eno.org; Tube: Charring Cross or Leicester Sq.), is London's largest and most splendid theater. English National Opera performs a wide range of works in English, from great classics to Gilbert and Sullivan to new and experimental works, staged with flair and imagination. Tickets are £10 to £81 ($20–$162). About 100 discount balcony tickets are sold from 10am on the day of performance.

Royal Albert Hall, Kensington Gore, SW7 2AP (✆ **020/7589-8212;** www.royalalberthall.com; Tube: South Kensington), is the annual setting for the BBC Henry Wood Promenade Concerts ("The Proms") from mid-July to mid-September. A British tradition since 1895, the programs are outstanding, often presenting newly commissioned works for the first time. Tickets are £5 to £150 ($10–$300), depending on the event.

Across Waterloo Bridge rises **Royal Festival Hall,** South Bank, SE1 (✆ **0871/663-2500;** www.southbankcentre.co.uk; Tube: Waterloo or Embankment). Here are three of the most comfortable and acoustically perfect concert halls in the world: Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, and the Purcell Room. Together they host more than 1,200 performances a year. Tickets are £8 to £60 ($16–$120).

THE CLUB & MUSIC SCENE

JAZZ & BLUES The reasonably priced **100 Club,** 100 Oxford St., W1 (✆ **020/7636-0933;** Tube: Tottenham Court Rd. or Oxford Circus), is a serious rival to the city's upscale jazz clubs. Its cavalcade of bands includes the best British jazz musicians, as well as many touring Americans. Rock, R & B, and blues are also on tap. Generally open Monday to Thursday and Sunday 7:30 to 11:30pm; Friday noon to 3pm and 8:30pm to 2am; and Saturday 7:30pm to 1am. Cover is £7 to £13 ($14–$26); discounts available for club members.

Mention the word "jazz" in London and people immediately think of Ronnie Scott's **Jazz Club,** 47 Frith St., W1 (✆ **020/7439-0747;** Tube: Leicester Sq. or Piccadilly Circus), long the citadel of modern jazz in Europe, where the best English and American groups are booked. Featured on almost every bill is an American band, often with a top-notch singer. In the Main Room, you can either stand at the bar to watch the show or sit at a table, where you can order dinner. The Downstairs Bar is more intimate. On weekends, the separate Upstairs Room has a disco called Club Latino. It's open Monday through Saturday from 6pm to 3am. Cover for nonmembers is £26 ($52).

DANCE CLUBS **Bar Rumba,** 36 Shaftesbury Ave., W1 (✆ **020/7287-6933;** www.barrumba.co.uk; Tube: Piccadilly Circus), is a Latin bar and club that could be featured in a book on "Underground London" in spite of its location on Shaftesbury Avenue. It leans toward radical jazz fusion on some nights, funk on other occasions. It boasts two full bars and a different musical theme every night. On weeknights, you have to be 18 or older; on Saturday and Sunday, nobody under 21 is allowed in. The club is open Monday from 9pm to 3:30am; Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday from 6pm to 3:30am; Saturday from 7pm to 6am; and Wednesday and Sunday from 8pm to 3:30am. Cover is £5 to £10 ($10–$20).

Moments The Pub Crawl, London Style

Dropping into the local pub for a pint of real ale or bitter is the best way to soak up the character of the different villages that make up London. You'll hear the accents and slang and see firsthand how far removed upper-crust Kensington is from blue-collar Wapping. Catch the local gossip or football talk—and, of course, enjoy some of the finest ales, stouts, ciders, and malt whiskeys in the world.

Central London is awash with wonderful historic pubs as rich and varied as the city itself. The **Cittie of Yorke,** 22 High Holborn, WC1 (✆ **020/7242-7670;** Tube: Holborn or Chancery Lane), boasts the longest bar in Britain, rafters ascending to the heavens, and a long row of immense wine vats, all of which give it the air of a great medieval hall—appropriate since a pub has existed at this location since 1430. Samuel Smiths is on tap, and the bar offers novelties such as chocolate-orange-flavored vodka.

Dickens once hung out in the **Lamb & Flag,** 33 Rose St., off Garrick Street, WC2 (✆ **020/7497-9504;** Tube: Leicester Sq.), and the room itself is little changed from the days when he prowled this neighborhood. The pub has an amazing and somewhat scandalous history. John Dryden was almost killed by a band of thugs outside its doors in December 1679; the pub gained the nickname the "Bucket of Blood" during the Regency era (1811–20) because of the routine bare-knuckled prizefights that broke out. Tap beers include Courage Best, Courage Directors, Old Speckled Hen, John Smith's, and Wadworth 6X.

The **Nags Head,** 10 James St., WC2 (✆ **020/7836-4678;** Tube: Covent Garden), is one of London's most famous Edwardian pubs. In days of yore, patrons had to make their way through lorries of fruit and flowers to drink here. Today, the pub is patronized mainly by young people. The draft Guinness is very good. Lunch is typical pub grub: sandwiches, salads, pork cooked in cider, and garlic prawns. Snacks are available in the afternoon.

The snug little **Dog & Duck,** 18 Bateman St., corner of Frith St., W1 (✆ **020/7494-0697;** Tube: Tottenham Court Rd. or Leicester Sq.), a Soho landmark, is the most intimate pub in London. One former patron was author George Orwell, who came here to celebrate his sales of Animal Farm in the United States. A wide mixture of patrons of all ages and persuasions flock here, chatting amiably while ordering the delights of Tetleys or Timothy Taylor Landlord. If business warrants it, the cozy upstairs bar is opened.

THE GAY & LESBIAN SCENE

Time Out carries listings on gay and lesbian clubs.

Adjacent to one of Covent Garden's best-known traffic junctions, **The Box,** at Seven Dials, 32–34 Monmouth St., WC2 (✆ **020/7240-5828;** Tube: Leicester Sq.), is a Mediterranean-style bar. Gay men outnumber lesbians, though the venue is sophisticated and blasé about sexual definition. Year-round, the place defines itself as a "summer bar," throwing open its doors and windows to a cluster of outdoor tables that attracts a crowd at the slightest hint of warmth. It's open daily from 11am to 11pm. No cover.

First Out, 52 St. Giles High St., W1 (✆ **020/7240-8042;** Tube: Tottenham Court Rd.), prides itself on being the first (est. 1986) all-gay coffee shop in London. Set in a 19th-century building whose venerable wood panels have been painted all colors of the rainbow, it maintains two intimate floors (read: not particularly cruisy) where menu items are exclusively vegetarian. Don't expect raucousness—some clients come here with their grandmothers. First Out is open Monday through Saturday from 10am to 11pm and Sunday from 11am to 10:30pm.

THE BAR SCENE

Bartok (78–79 Chalk Farm Rd., opposite The Roundhouse; ✆ **020/7916-0595;** Tube: Chalk Farm) has been around for about a decade, but still isn't very well known—and it should be. The hippest bar in Camden, specializing in classical music (of all things) and named for the Hungarian composer, Bela Bartok. It's been called the ultimate chill-out bar in London, ideal for a romantic evening regardless of your sexual persuasion. Crystal chandeliers and the flicker of candle set the rather decadent, hedonistic mood. Visitors sprawl out on tapestry-covered couches, enjoying actual conversation, the music, the food, the drink, and each other. Open Monday to Thursday from 5pm to 3am; Friday 5pm to 4am; Saturday 1pm to 4am; Sunday 1pm to 3am.

Perhaps the best mixologists in London are found right in the heart of the city at **Lab** (12 Old Compton St.; ✆ **020/7437-7820;** www.lab-townhouse.com; Tube: Leicester Sq.), a '70s kitsch-inspired cocktail bar, where bartenders will whip you up the best Feijon Flip or Red Hot Chili Pepper in town. Come here for the ultimate in intoxication, hanging out in an interior of leather and Formica spread over two floors. A thick cocktail book lies on every table; if you're in London long enough you may want to work your way through all the drinks from the classic to house specialties. In a glam, glossy setting, DJs keep the mood relaxed in a glam, glossy setting. It's open Monday to Saturday from 4pm to midnight; Sunday from 4pm to 10:30pm.

DAY TRIPS FROM LONDON

HAMPTON COURT PALACE ★★★ On the north side of the Thames, 21km (13 miles) west of London in East Molesey, Surrey, this 16th-century palace of Cardinal Wolsey can teach us a lesson: Don't try to outdo your boss, particularly if he happens to be Henry VIII. The rich cardinal did just that. He eventually lost his fortune, power, and prestige—and he ended up giving his lavish palace to the Tudor monarch. Although the palace enjoyed prestige and pomp in Elizabethan days, it owes much of its present look to William and Mary—or rather to Sir Christopher Wren, who designed and built the Northern or Lion Gates. You can parade through the apartments today, filled as they are with porcelain, furniture, paintings, and tapestries. The Renaissance Gallery is graced with paintings by Old Masters on loan from Queen Elizabeth II.

Hampton Court (✆ **0870/752-7777;** www.hrp.org.uk) is easily accessible. Frequent trains run from Waterloo Station (Network Southeast) to Hampton Court Station (✆ **0845/748-4950**). Once at the station, buses will take you the rest of the way to the palace. If you're driving from London, take the A308 to the junction with the A309 on the north side of Kingston Bridge over the Thames.

Admission to Hampton Court is £13 ($26) adults, £11 ($22) students and seniors, £6.50 ($13) children 5 to 15, free for children 4 and under, £36 ($72) family. Gardens are open year-round daily from 7am to dusk (no later than 9pm); admission is free to all except Privy Garden (admission £4.50/$9 adults, £2.30/$4.60 children) without a palace ticket during summer months. Cloisters, courtyards, state apartments, great kitchen, cellars, and Hampton Court exhibition are open March to October daily from 10am to 6pm; November to February daily from 10am to 4:30pm.

WINDSOR CASTLE ★★★ When William the Conqueror ordered a castle built on this spot, he began a legend and a link with English sovereignty that has known many vicissitudes, the most recent being a 1992 fire. The state apartments display many works of art, porcelain, armor, furniture, three Verrio ceilings, and several 17th-century Gibbons carvings. Several works by Rubens adorn the King's Drawing Rooms. Of the apartments, the grand reception room, with its Gobelin tapestries, is the most spectacular.

Queen Mary's Doll's House is a palace in perfect miniature. It was given to Queen Mary in 1923 as a symbol of national goodwill. The house, designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens, was created on a scale of 1 to 12. It took 3 years to complete and involved the work of 1,500 tradespeople and artists.

St. George's Chapel is a gem of the Perpendicular style, sharing the distinction with Westminster Abbey as a pantheon of English monarchs (Victoria is a notable exception). The present St. George's was founded in the late 15th century by Edward IV on the site of the original Chapel of the Order of the Garter (from 1348).

Windsor Castle (✆ **01753/83118;** www.royalcollection.org.uk) lies 34km (21 miles) west of London; you can reach it in 50 minutes by train from Paddington Station. Admission is £14 ($28) adults, £8 ($16) children 16 and under, £37 ($74) family of four (two adults only). The castle is open March through October, daily from 9:45am to 5:15pm and November through February, daily from 9:45am to 4:15pm.

2 Oxford & Stratford-upon-Avon

TOWN & GOWN: OXFORD ★★

Oxford is a city of business and commerce, home to several industries; it's much more of a real city than Cambridge. Oxford isn't entirely dominated by its university, although the college spires are the reason the hordes, including tour buses, flock here. The fast-flowing pedestrian traffic may cause you to think you've been transported back to London instead of delivered to not-so-sleepy Oxford.

At any time of the year, you can tour the colleges, many of which represent a peak in England's architectural kingdom, as well as a valley of Victorian contributions. The Oxford Tourist Information Centre (see below) offers guided walking tours daily year-round. Just don't mention the other place (Cambridge), and you shouldn't have any trouble. Comparisons between the two universities are inevitable of course; Oxford is better known for the arts and Cambridge more for the sciences.

The city predates the university—in fact, it was a Saxon town in the early part of the 10th century. By the 12th century, Oxford was already growing in reputation as a seat of learning, at the expense of Paris. The first colleges were founded in the 13th century. The story of Oxford is filled with local conflicts: The relationship between town and gown wasn't as peaceful as it is today, and riots often flared over the rights of the university versus the town. Nowadays, the young people of Oxford take out their aggressions in sporting competitions.

Ultimately, the test of a great university lies in the caliber of the people it turns out. Oxford can name-drop a mouthful: Roger Bacon, Sir Walter Raleigh, John Donne, Sir Christopher Wren, Samuel Johnson, William Penn, Lewis Carroll, Harold Macmillan, Graham Greene, T. E. Lawrence, just to name a select few.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE Oxford is 87km (54 miles) northwest from London.

By Train Trains from Paddington Station reach Oxford in 1½ hours. Five trains run every hour. A cheap, same-day round-trip ticket costs £18 ($36). For more information, call ✆ **0845/748-4950** or visit www.networkrail.co.uk.

By Bus Stagecoach (✆ **01865/772250;** www.stagecoachbus.com) runs buses from London at the rate of three to five per hour. The trip costs £12 ($24) one way (£10/$20 if you're a student).

By Car Take M-40 west from London and follow the signs. Traffic and parking are a disaster in Oxford; you may want to use one of the four "Park and Ride" lots just outside the city.

VISITOR INFORMATION The **Oxford Tourist Information Centre** is at 15–16 Broad St. (✆ **01865/249811;** www.oxford.gov.uk/index.cfm). The center sells a comprehensive range of maps, brochures, and souvenir items, as well as the famous Oxford University T-shirt. Guided walking tours leave from the center daily (see later in this chapter). Open Monday to Saturday 9:30am to 5pm and Sunday and bank holidays in summer 10am to 1pm and 1:30 to 3:30pm.

GETTING AROUND Competition thrives in Oxford transportation, and the public benefits with swift, clean service by two companies. **The Oxford Bus Company,** 395 Cowley Rd. (✆ **01865/785400;** www.oxfordbus.co.uk), has green Park and Ride buses that leave from four parking lots in the city using the north-south or east-west routes. A round-trip ticket costs £2 ($4). Their Airline buses are blue and travel to London, Heathrow, and Gatwick.

The competition, **Stagecoach,** Unit 4, Horsepath, Cowley (✆ **01865/772250;** www.stagecoachbus.com/oxfordshire), uses blue-and-cream minibuses and red-blue-and-orange coaches. City buses leave from Queen Street in Oxford's city center. A 1-day ticket that allows unlimited travel within Oxford city (called Dayrider) costs £3.30 ($6.60).

WHERE TO STAY

The **Oxford Tourist Information Centre,** Gloucester Green, behind the bus bays (✆ **01865/252200**), operates a year-round room-booking service for a £5 ($10) fee, plus a 10% refundable deposit. If you'd like to seek lodgings on your own, the center has a list of accommodations, maps, and guidebooks.

Expensive

Malmaison Oxford Castle ★★ *Finds* In a TripAdvisor poll of the top 10 quirkiest hotels in the world, the Malmaison in Oxford made the list. Formerly it was for inmates detained at Her Majesty's pleasure, and many aspects of prison life, including barred windows, have been retained. In a converted Victorian building, guestrooms are remodeled "cells" that flank two sides of a large central atrium, a space that rises three stories and is crisscrossed by narrow walkways. The former inmates never had it so good—great beds, mood lighting, power showers, CD players and libraries, satellite TV, and serious wines. In spite of its origins, this is a stylish and comfortable place to stay.

3 Oxford Castle, Oxford OXI 1AY. ✆ **01865/268400.** Fax 01845/3654247. www.malmaison.com. 94 units. £160 ($320) double; £290 ($580) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; room service; laundry service/dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV, minibar, beverage maker, Wi-Fi.

Old Bank Hotel ★★ The first hotel created in the center of Oxford in 135 years, the Old Bank opened late in 1999. Located on Oxford's main street and surrounded by some of its oldest colleges and sights, the building dates from the 18th century and was indeed once a bank. The hotel currently features a collection of 20th-century British art handpicked by the owners. Bedrooms are comfortably and elegantly appointed, often opening onto views. A combination of velvet and shantung silk-trimmed linen bedcovers gives the accommodations added style.

92–94 High St., Oxford OX1 4BN. ✆ **01865/799599.** Fax 01865/799598. www.oxford-hotels-restaurants.co.uk. 42 units. £175–£210 ($350–$420) double; £325 ($650) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: 7. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; room service; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, beverage maker, hair dryer, safe.

Old Parsonage Hotel ★★ This extensively renovated hotel, near St. Giles Church and Keble College, looks like an extension of one of the ancient colleges. Originally a 13th-century hospital, it was restored in the early 17th century. In the 20th century, a modern wing was added, and in 1991 it was completely renovated and made into a first-rate hotel. This intimate old hotel is filled with hidden charms such as tiny gardens in its courtyard and on its roof terrace. In this tranquil area of Oxford, you feel like you're living at one of the colleges yourself. The rooms are all nonsmoking and individually designed but not large; each of them opens onto the private gardens; 10 of them are on the ground floor.

1 Banbury Rd., Oxford OX2 6NN. ✆ **01865/310210.** Fax 01865/311262. www.oldparsonage-hotel.co.uk. 30 units. £160–£200 ($320–$400) double; £250 ($500) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: 7. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; car and limo service for hire; room service; laundry service; dry-cleaning; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer, trouser press.

Moderate

Eastgate Hotel ★ The Eastgate, built on the site of a 1600s structure, stands within walking distance of Oxford College and the city center. Recently refurbished, it offers modern facilities while somewhat retaining the atmosphere of an English country house. The bedrooms are well worn but still cozy and range in size from small to medium.

23 Merton St., 73 The High St., Oxford, Oxfordshire, OX1 4BE. ✆ **0870/400-8201.** Fax 01865/791681. www.accorhotels.com. 63 units. £120–£160 ($240–$320) double. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: 3, 4, 7, or 52. **Amenities:** Bar; room service; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, beverage maker, hair dryer, iron, trouser press.

Inexpensive

Dial House *Value* Three kilometers (2 miles) east of the heart of Oxford, beside the main highway leading to London, is this country-style house originally built between 1924 and 1927. Graced with mock Tudor half-timbering and a prominent blue-faced sundial (from which it derives its name), it has cozy and recently renovated rooms. The owners, the Morris family, serve breakfast in their bright dining room.

25 London Rd., Headington, Oxford, Oxfordshire OX3 7RE. ✆ **01865/425100.** Fax 01865/427388. www.oxfordcity.co.uk/accom/dialhouse. 8 units. £60–£75 ($120–$150) double; £75–£95 ($150–$190) family room. AE, MC, V. Bus: 2, 7, 7A, 7B, or 22. **Amenities:** Nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV, beverage maker, hair dryer, safe, no phone.

WHERE TO DINE

Very Expensive

Le Manoir aux Quat' Saisons ★★★ MODERN FRENCH Some 19km (12 miles) southeast of Oxford, Le Manoir aux Quat' Saisons offers the finest cuisine in the Midlands. The gray- and honey-colored stone manor house, originally built by a Norman nobleman in the early 1300s, has attracted many famous visitors. Today, the restaurant's connection with France has been masterfully revived by the Gallic owner and chef, Raymond Blanc. His reputation for comfort and cuisine attracts guests from as far away as London. The menu is seasonally adjusted to take advantage of the best produce in any season.

Accommodations are also available. Each very pricey room (£400 [$800] for a double; from £850 [$1,700] for a suite) is decorated with luxurious beds and linens, ruffled canopies, and antique reproductions.

Church Rd. Great Milton, Oxfordshire. ☎ **800/845-4274** in the U.S., or 01844/278881. Fax 01844/278847. www.manoir.com. Reservations required. Main courses £40–£45 ($80–$90); lunch menu du jour £49 ($98); lunch or dinner menu gourmand £95 ($190). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 12:15–2:30pm and 7:15–9:30pm. Take exit 7 off M40 and head along A329 toward Wallingford; look for signs for Great American Milton Manor about 1.6km (1 mile) after.

Expensive

Cherwell Boathouse Restaurant ★ FRENCH/MODERN ENGLISH An Oxford landmark on the River Cherwell, this restaurant is owned by Anthony Verdin. Every two weeks, cooks change the intriguing fixed-price menu to take advantage of the availability of fresh vegetables, fish, and meat. There is a very reasonable, even exciting, wine list. The success of the main dishes is founded on savory treats such as grilled quail with garlic and oregano dressing; pan-fried medallions of beef with a shallot and truffle sauce, and char-grilled loin of pork with a chorizo-laced butter. A special treat is the grilled gray mullet with ratatouille accompanied by a basil and chile sauce. For dessert, indulge in the lemon and almond roulade. The style is sophisticated yet understated, with a heavy reliance on quality ingredients that are cooked in a way that preserves natural flavors.

Bardwell Rd. ☎ **01865/552746.** www.cherwellboathouse.co.uk. Reservations recommended. Main courses £16–£18 ($32–$36); fixed-price dinner from £25 ($50); Mon–Fri set lunch £23 ($46); express lunch £13–£16 ($26–$32). AE, MC, V. Daily noon–2:30pm and 6–9:30pm. Closed Dec 24–30. Bus: Banbury Rd.

Rosamund the Fair ★ *Finds* CONTINENTAL/ENGLISH This establishment accurately bills itself as Oxfordshire's cruising restaurant, a weekend retreat. A purpose-built narrow boat restaurant, this floating dining room cruises the Oxford Canal in and around Banbury; as you dine, say hello to the swans. The chefs might get by with the novelty of it all, but they also serve a sublime cuisine. The boat seats 20 people who for 2½ hours enjoy the dinner and the cruise. Between courses you can go on deck and admire the view. A typical menu includes such starters as mango, avocado, and papaya salad with a lime and yogurt dressing, followed by sea bream with deep fried leeks and a lime butter sauce; or you might select ravioli with a salmon and chervil mousse with champagne sauce—a delightful choice—followed by a best end of lamb with a mustard hollandaise glaze and rosemary jus.

Tooley's, Banbury Museum, Spiceball Park Rd., Banbury. ☎ **01295/278690.** www.rosamundthefair.co.uk. Reservations required. Fixed-price menu £55 ($110) per person. MC, V. Sat 7–10:45pm; Sun noon–2:30pm. Closed Jan.

Moderate

Gee's Restaurant ★ MEDITERRANEAN/INTERNATIONAL This restaurant, in a spacious Victorian glass conservatory, was converted from what for 80 years was the leading florist of Oxford. Its original features were retained by the owners, also of the Old Parsonage Hotel (see above), who have turned it into one of the most nostalgic and delightful places to dine in the city. Based on fine ingredients and a skilled preparation, you are likely to enjoy such main courses as pan-fried venison with carrot and beet purée, whole roasted partridge with red wine jus, or homemade semolina gnocchi with baby spinach, goat's cheese, and pine nuts. A good dessert choice is the lemon tart with blackberries.

61 Banbury Rd. ✆ **01865/553540.** Reservations recommended. Main courses £15–£26 ($30–$52); 2-course fixed-price menu £22 ($44); 3-course fixed-price menu £25 ($50); set lunch and pretheater menu £16–£19 ($32–$38). AE, MC, V. Mon–Fri noon–10:30pm; Sat–Sun 11am–10:30pm.

Inexpensive

Al-Salam ★ *Value* LEBANESE Some Oxford students think this place offers the best food value in the city, and because it's a bit less expensive (and a bit less formal) than its major competitor (the also-recommended Al-Shami, see below), we tend to agree. You'll dine within one of three sand-colored dining rooms, each separated from the other with antique (and very solid) wooden doors. Ironically, the newest of the three rooms looks as if it's the oldest, thanks to stone-built arches and a commitment to the kinds of raw materials (wood and masonry) that would have been available in Lebanon a century ago. The menu depends on what's available in the marketplace, and the chef's skill is reflected in such dishes as king prawns sautéed with a garlic and tomato sauce, or spicy lamb with a chili-and-onion sauce. Long lines can form at the door, especially on Friday and Saturday. The location is 2 minutes from both the bus and the train stations.

6 Park End St. ✆ **01865/245710.** Reservations recommended. Main courses £7.50–£12 ($15–$24). MC, V. Daily noon–midnight.

WALKING AROUND THE COLLEGES

The best way to get a running commentary on the important sights is to take a 2-hour walking tour through the city and the major colleges. The tours leave daily from the Oxford Tourist Information Centre at 11am, 1pm, and 2pm. Tours cost £6.50 ($13) for adults and £3 ($6) for children; the tours do not include New College or Christ Church.

AN OVERVIEW For a bird's-eye view of the city and colleges, climb **Carfax Tower** ★, located in the center of the city. This structure is distinguished by its clock and figures that strike on the quarter-hour. Carfax Tower is all that remains from St. Martin's Church, where William Shakespeare once stood as godfather for William Davenant, who also became a successful playwright. A church stood on this site from 1032 until 1896. The tower used to be higher, but after 1340 it was lowered, following complaints from the university to Edward III that townspeople threw stones and fired arrows at students during town-and-gown disputes. Admission is £2 ($4) for adults, £1 ($2) for children. The tower is open year-round, except for from Christmas Eve to January 1. April to October, hours are 10am to 4pm daily. Off-season hours are Monday to Saturday 10am to 3pm. Children younger than 5 are not admitted. For information, call ✆ **01865/792653.**

CHRIST CHURCH ★★ *Kids* Begun by Cardinal Wolsey as Cardinal College in 1525, Christ Church (✆ **01865/276150;** www.chch.ox.ac.uk), known as the House, was founded by Henry VIII in 1546. Facing St. Aldate's Street, Christ Church has the largest quadrangle of any college in Oxford. Tom Tower houses Great Tom, an

18,000-pound bell. It rings at 9:05pm nightly, signaling the closing of the college gates. The 101 times it peals originally signified the number of students in residence at the time the college was founded. Although the student body has grown significantly, Oxford traditions live forever. There are some portraits in the 16th-century Great Hall, including works by Gainsborough and Reynolds. There's also a separate portrait gallery.

The college chapel was constructed over a period of centuries, beginning in the 12th century. (Incidentally, it's not only the college chapel but also the cathedral of the diocese of Oxford.) The cathedral's most distinguishing features are its Norman pillars and the vaulting of the choir, dating from the 15th century. In the center of the great quadrangle is a statue of Mercury mounted in the center of a fishpond. Many scenes from the Harry Potter films have been shot with the cloisters, quads, and staircases of Christ Church standing in for Hogwarts, making this a popular stop for kids of all ages. You can visit the college and cathedral between 9am and 5pm, though times vary (1–5pm Sun). It's best to call before you visit. The entrance fee is £4.90 ($9.80) for adults and £3.90 ($7.80) for children.

MAGDALEN COLLEGE Pronounced *Maud*-lin, Magdalen College, High Street (✆ **01865/276000;** www.magd.ox.ac.uk), was founded in 1458 by William of Waynflete, bishop of Winchester and later chancellor of England. Its alumni range from Wolsey to Wilde. Opposite the botanic garden, the oldest in England, is the bell tower, where the choristers sing in Latin at dawn on May Day. Charles I, his days numbered, watched the oncoming Roundheads from this tower. Visit the 15th-century chapel, in spite of many of its latter-day trappings. Ask when the hall and other places of special interest are open. The grounds of Magdalen are the most extensive of any Oxford college; there's even a deer park. From July to September it is open daily noon to 6pm; from October to June daily 1 to 6pm. Admission is £3 ($6) adults; £2 ($4) seniors, students, and children.

MERTON COLLEGE ★★ Founded in 1264, Merton College, Merton Street (✆ **01865/276310;** www.merton.ox.ac.uk), is among the three oldest colleges at the university. It stands near Corpus Christi College on Merton Street, the sole survivor of Oxford's medieval cobbled streets. Merton College is noted for its library, built between 1371 and 1379 and said to be the oldest college library in England. Though a tradition once kept some of its most valuable books chained, now only one book is secured in that manner to illustrate that historical custom. One of the library's treasures is an astrolabe (an astronomical instrument used for measuring the altitude of the sun and stars) thought to have belonged to Chaucer. You pay £2 ($4) to visit the ancient library as well as the Max Beerbohm Room (the satirical English caricaturist who died in 1956). Call ahead for information. The library and college are open Monday to Friday 2 to 4pm, and Saturday and Sunday 10am to 4pm. It's closed for 1 week at Easter and Christmas and on weekends during the winter.

THE SHOPPING SCENE

In its way, **Alice's Shop,** 83 St. Aldate's (✆ **01865/723793**), played an important role in English literature. Set within a 15th-century building that has housed some kind of shop since 1820, it functioned as a general store (selling brooms, hardware, and the like) during the period that Lewis Carroll, at the time a professor of mathematics at Christ Church College, was composing Alice in Wonderland. It is believed to have been the model for important settings within the book. Today, the place is a favorite

Calling on Churchill at Blenheim Palace

Just 13km (8 miles) northwest of Oxford stands the extravagantly baroque **Blenheim Palace** ★★★ (✆ **01993/811091;** www.blenheimpalace.com), England's answer to Versailles. Blenheim is the home of the 11th duke of Marlborough, a descendant of John Churchill, the first duke, who was an on-again, off-again favorite of Queen Anne's. In his day (1650–1722), the first duke became the supreme military figure in Europe. Fighting on the Danube near a village named Blenheim, Churchill defeated the forces of Louis XIV, and the lavish palace of Blenheim was built for the duke as a gift from the queen. It was designed by Sir John Vanbrugh; the landscaping was created by the famous 18th-century landscape gardener Capability Brown. You may recognize Blenheim as the setting for Kenneth Branagh's *Hamlet.*

The palace is loaded with riches: antiques, porcelain, oil paintings, tapestries, and chinoiserie. North Americans know Blenheim as the birthplace of Sir Winston Churchill. His birth room is included in the palace tour, as is the Churchill exhibition, four rooms of letters, books, photographs, and other relics. Today, the former prime minister lies buried in Bladon Churchyard, near the palace. Blenheim Palace is open from mid-February to mid-December daily from 10:30am to 5:30pm; last admission is at 4:45pm. Admission is £14 to £16 ($28–$32) adults, £11 to £14 ($22–$28) seniors/students, £7.50 to £9.75 ($14–$20) children 5 to 15, and £18 to £43 ($36–86) family ticket, free for children 4 and under. If you're driving, take the A-44 from Oxford; otherwise, the no. 20 or 120A Gloucester Green bus (✆ **01865/772250**) leaves Oxford about every 30 minutes during the day for the half-hour trip.

stopover of Lewis Carroll fans from as far away as Japan, who gobble up commemorative pencils, chess sets, party favors, bookmarks, and in rare cases, original editions of some of Carroll's works.

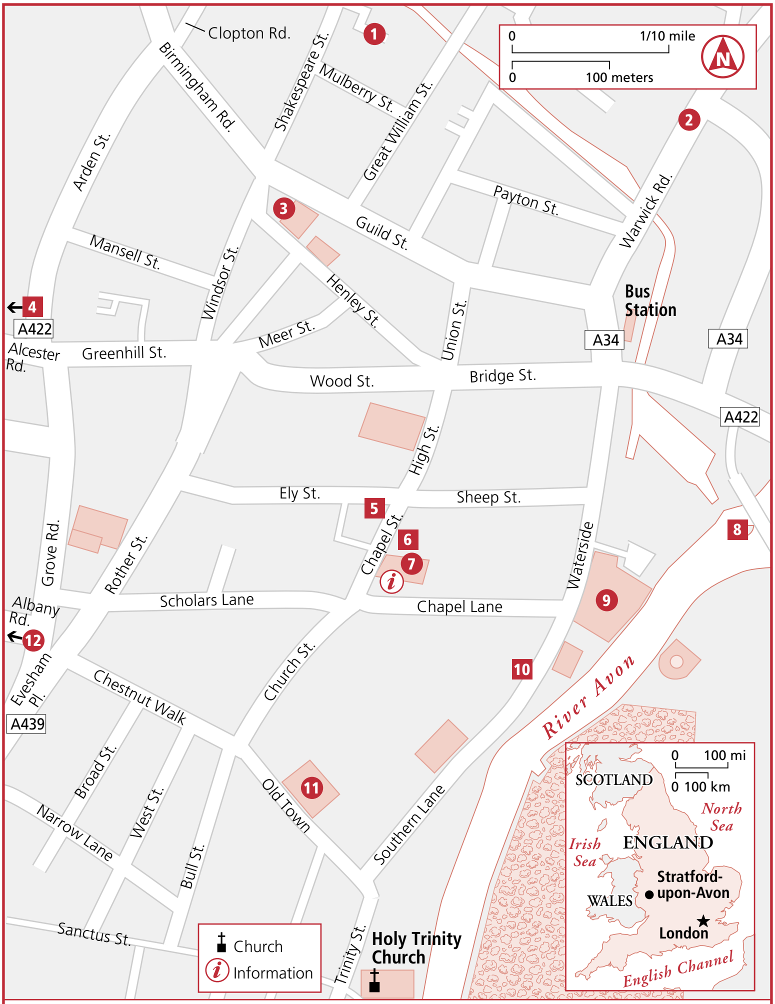
The **Bodleian Library Shop,** Old School's Quadrangle, Radcliffe Square, Broad Street (✆ **01865/277091**), specializes in Oxford souvenirs, from books and paperweights to Oxford banners and coffee mugs.

Castell & Son (The Varsity Shop), 13 Broad St. (✆ **01865/244000;** www.varsityshop.co.uk), is the best outlet in Oxford for clothing emblazoned with the Oxford logo or heraldic symbol. Choices include both whimsical and dead-on-serious neckties, hats, T-shirts, pens, beer and coffee mugs, and cuff links. It's commercialized Oxford, but it still has a sense of relative dignity and style. A second location is at 109–114 High St. (✆ **01865/249491**).

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON ★★

Stratford is virtually overrun by visitors in the summer months; the crowds dwindle in winter, allowing you at least to walk on the streets and seek out the places of genuine historic interest. Stratford is 146km (91 miles) northwest of London and 64km (40 miles) northwest of Oxford.

Stratford-upon-Avon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Henley St.
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Union St.
Bus Station
A422
Alcester Rd.
Greenhill St.
A34
A34
Wood St.
Bridge St.
A422
High St.
Ely St.
Sheep St.
Grove Rd.
Rother St.
Chapel St.
Waterside
Albany Rd.
Scholars Lane
Chapel Lane
Evesham Pl.
A439
Chestnut Walk
Church St.
River Avon
Broad St.
West St.
Old Town
Southern Lane
Narrow Lane
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Trinity St.
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ENGLAND
WALES
Stratford-upon-Avon
London
English Channel
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12

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William Shakespeare, of course, was born here. Little is known about his early life, and many of the stories connected with Shakespeare's days in Stratford are largely fanciful, invented to amuse the vast number of literary fans who make the pilgrimage. David Garrick, the actor, really launched the shrine in 1769 when he organized the first of the Bard's commemorative birthday celebrations.

Tourist magnets include the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, where the Royal Shakespeare Company performs for 11 months each year. Visitors often rush back to London after a performance. Despite the crowds, Stratford's literary pilgrimage sights merit your interest. The town today aggressively hustles the Shakespeare connection, a bit suffocatingly so; everybody seems in business to make a buck off the Bard.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **By Train** The journey from London to Stratford-upon-Avon takes about 2¼ hours, and a round-trip ticket costs £28 to £69 ($56–$138) depending on the train. For schedules and information, call ☎ **0845/748-4950,** or go to **www.nationalrail.co.uk**. The train station at Stratford is on Alcester Road.

By Bus Four **National Express** buses a day leave from London's Victoria Station, with a trip time of 3¼ hours. A single-day round-trip ticket costs £17 ($34). For schedules and information, call ☎ **0870/580-8080** (www.nationalexpress.co.uk).

By Car If you're driving from London, take the M40 toward Oxford and continue to Stratford-upon-Avon on the A34.

VISITOR INFORMATION The **Tourist Information Centre,** Bridgefoot, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire, CV37 6GW (☎ **0870/160-7930;** www.shakespeare-country.co.uk), provides any details you may wish to know about the Shakespeare houses and properties, and will assist in booking rooms. Call and ask for a copy of their free *Shakespeare Country Holiday* guide. It's open April to September, Monday to Saturday 9am to 5:30pm and Sunday 10am to 4pm; October to March, Monday to Saturday 9am to 5pm and Sunday 10am to 3pm.

WHERE TO STAY

Very Expensive

Menzies Welcombe Hotel Spa & Golf Club ★★★ For a formal, historic hotel in Stratford, there's nothing better than the Welcombe. One of England's great Jacobean country houses, this hotel is a 10-minute ride from the heart of Stratford-upon-Avon. Its key feature is an 18-hole golf course. It's surrounded by 63 hectares (156 acres) of grounds and has a formal entrance on Warwick Road, a winding driveway leading to the main hall. Bedrooms are luxuriously furnished in traditional Jacobean style, with fine antiques and elegant fabrics. Most bedrooms are seemingly big enough for tennis matches, but those in the garden wing, although comfortable, are small. Some of the bedrooms are sumptuously furnished with elegant four-posters.

Warwick Rd., Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire CV37 0NR. ☎ **01789/295252.** Fax 01789/414666. www.menzies-hotels.co.uk. 78 units. £195–£245 ($390–$490) double; £245–£470 ($490–$940) suite. Rates include English breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Take A439 2km (1¼ miles) northeast of the town center. Free parking. **Amenities:** 2 Restaurants; bar; indoor heated pool; golf course; tennis court; gym; aerobics studio; spa; business center; room service; laundry service; dry cleaning; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* TV, hair dryer, iron.

Expensive

Alveston Manor Hotel ★★ This Tudor manor is perfect for theatergoers—it's just a 5-minute walk from the theaters. The hotel has a wealth of chimneys and gables, and everything from an Elizabethan gazebo to Queen Anne windows. Mentioned in the *Domesday Book,* the building predates the arrival of William the Conqueror. The rooms in the manor will appeal to those who appreciate the old-world charm of slanted floors, overhead beams, and antique furnishings. Some triples or quads are available in the modern section, connected by a covered walk through the rear garden. Most rooms here are original and have built-in walnut furniture and a color-coordinated decor. You can live in luxury in the original rooms with their walnut furniture or be assigned a routine standard twin that, though comfortable, will lack romance.

Clopton Bridge (off B4066), Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire CV37 7HP. ✆ **800/225-5843** in the U.S. and Canada, or 0870/400-8181. Fax 01789/414095. www.macdonaldhotels.co.uk. 114 units. £142–£210 ($284–$420) double; £172–£250 ($344–$500) suite. Rates include breakfast. AE, MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; indoor heated pool; gym; spa; sauna; room service; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning. *In room:* TV, beverage maker, hair dryer, iron.

Shakespeare Hotel ★★ The original core of this hotel, dating from the 1400s, has seen many additions in its long life. Quieter and plusher than the Falcon (see below), it is equaled in the central core of Stratford only by sister property Alveston Manor. Residents relax in the post-and-timber-studded public rooms, within sight of fireplaces and playbills from 19th-century productions of Shakespeare's plays. Bedrooms are named in honor of noteworthy actors, Shakespeare's plays, or Shakespearean characters. The oldest are capped with hewn timbers, and all have modern comforts. Even the newer accommodations are at least 40 to 50 years old and have rose-and-thistle patterns carved into many of their exposed timbers. Bathrooms range in size.

Chapel St., Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire CV37 6ER. ✆ **888/892-0038** in the U.S., or 01789/294997. Fax 01789/415411. www.mercure.com. 74 units. £100–£180 ($200–$360) double; from £130 ($260) suite. Rates include buffet breakfast. Children younger than 13 stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking £5 ($10). **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; room service; laundry service; dry cleaning; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar (in some), beverage maker, hair dryer, iron.

Moderate

Falcon This inn blends the very old and the very new. The black-and-white timbered inn was licensed a quarter of a century after Shakespeare's death; a glass passageway at the rear of the inn connects a more sterile bedroom extension added in 1970. In the heart of Stratford, the inn faces the Guild Chapel and the New Place Gardens. The recently upgraded rooms in the older section have oak beams, diamond leaded-glass windows, antiques, and good reproductions. In the inn's intimate Merlin Lounge, you'll find an open copper-hooded fireplace where fires are stoked under beams salvaged from old ships.

Chapel St., Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire CV37 6HA. ✆ **0870/832-9905.** Fax 0870/832-9906. www.legacy-hotels.co.uk. 84 units. £90–£150 ($180–$300) double; from £165 ($330) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; 2 bars; room service; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* TV, beverage maker, hair dryer, trouser press.

Thistle Stratford-upon-Avon ★ Theatergoers flock to this Georgian-town-house-style hotel located across the street from the entrance to the Royal Shakespeare and Swan theatres. The hotel's redbrick main section dates from the Regency period, although over the years a handful of adjacent buildings were included in the hotel and an uninspired modern extension was added. Today, the interior has a well-upholstered lounge and bar, a covered garden terrace, and comfortable but narrow bedrooms. Though small, rooms have a sitting area with a couple of armchairs and round side tables, plus twin beds (for the most part). Sometimes a room is graced with a four-poster bed.

44 Waterside, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire CV37 6BA. ✆ **0870/333-9146.** Fax 0870/333-9246. www.stratfordthistle.co.uk. 63 units. £70–£225 ($140–$450) double. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking £5 ($10). **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; room service; laundry service; dry cleaning. *In room:* TV, beverage maker, hair dryer, trouser press.

Inexpensive

Heron Lodge ★ *Value* Bob and Chris Heaps run one of the better B&Bs in Stratford, their lodge lying 1km (½ mile) outside the heart of town. Their midsize bedrooms have individual character, and the furnishings are both tasteful and comfortable. They still practice the old-fashioned custom of an afternoon "cuppa" served in their conservatory. Like Penryn Lodge, the Heaps serve one of the town's best breakfasts, using local products when available.

260 Alcester Rd., Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire CV37 9JQ. ✆ **01789/299169.** www.heronlodge.com. 5 units. £56–£70 ($112–$140) double. MC, V. **Amenities:** Nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* No phone.

WHERE TO DINE

The Quarto's Restaurant ★ FRENCH/ITALIAN/TRADITIONAL ENGLISH This restaurant enjoys the best location in town—it's in the Royal Shakespeare Theatre itself—with glass walls providing an unobstructed view of the swans on the Avon. You can partake of an intermission snack of smoked salmon and champagne or dine by flickering candlelight after the performance. Many dishes are definitely old English; others reflect a Continental touch. You can revel in such appetizers as Stilton with a cucumber-and-red-pepper salad enhanced with a walnut dressing, or else sample the ham terrine with parsley dressing and an apple and onion marmalade. The chef has learned his craft well as reflected by such main dishes as seared tuna with fresh thyme and baby spinach with a mango and lime chutney. Or else you might try the local corn-fed chicken with smoked bacon and apricots, served with Savoy cabbage and a tarragon cream sauce.

In the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Waterside. ✆ **01789/403415.** Reservations recommended. Main courses £11–£17 ($22–$34). AE, MC, V. Thurs and Sat 11:30am–2:30pm; Mon–Sat 5:30–11pm. Closed when theater is shut down.

Thai Boathouse ★ THAI The only restaurant set on the Avon, this charming choice is reached by crossing Clopton Bridge toward Oxford and Banbury. The second-floor dining room opens onto vistas of the river. This restaurant, originally established 4 decades ago in Bangkok, has brought spice and zest to Stratford's lazy restaurant scene. The decor comes from Thailand itself, with elephants, woodcarvings, and Buddhas adorning the restaurant. Seasonal specialties such as wild duck and pheasant are a special feature of the menu. Fresh produce, great skill in the kitchen, and exquisite presentations are the hallmarks of this restaurant. Sample a selection of authentic Thai appetizers before going on to the delectable main courses, which include stir-fried mixed seafood with fresh chili and sweet Thai basil or else chicken stir fried with sweet peppers, pineapple, and onion in a sweet-and-sour sauce.

Swan's Nest Lane. ✆ **01789/297733.** Reservations recommended. Main courses £6–£12 ($12–$24); fixed-price menus £21–£26 ($42–$52). MC, V. Sun–Fri noon–2:30pm; daily 5:30–10:30pm.

PUBS

The Black Swan ("The Dirty Duck") ★★ ENGLISH Affectionately known as The Dirty Duck, this has been a popular hangout for Stratford players since the 18th century. The wall is lined with autographed photos of its many famous patrons. Typical English grills, among other dishes, are featured in the Dirty Duck Grill Room, though no one has ever accused it of serving the best food in Stratford. You'll have a choice of a dozen appetizers, most of which would make a meal themselves. In fair weather, you can have drinks in the front garden and watch the swans glide by on the Avon.

Waterside. ✆ **01789/297312.** Reservations required for dining. Main courses £9–£15 ($18–$30); bar snacks £4–£8 ($8–$16). AE, DC, MC, V (in restaurant only). Restaurant daily noon–10pm; bar daily 11am–1am.

The Garrick Inn ENGLISH Near Harvard House, this black-and-white timbered Elizabethan pub has an unpretentious charm. The front bar is decorated with tapestry-covered settles, an old oak refectory table, and an open fireplace that attracts the locals. The back bar has a circular fireplace with a copper hood and mementos of the triumphs of the English stage. The specialty is homemade pies such as steak and kidney or chicken and mushroom. Wild boar and venison are other specialties.

25 High St. ✆ **01789/292186.** Main courses £5–£11 ($10–$22). MC, V. Meals Mon–Sat noon–10pm, Sun noon–9pm; pub Mon–Thurs 11am–11pm, Fri–Sat 11am–midnight, Sun noon–10:30pm.

THEATER

On the banks of the Avon, the **Royal Shakespeare Theatre (RST),** Waterside, Stratford-upon-Avon CV37 6BB (✆ **01789/403444;** www.rsc.org.uk), is a major showcase for the Royal Shakespeare Company and seats 1,500 patrons. The theater's season runs from November to September and typically features five Shakespearean plays. The company has some of the finest actors on the British stage. ***Warning:*** The theater is undergoing restoration, its Art Deco exterior remaining but a new thrust stage built inside. Expect a gala opening sometime in 2010. During the work, the company will perform at a new theater, **The Courtyard,** near the RST.

You usually need **ticket reservations,** with two successive booking periods, each one opening about 2 months in advance. You can pick these up from a North American or English travel agent. A small number of tickets are always held for sale on the day of a performance, but it may be too late to get a good seat if you wait until you arrive in Stratford. Tickets can be booked through **Keith Prowse** (✆ **800/669-8687** in the U.S. and Canada, or 0870/840-1111 in England; www.keithprowse.com).

You can also call the **theater box office** directly (✆ **0844/800-1110**) and charge your tickets. The box office is open Monday to Saturday 9am to 8pm, although it closes at 6pm on days when there are no performances. Seat prices range from £5 to £45 ($10–$90). You can make a credit card reservation and pick up your tickets on the performance day, but you must cancel at least 1 full week in advance to get a refund.

SHAKESPEARE PILGRIMAGE SIGHTS

Besides the attractions on the periphery of Stratford, many Elizabethan and Jacobean buildings are in town, a number of them administrated by the **Shakespeare Birthplace Trust** (✆ **01789/204016;** www.shakespeare.org.uk). One ticket—costing £15 ($30) adults, £13 ($26) for seniors and students, and £7.20 ($14) for children—lets you visit the five most important sights. You can also buy a family ticket to all five sights (good for two adults and three children) for £38 ($76) —a good deal. Pick up the ticket if you're planning to do much sightseeing (obtainable at your first stopover at any one of the Trust properties).

Anne Hathaway's Cottage ★ Before she married Shakespeare, Anne Hathaway lived in this thatched, wattle-and-daub cottage in the hamlet of Shottery, 1.6km (1 mile) from Stratford. It's the most interesting and the most photographed of the

Trust properties. The Hathaways were yeoman farmers, and their descendants lived in the cottage until 1892. As a result, it was never renovated and provides a rare insight into the life of a family in Shakespearean times. The Bard was only 18 when he married Anne, who was much older. Many original furnishings, including the courting settle (the bench on which Shakespeare is said to have wooed Anne) and various kitchen utensils, are preserved inside the house. After visiting the house, take time to linger in the garden and orchard.

Cottage Lane, Shottery. ✆ **01789/292100.** Admission £6 ($12) adults, £5 ($10) seniors and students, £3 ($6) children, £14 ($28) family ticket (2 adults, 3 children). Nov–Mar daily 10am–4pm; Apr–May Mon–Sat 9:30am–5pm, Sun 10am–5pm; June–Aug Mon–Sat 9am–5pm, Sun 9:30am–5pm; Sept–Oct Mon–Sat 9:30am–5pm, Sun 10am–5pm. Closed Dec 23–26. Take a bus from Bridge St. or walk via a marked pathway from Evesham Place in Stratford across the meadow to Shottery.

Hall's Croft This house is on Old Town Street, not far from the parish church, Holy Trinity. It was here that Shakespeare's daughter Susanna probably lived with her husband, Dr. John Hall. Hall's Croft is an outstanding Tudor house with a walled garden, furnished in the style of a middle-class home of the time. Dr. Hall was widely respected and built up a large medical practice in the area. Fascinating exhibits illustrate the theory and practice of medicine in Dr. Hall's time.

Old Town St. (near Holy Trinity Church). ✆ **01789/292107.** Admission £4 ($8) adults, £3.50 ($7) senior and students, £2 ($4) children, £11 ($21) family ticket (2 adults, 3 children). Nov–Mar daily 11am–4pm; Apr–May daily 11am–5pm; June–Aug Mon–Sat 9:30am–5pm, Sun 10am–5pm; Sept–Oct daily 11am–5pm. Closed Dec 23–28. To reach Hall's Croft, walk west from High St., which becomes Chapel St. and Church St. At the intersection with Old Town St., go left.

Mary Arden's House (Glebe Farm)/Palmer's Farm ★ So what if millions of visitors have been tricked into thinking this timber-framed farmhouse with its old stone dovecote and various outbuildings was the girlhood home of Shakespeare's mother, Mary Arden? It's still one of the most intriguing sights outside Stratford, even if local historian Dr. Nat Alcock discovered in 2000 that the actual childhood home of Arden was the dull-looking brick-built farmhouse, Glebe Farm, next door. Glebe's Farm has now been properly renamed Mary Arden's House. It was all the trick of an 18th-century tour guide, John Jordan, who decided Glebe Farm was too unimpressive to be the home of the Bard's mother, so he told tourists it was this farmstead instead. What was known for years as "Mary Arden's House" has been renamed Palmer's Farm. Actually, this farm wasn't constructed until the late 16th century, a little late to be Mary Arden's actual home. After the name confusion, local authorities have converted Palmer's Farm into a working farm. Visitors can tour the property seeing first-hand how a farming household functioned in the 1570s—yes, cows to be milked, bread to be baked, and vegetables cultivated in an authentic 16th-century manner. In the barns, stable, cowshed, and farmyard is an extensive collection of farming implements illustrating life and work in the local countryside from Shakespeare's time to the present.

Wilmcote. ✆ **01789/293455.** Admission £7 ($14) adults, £6 ($12) students and seniors, £3.50 ($7) children, £18 ($36) family ticket, children under 5 free. Nov–Mar daily 10am–4pm; Apr–May daily 10am–5pm; June–Aug daily 9:30am–5pm; Sept–Oct daily 10am–5pm. Closed Dec 23–26. Take A3400 (Birmingham) for 5.5km (3½ miles).

New Place/Nash's House Shakespeare retired to New Place in 1610 (a prosperous man by the standards of his day) and died here 6 years later. Regrettably, the house was torn down, so only the garden remains. A mulberry tree planted by the Bard was so popular with latter-day visitors to Stratford that the garden's owner chopped it down. It is said that the mulberry tree that grows here today was planted from a cutting of the original tree. You enter the gardens through Nash's House (Thomas Nash married Elizabeth Hall, a granddaughter of the poet). Nash's House has 16th-century period rooms and an exhibition illustrating the history of Stratford. The popular Knott Garden adjoins the site and represents the style of a fashionable Elizabethan garden.

Chapel St. ✆ **01789/292325.** Admission £4 ($8) adults, £3.50 ($7) seniors and students, £2 ($4) children, £11 ($22) family ticket (2 adults, 3 children). Nov–Mar daily 11am–4pm; Apr–May daily 11am–5pm; June–Aug Mon–Sat 9:30am–5pm, Sun 10am–5pm; Sept–Oct daily 11am–5pm. Closed Dec 23–26. Walk west down High St.; Chapel St. is a continuation of High St.

Shakespeare's Birthplace ★ The son of a glover and whittawer (leather worker), the Bard was born on St. George's Day, April 23, 1564, and died on the same date 52 years later. Filled with Shakespeare memorabilia, including a portrait and furnishings of the writer's time, the Trust property is a half-timbered structure, dating from the early 16th century. The house was bought by public donors in 1847 and preserved as a national shrine. You can visit the living room, the bedroom where Shakespeare was probably born, a fully equipped kitchen of the period (look for the "babyminder"), and a Shakespeare Museum, illustrating his life and times. Later, you can walk through the garden.

Henley St. (in the town center near the post office, close to Union St.). ✆ **01789/204016.** Admission £8 ($16) adults, £7 ($14) students and seniors, £4 ($8) children, £21 ($42) family ticket (2 adults, 3 children). Nov–Mar Mon–Sat 10am–4pm, Sun 10:30am–4pm; Apr–May daily 10am–5pm; June–Aug Mon–Sat 9am–5pm, Sun 9am–5pm; Sept–Oct daily 10am–5pm. Closed Dec 23–26.

ORGANIZED TOURS

Guided tours of Stratford-upon-Avon are conducted by **City Sightseeing,** Civic Hall, Rother Street. In summer, open-top double-decker buses depart every 15 minutes daily from 9am to 6pm. You can take a 1-hour ride without stops, or you can get off at any or all of the town's five Shakespeare properties. Though the bus stops are clearly marked along the historic route, the most logical starting point is the sidewalk in front of the Pen & Parchment Pub, at the bottom of Bridge Street. Tour tickets are valid all day so you can hop on and off the buses as many times as you want. The tours cost £10 ($20) for adults, £8 ($16) for seniors or students, and £5 ($10) for children younger than 16. A family ticket sells for £25 ($50) and children under 5 are free. Tour frequency depends on the time of the year; call for information. The first departures are at 9:30am.

THE SHOPPING SCENE

Set within an antique house with ceiling beams, **The Shakespeare Bookshop,** 39 Henley St. (✆ **01789/292176**), across from the Shakespeare Birthplace Centre, is the region's premier source for textbooks and academic treatises on the Bard and his works. It specializes in books for every level of expertise on Shakespearean studies, from picture books for junior high school students to weighty tomes geared to anyone pursuing a Ph.D. in literature.

Everything in the **Pickwick Gallery,** 32 Henley St. (✆ **01789/294861**), is a well-crafted work of art produced by copper or steel engraving plates, or printed by means of a carved wooden block. Hundreds of botanical prints, landscapes, and renderings of artfully arranged ruins, each suitable for framing, can be purchased. Topographical maps of regions of the United Kingdom are also available if you're planning on doing any serious hiking.

A Visit to Warwick Castle

Perched on a rocky cliff above the Avon River in the town center, **Warwick Castle** ★★★ is a stately late-17th-century-style mansion surrounded by a magnificent 14th-century fortress. The first significant fortifications were built by Ethelfleda, daughter of Alfred the Great, in 914. Two years after the Norman Conquest in 1068, William the Conqueror ordered the construction of a "motte and bailey" castle. The mound is all that remains today of the Norman castle.

The Beauchamp family, earls of Warwick, is responsible for the appearance of the castle today, and much of the external structure remains unchanged from the mid–14th century. The staterooms and Great Hall house fine collections of paintings, furniture, arms, and armor. The armory, dungeon, torture chamber, ghost tower, clock tower, and Guy's tower create a vivid picture of the castle's turbulent past and its important role in the history of England.

Sir Walter Scott described Warwick Castle in 1828 as "that fairest monument of ancient and chivalrous splendor which yet remains uninjured by time." Visitors can also see the Victorian rose garden, a re-creation of an original design from 1868 by Robert Marnock. On Castle Hill, Warwick Castle (✆ **0870/442-2000;** www.warwick-castle.co.uk) is open April through September daily from 10am to 6pm; October through March daily from 10am to 5pm; closed Christmas Day. Admission is £18 to £19 ($36–$38) adults, £12 ($24) children 4–16, £52 to £56 ($104–$112) family ticket, free for children 3 and younger. Discounts available online.

Trains run frequently between Stratford-upon-Avon and Warwick. A one-way ticket costs around £4.50 ($9) Call ✆ **0845/748-4950** for schedules and information. One **Stagecoach** bus, the 16, departs Stratford-upon-Avon every hour during the day. The trip takes roughly half an hour. Call the **tourist office** (✆ **0870/160-7930**) for schedules. **National Express** (✆ **0870/580-8080;** www.nationalexpress.com) runs four buses daily from the Riverside bus station in Stratford-upon-Avon to Puckerings Lane in Warwick for £1.50 ($3). Take the A46 if you're driving from Stratford-upon-Avon.

3 Stonehenge & Bath

Many visitors with very limited time head for the West Country, where they explore its two major attractions: Stonehenge—the most important prehistoric monument in Britain—and Bath, England's most elegant city, famed for its architecture and its hot springs. If you have the time, you may also want to visit Salisbury Cathedral and the other prehistoric sites in the area, at Avebury and Old Sarum.

STONEHENGE ★★★

At the junction of A-303 and A-344/A-360, 3km (1¾ miles) west of Amesbury and about 15km (9⅓ miles) north of Salisbury, stands the renowned monument of

Stonehenge, a stone circle believed to be approximately 5,000 years old. This circle of lintels and megalithic pillars is the most important prehistoric monument in Britain.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **By Car** To reach Stonehenge from London, head in the direction of Salisbury (see below), 145km (90 miles) to the southwest. Take the M-3 to the end of the run, continuing the rest of the way on A-30. Once at Salisbury, after stopping to view its cathedral (see below), head north on Castle Road. At the first roundabout (traffic circle), take the exit toward Amesbury (A-345) and Old Sarum. Continue along this route for 13km (8 miles) and then turn left onto A-303 in the direction of Exeter. Stonehenge is signposted, leading you up the A-344 to the right. In all, it's about 19km (12 miles) from Salisbury.

By Train or Bus Once in Salisbury (see below) you can catch a bus to Stonehenge. **Wilts & Dorset** (☎ **01722/336855;** www.wdbus.co.uk) runs several buses daily (depending on demand) from Salisbury to Stonehenge, as well as buses from the Salisbury train station to Stonehenge. The bus trip to Stonehenge takes 40 minutes, and a round-trip ticket costs £7.50 ($15) for adults, £4.50 ($9) for children ages 5 to 15 (4 and younger ride free), £5.50 ($11) seniors, and £14 ($28) family ticket.

EXPLORING STONEHENGE

Visitors cannot help but be impressed when they first see Stonehenge, an astonishing engineering feat, in person. The boulders, the bluestones in particular, were moved many miles, possibly from as far away as southern Wales, to this site.

The widely held view of the 18th- and 19-century Romantics that Stonehenge was the work of the druids is without foundation. The boulders, many weighing several tons, are believed to have predated the arrival in Britain of the Celtic druidic cult. Recent excavations continue to bring new evidence to bear on the origin and purpose of the prehistoric circle; controversy has surrounded the site, especially since the publication of *Stonehenge Decoded* by Gerald S. Hawkins and John B. White, which maintains that Stonehenge was an astronomical observatory—that is, a Neolithic calendar capable of predicting eclipses.

The site is now surrounded by a fence to protect it from vandals and souvenir hunters. Your ticket permits you to go inside the fence, all the way up to a short rope barrier about 15m (50 ft.) from the stones. You can make a full circular tour around Stonehenge; a modular walkway has been introduced to cross the archaeologically important area that runs between the Heel Stone and the main circle of stones. This lets you complete a full circuit of the stones, an excellent addition to the well-received audio tour.

Admission to Stonehenge (☎ **01980/623108**) is £6.30 ($13) adults, £4.70 ($9.40) students and seniors, £3.20 ($6.40) children, £16 ($32) family ticket. It's open June to Aug daily from 9am to 7pm; March 16 to May and September to October 15 daily from 9:30amto 6pm; and October 16 to March 15 daily from 9:30am to 4pm.

AVEBURY ★★

Avebury, one of Europe's largest prehistoric sites, lies 32km (20 miles) north of Stonehenge on the Kennet River, 11km (6¾ miles) west of Marlborough. The small village actually lies within the vast stone circle. Unlike Stonehenge, you can walk around the 11-hectare (27-acre) site, winding in and out of the circle of more than 100 stones, some of which weigh up to 50 tons. The stones are made of sarsen, a sandstone found in Wiltshire. Inside this large circle are two smaller ones, each with about 30 stones standing upright. Native Neolithic tribes are believed to have built these circles.

Also here is the **Alexander Keiller Museum** (✆ **01672/539250**), which houses one of Britain's most important archaeological collections, including material from excavations at Windmill Hill and Avebury, and artifacts from other prehistoric digs at West Kennet, Long Barrow, Silbury Hill, West Kennet Avenue, and the Sanctuary.

GETTING THERE Avebury is on A-361 between Swindon and Devizes and 1.6km (1 mile) from the A-4 London-Bath road. The closest rail station is at Swindon, some 19km (12 miles) away, which is served by the main rail line from London to Bath. A limited bus service (no. 49) runs from Swindon to Devizes through Avebury.

Wilts & Dorset (✆ **01722/336855;** www.wdbus.co.uk) has two buses (nos. 5 and 6) that run between the Salisbury bus station and Avebury five times a day Monday through Saturday and three times a day on Sunday. The one-way trip takes 1 hour and 40 minutes. Round-trip tickets are £7.50 ($15) for adults, £5.50 ($11) seniors, £14 ($28) family ticket, and £4.50 ($9) for children ages 5 to 14 (4 and younger ride free).

SALISBURY ★★

Long before you enter Salisbury, the spire of the cathedral comes into view, just as John Constable painted it many times. Salisbury lies in the Avon River Valley, and is a fine place to stop for lunch and a look at the cathedral on your way to Stonehenge.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **By Train** **Network Express trains** depart for Salisbury hourly from Waterloo Station in London; the trip takes 1½ hours. Sprinter trains offer fast, efficient service every hour from Portsmouth, Bristol, and South Wales. Also, direct rail service is available from Exeter, Plymouth, Brighton, and Reading. For rail information, call ✆ **0845/748-4950** or visit **www.nationalrail.co.uk**.

By Bus Three **National Express buses** per day run from London, Monday through Friday. On Saturday and Sunday, three buses depart Victoria Coach Station for Salisbury. The trip takes 3 hours. Call ✆ **0870/580-8080** for schedules and information, or visit **www.nationalexpress.com**.

By Car If you're driving from London, head west on the M3 to the end of the run, continuing the rest of the way on the A30.

VISITOR INFORMATION The **Tourist Information Centre** is at Fish Row (✆ **01722/334956;** www.visitsalisbury.com) and is open October to April, Monday to Saturday 9:30am to 5pm; May, Monday to Saturday 9:30am to 5pm and Sunday 10:30am to 4:30pm; June to September, Monday to Saturday 9:30am to 6pm and Sunday 10:30am to 4:30pm.

WHERE TO STAY

The Beadles ★★ *Finds* A traditional modern Georgian house with antique furnishings and a view of the cathedral, The Beadles offers unobstructed views of the beautiful Wiltshire countryside from its .4-hectare (1-acre) gardens. It's situated in a small, unspoiled English village, 11km (7 miles) from Salisbury, which offers excellent access to Stonehenge, Wilton House, the New Forest, and the rambling moors of Thomas Hardy country. Even the road to Winchester is an ancient Roman byway. Furnished tastefully, this household contains rooms with twins or doubles. Owners David and Anne-Marie Yuille-Baddeley delight in providing information on the area.

Middleton, Middle Winterslow, near Salisbury, Wiltshire SP5 1QS. ☎ **01980/862922.** Fax 01980/863565. www.guestaccom.co.uk/754.htm. 3 units. £70 ($140) double. Rates include English breakfast. MC, V. Turn off A30 at Pheasant Inn to Middle Winterslow. Enter the village, make the 1st right, turn right again, and it's the 1st right after Trevano. **Amenities:** Dining room; tour services; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* TV, coffeemaker, hair dryer.

The Legacy Rose and Crown Hotel ★★★ This half-timbered, 13th-century gem stands with its feet almost in the River Avon; beyond the water, you can see the tall spire of the cathedral. Because of its tranquil location, it's our top choice. From here, you can easily walk over the arched stone bridge to the center of Salisbury in 10 minutes. Old trees shade the lawns and gardens between the inn and the river, and chairs are set out so that you can enjoy the view and count the swans. The inn has both a new and an old wing. The new wing is modern, but the old wing is more appealing, with its sloping ceilings and antique fireplaces and furniture. Bedrooms in the main house range from small to medium in size, though those in the new wing are more spacious and better designed.

Harnham Rd., Salisbury, Wiltshire SP2 8JQ. ☎ **0870/832-9946.** Fax 0870/832-9947. www.legacy-hotels.co.uk. 28 units. £80–£197 ($160–$394) double. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Take A3094 2.5km (1½ miles) from the center of town. Free parking. **Amenities:** Restaurant; 2 bars; room service; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* TV, beverage maker, hair dryer, trouser press.

WHERE TO DINE

Harper's Restaurant ENGLISH/INTERNATIONAL The chef-owner of this place prides himself on specializing in homemade and wholesome "real food." The pleasantly decorated restaurant is on the second floor of a redbrick building at the back end of Salisbury's largest parking lot, in the center of town. In the same all-purpose dining room, you can order from two different menus, one with affordable bistro-style platters, including beefsteak casserole with "herby dumplings." A longer menu, with items that take more time to prepare, includes roast Barbury duck breast on a plum ginger and star anise confit, or local grilled lamb chops with red currant jus.

6–7 Ox Row, Market Sq. ☎ **01722/333118.** www.harpersrestaurant.co.uk. Reservations recommended. Dinner main courses £8.50–£15 ($17–$30); lunch menu main courses all £7.90 ($16). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat noon–2pm and 6–9:30pm. Closed Sun.

Howard's House Hotel Restaurant ★ INTERNATIONAL If you'd like to dine in one of the loveliest places in the area and enjoy a refined cuisine at the same time, leave Salisbury and head for this previously recommended hotel (see above). It's a 14km (9-mile) drive to Teffont Evias but well worth the trip. The village itself is one of the most beautiful in Wiltshire.

The elegantly appointed restaurant showcases a finely honed cuisine prepared with first-class ingredients. The menu changes daily but is likely to feature such starters as Cornish scallop risotto with deep-fried basil or maple glazed pork belly. Main courses are very appealing with well-balanced flavors, as exemplified by filet of wild sea bass in a saffron broth or filet of Scottish beef with foie gras and truffle jus.

Teffont Evias, near Salisbury. ☎ **01722/716392.** Reservations required. 2-course fixed-price lunch £21 ($42); 3-course fixed-price lunch £25 ($50); 2-course fixed-price dinner £33 ($66); 3-course fixed-price dinner £42 ($84). Sun–Wed 12:30–1:30pm; daily 7:30–9pm. For directions, see the Howard's House listing in the "Where to Stay" section, above.

Salisbury Haunch of Venison ENGLISH Right in the heart of Salisbury, this creaky-timbered chophouse (it dates from 1320) serves excellent dishes, especially English roasts and grills. Stick to its specialties and you'll rarely go wrong. Begin with a tasty warm salad of venison sausages with garlic croutons and then follow with the time-honored roast haunch of venison with parsnips and juniper berries. Other classics are served as well including sugar-baked Wiltshire ham with bubble and squeak (a dish of cabbage and potatoes).

1 Minster St. ✆ **01722/411313.** www.haunchofvenison.uk.com. Fixed-price menu £9.90 ($20) served daily noon–2pm and 6–8pm; main courses £7.90–£16 ($16–$32). MC, V. Mon–Sat 11:30am–11pm; Sun noon–10:30pm.

IN & AROUND SALISBURY

Old Sarum ★ Believed to have been an Iron Age fortification, Old Sarum was used again by the Saxons and flourished as a walled town into the Middle Ages. The Normans built a cathedral and a castle here; parts of the old cathedral were taken down to build the city of New Sarum (Salisbury).

3km (2 miles) north of Salisbury off A345 on Castle Rd. ✆ **01722/335398.** www.english-heritage.org.uk/oldsarum. Admission £2.90 ($5.80), £2.20 ($4.40) seniors, £1.50 ($3) children. Apr–June and Sept daily 10am–5pm; July–Aug daily 9am–6pm; Oct daily 10am–4pm; Nov–Feb daily 11am–3pm; Mar daily 10am–4pm. Bus nos. 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 run every 30 min. during the day from the Salisbury bus station.

Salisbury Cathedral ★★★ You can search all of England, but you'll find no better example of early English or pointed style than Salisbury Cathedral. Construction began as early as 1220 and took 38 years to complete; this was rather fast since it was customary in those days for a cathedral building to require at least 3 centuries. The soaring spire was completed at the end of the 13th century. Despite an ill-conceived attempt at renovation in the 18th century, the architectural integrity of the cathedral has been retained.

The 13th-century octagonal chapter house (note the fine sculpture), which is especially attractive, possesses one of the four surviving original texts of the Magna Carta, along with treasures from the diocese of Salisbury and manuscripts and artifacts belonging to the cathedral. The cloisters enhance the beauty of the cathedral, and the exceptionally large close, with at least 75 buildings in its compound (some from the early 18th c., others earlier), sets off the cathedral most effectively.

The Close, Salisbury. ✆ **01722/555120.** www.salisburycathedral.org.uk. Suggested donation £5 ($10), £3.50 ($7) students and seniors, £3 ($6) children, £12 ($24) family. Sept to mid-June Mon–Sat 7:15am–6:15pm; mid-June to Aug Mon–Sat 7:15am–7:15pm; year-round Sun 7:15am–6:15pm.

Wilton House ★★ This home of the earls of Pembroke is in the town of Wilton. It dates from the 16th century but has undergone numerous alterations, most recently in Victoria's day, and is noted for its 17th-century staterooms, designed by celebrated architect Inigo Jones. Shakespeare's troupe is said to have entertained here, and Eisenhower and his advisers prepared here for the D-Day landings at Normandy, with only the Van Dyck paintings as silent witnesses.

The house is filled with beautifully maintained furnishings and world-class art, including paintings by Rubens, Brueghel, and Reynolds. You can visit a reconstructed Tudor kitchen and Victorian laundry.

On the 8.4-hectare (21-acre) estate are giant cedars of Lebanon trees, the oldest of which were planted in 1630, as well as rose and water gardens, riverside and woodland walks, and a huge adventure playground for children.

5km (3 miles) west of Salisbury on A36. ✆ **01722/746714.** www.wiltonhouse.co.uk. Admission (including grounds) £12 ($24) adults, £9.75 ($20) seniors, £6.50 ($13) children 5–15, £30 ($60) family ticket, free for children younger than 5. Easter–Sept Sun–Fri 10:30am–5:30pm (last entrance at 4:30pm); grounds Sat only.

BATH ★★★

The city of Bath has had two lives. Originally, it was a Roman spa known as Aquae Sulis. The foreign legions founded their baths here (which may be visited today) to ease their rheumatism in the curative mineral springs. In 1702, Queen Anne made the trek from London, 185km (115 miles) west to the mineral springs of Bath, thereby launching a fad that was to make the city England's most celebrated spa.

The most famous personage connected with Bath's growing popularity was the 18th-century dandy Beau Nash. As the master of ceremonies of Bath, Nash cut a striking figure. In all the plumage of a bird of paradise, he was carted around in a sedan chair, dispensing (at a price) trinkets to courtiers and aspirant gentlemen. This polished arbiter of taste and manners succeeded in making dueling déclassé.

The 18th-century architects John Wood the Elder and his son envisioned a proper backdrop for Nash's activities. They designed a city of honey-colored stone from the nearby hills, a feat so substantial and lasting that Bath today is the most harmoniously laid-out city in England. The city attracted leading political and literary figures, such as Dickens, Thackeray, Nelson, Pitt, and, most important, of course, Jane Austen. Canadians may already know that General Wolfe lived on Trim Street, and Australians may want to visit the house at 19 Bennett St. where their founding father, Admiral Phillip, lived.

Remarkable restoration and careful planning have ensured that Bath retains its handsome look today. It has somewhat of a museum appearance, with the attendant gift shops. Prices, stimulated by massive tourist invasion, tend to be high. But Bath remains one of the high points of the West Country.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **By Train** Trains leave London's Paddington Station bound for Bath once every half-hour during the day. The trip takes about 1½ hours. For rail information, call ✆ **0845/748-4950** or visit www.nationalrail.co.uk.

By Bus A **National Express** coach leaves London's Victoria Coach Station every 90 minutes during the day. The trip takes 3½ hours. Coaches also leave Bristol bound for Bath and make the trip in 40 minutes. For schedules and information, call ✆ **0870/580-8080** or visit **www.nationalexpress.com**.

By Car Drive west on the M4 to the junction with the A4, then continue west to Bath.

VISITOR INFORMATION The **Bath Tourist Information Centre** is at Abbey Chambers, Abbey Church Yard (✆ **09067/112000** toll call 50p/£1 per minute; www.visitbath.co.uk), next to Bath Abbey. It's open May to September, Monday to Saturday 9:30am to 6pm, Sunday 10am to 4pm; off season, Monday to Saturday 9:30am to 5pm and Sunday 10am to 4pm. It is closed Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

SPECIAL EVENTS Bath's graceful Georgian architecture provides the setting for one of Europe's most prestigious international festivals of music and the arts, the **Bath International Music Festival.** For 15 days in late May and early June each year, the city is filled with more than 1,000 performers. The festival focuses on classical music, jazz, new music, and the contemporary visual arts, with orchestras, soloists, and artists from all over the world. In addition to the main music and art program, the festival offers walks, tours, and talks, plus free street entertainment, a free Festival Club, and opening night celebrations with fireworks. For information, contact the **Bath Festivals Box Office,** 2 Church St., Abbey Green, Bath BA1 1NL (✆ **01225/463362;** www.bathmusicfest.org.uk).

GETTING AROUND One of the best ways to explore Bath is by bike. Rentals are available at **The Bath & Dundas Canal Company,** Brass Knocker Basin at Monkton Combe (✆ **01225/722292;** www.bathcanal.com). Daily rentals go for £14 ($28).

WHERE TO STAY

Very Expensive

The Bath Priory ★★★ Converted from one of Bath's Georgian houses in 1969, the Priory is situated on .8 hectare (2 acres) of formal and award-winning gardens with manicured lawns and flower beds. The rooms are furnished with antiques; our personal favorite is Clivia (all rooms are named after flowers or shrubs), a nicely appointed duplex in a circular turret. Rooms range from medium in size to spacious deluxe units, the latter with views, large sitting areas, and generous dressing areas. Each has a lovely old English bed, often a half-tester.

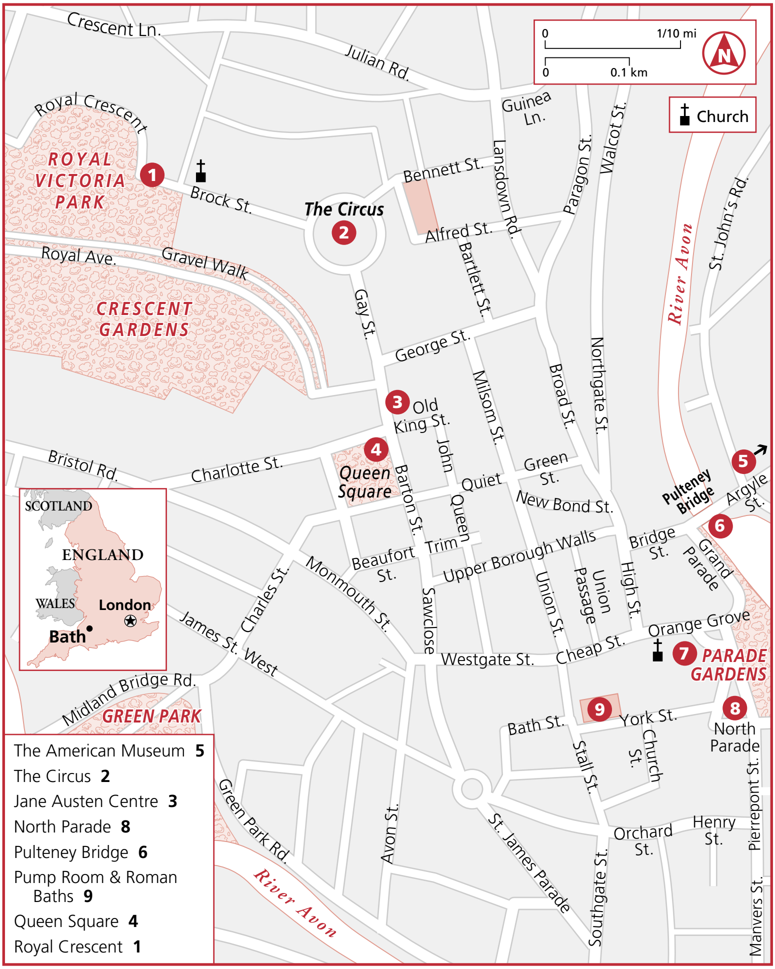
Weston Rd., Bath, Somerset BA1 2XT. ✆ **01225/331922.** Fax 01225/448276. www.thebathpriory.co.uk. 27 units. £245–£360 ($490–$720) standard double; from £425 ($850) suite; from £495 ($990) family room. Rates include English breakfast. Free parking. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; 2 pools (1 indoor, 1 outdoor); health club; spa; Jacuzzi; sauna; solarium; croquet lawn; room service; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning; room for those w/limited mobility; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer, minibar, trouser press.

Bath Spa Hotel ★★★ This stunning restored 19th-century mansion is a 10-minute walk from the center of Bath. Behind a facade of Bath stone, it lies at the end of a tree-lined drive on 2.8 hectares (7 acres) of landscaped grounds, with a Victorian grotto and a Grecian temple. In its long history, it served many purposes (once as a hostel for nurses) before being returned to its original grandeur. The hotel uses log fireplaces, elaborate moldings, and oak paneling to create country-house charm. The rooms are handsomely furnished, and most of them are spacious. Most beds are doubles, and some even offer an old-fashioned four-poster.

Sydney Rd. (east of the city, off A36), Bath, Somerset BA2 6JF. ✆ **0870/4008222.** Fax 01225/444006. www.bathspahotel.co.uk. 129 units. £149–£359 ($298–$718) double; £399–£679 ($798–$1,358) suite. Rates include breakfast. AE, MC, V. Free parking. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; indoor pool; gym; spa; whirlpool; sauna; croquet lawn; salon; room service; laundry service; dry cleaning; valet; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, coffeemaker, hair dryer, iron, trouser press, safe, Wi-Fi.

The Royal Crescent ★★★ This special place stands proudly in the center of the famed Royal Crescent. Long regarded as Bath's premier hotel (before the arrival of the even better Bath Spa), it has attracted the rich and famous. The bedrooms, including the Jane Austen Suite, are lavishly furnished with such amenities as four-poster beds and marble tubs. Each room is individually designed and offers such comforts as bottled mineral water, fruit plates, and other special touches. Bedrooms, generally quite spacious, are elaborately decked out with thick wool carpeting, silk wall coverings, and antiques, each with a superb and rather sumptuous bed.

15–16 Royal Crescent, Bath, Somerset BA1 2LS. ✆ **01225/823333**. Fax 01225/339401. www.royalcrescent.co.uk. 45 units. £305–£405 ($610–$810) double; from £545 ($1,090) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; indoor pool; health club; steam room; sauna; room service; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning; rooms for those w/limited mobility; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV, minibar (in some), beverage maker, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.


Bath

The Circus
ROYAL VICTORIA PARK
CRESCENT GARDENS
Queen Square
GREEN PARK
PARADE GARDENS
River Avon
Pulteney Bridge
Crescent Ln.
Julian Rd.
Royal Crescent
Brock St.
Royal Ave.
Gravel Walk
Gay St.
Bennett St.
Alfred St.
Bartlett St.
Lansdown Rd.
Guinea Ln.
Paragon St.
Walcot St.
St. John's Rd.
George St.
Old King St.
John St.
Milsom St.
Broad St.
Northgate St.
Bristol Rd.
Charlotte St.
Barton St.
Quiet St.
Green St.
New Bond St.
Queen St.
Trim St.
Beaufort St.
Upper Borough Walls
Union Passage
Union St.
High St.
Bridge St.
Argyle St.
Grand Parade
Orange Grove
Monmouth St.
Charles St.
James St. West
Sawclose
Westgate St.
Cheap St.
Midland Bridge Rd.
Bath St.
York St.
Church St.
Stall St.
North Parade
Green Park Rd.
Avon St.
St. James Parade
Southgate St.
Orchard St.
Henry St.
Pierrepont St.
Manvers St.
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N
Church
The American Museum 5
The Circus 2
Jane Austen Centre 3
North Parade 8
Pulteney Bridge 6
Pump Room & Roman Baths 9
Queen Square 4
Royal Crescent 1

Expensive

Hotel Mercure Francis Hotel ★ An integral part of Queen Square, the Francis is an example of 18th-century taste and style, but we find it too commercial and touristy. Originally consisting of six private residences dating from 1729, the Francis was opened as a private hotel by Emily Francis in 1884 and has offered guests first-class service for more than 100 years. Many of the well-furnished and traditionally styled bedrooms overlook Queen Square, named in honor of George II's consort, Caroline. Rooms range in size from rather small to medium, with either twin or double beds. Accommodations in the older building have more charm, especially the upper floor.

Queen Sq., Bath, Somerset BA1 2HH. ✆ **888/221-4542** in the U.S. and Canada, or 01225/424105. Fax 01225/319715. www.mercure.com. 95 units. £135–£195 ($270–$390) double; £195 ($390) suite. Rates include breakfast.

AE, DC, MC, V. Parking £10 ($20). **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; room service; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C in some, TV, fridge, hair dryer, iron, trouser press, Wi-Fi.

Pratt's Hotel ★ Once the home of Sir Walter Scott, Pratt's dates from the heady days of Beau Nash. Functioning as a hotel since 1791, it has become part of the legend and lore of Bath. Several elegant terraced Georgian town houses were joined together to form this complex with a very traditional British atmosphere. Rooms are individually designed, and as is typical of a converted private home, bedrooms range from small to spacious (the larger ones are on the lower floors). Regardless of their dimensions, the rooms are furnished in a comfortable though utilitarian style.

S. Parade, Bath, Somerset BA2 4AB. ✆ **01225/460441.** Fax 01225/448807. www.prattshotel.com. 46 units. £139–£149 ($278–$298) double. Children under 14 sharing a room with 2 adults stay free. Rates include English breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking £12 ($24). **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; room service; laundry service; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV, coffeemaker, hair dryer, iron, trouser press.

Queensberry ★ A gem of a hotel, this early Georgian-era town house has been beautifully restored. In our view, it is now among the finest places to stay in a city where the competition for restored town-house hotels is fierce. The Marquis of Queensberry commissioned John Wood the Younger to build this house in 1772. Rooms—often spacious but sometimes medium in size—are delightful, each tastefully decorated with antique furniture and such thoughtful extras as fresh flowers.

Russell St., Bath, Somerset BA1 2QF. ✆ **01225/447928.** Fax 01225/446065. www.thequeensberry.co.uk. 29 units. £115–£230 ($230–$460) double; £225–£410 ($450–$820) suite. AE, MC, V. Free parking. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; room service; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV, beverage maker, hair dryer.

Moderate

Apsley House Hotel ★★ *Finds* This charming and stately building, just 1.5km (1 mile) west of the center of Bath, dates from 1830, during the reign of William IV. In 1994, new owners refurbished the hotel, filling it with country-house chintzes and a collection of antiques borrowed from the showrooms of an antiques store they own. (Some furniture in the hotel is for sale.) Style and comfort are the keynote here, and all the relatively spacious bedrooms are inviting, appointed with plush beds.

141 Newbridge Hill, Bath, Somerset BA1 3PT. ✆ **01225/336966.** Fax 01225/425462. www.apsley-house.co.uk. 11 units. £70–£170 ($140–$340) double; £100–£200 ($200–$400) suite. Rates include English breakfast. AE, MC, V. Take A4 to Upper Bristol Rd., fork right at the traffic signals into Newbridge Hill, and turn left at Apsley Rd. Free parking. **Amenities:** Bar; room service; in-room massage; laundry service; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV, coffeemaker, hair dryer, trouser press, Wi-Fi.

Dukes Hotel A short walk from the heart of Bath, this 1780 building is fresher than ever following a complete restoration. Many of the original Georgian features, including cornices and moldings, have been retained. Rooms, ranging from small to medium, are exceedingly comfortable. All of the bathrooms are small but efficiently arranged and sport tub/shower combinations or just showers. Guests can relax in a refined drawing room or patronize the cozy bar overlooking a garden. The entire setting has been called a "perfect *Masterpiece Theatre* take on Britain," with a fire burning in the grate.

53–54 Great Pulteney St., Bath, Somerset BA2 4DN. ✆ **01225/787960.** Fax 01225/787961. www.dukesbath.co.uk. 17 units. £155–£175 ($310–$350) double; £215 ($430) 4-poster room; £198 ($396) suite. Rates include continental breakfast. AE, MC, V. 2-night minimum stay on weekends. Bus: 18. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; business services; room service; laundry service; dry cleaning. *In room:* TV, minibar (in some), beverage maker, hair dryer.

Inexpensive

One Three Nine ★ Value At the southern side of the city on the A367 road to Exeter (Devon), this Victorian residence from the 1870s is a 10-minute walk from the center of Bath, and minibuses pass by frequently. David and Annie Lanz offers one of the best-value accommodations in the area. The hotel rents elegant and spacious bedrooms, individually furnished and decorated.

139 Wells Rd., Bath, Somerset BA2 3AL. ✆ **01225/314769.** Fax 01225/443079. www.139bath.co.uk. 8 units. £70–£160 ($140–$320) double; £110–£175 ($220–$350) family room. Rates include English breakfast. AE, MC, V. 2-night minimum stay on weekends. On approaching Bath, follow A367 Exeter signs but ignore the LIGHT VEHICLES ONLY sign; turn left onto A37/A367 (the Wells Rd.) and follow the black railings uphill (450m/1,500 ft.); when the railings end, turn left into Hayesfield Park, and Leighton House will be on the right. Free parking. **Amenities:** Breakfast room; lounge; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C (in some), TV, coffeemaker, hair dryer, Wi-Fi.

WHERE TO DINE

Expensive

The Moody Goose ★★★ ENGLISH For some of the finest food in Greater Bath, you have to go outside the center to Midsomer Norton. The kitchen has an absolute passion for fresh ingredients and food cooked to order, and the chefs believe in using produce grown as near home as possible, though the Angus beef comes in from Scotland and the fresh fish from the coasts of Cornwall and Devon. Natural flavors are appreciated here and not smothered in sauces. Even the breads, ice creams, and petits fours are homemade. The kitchen team is expert at chargrilling.

Some of the best-tasting starters include crab salad with tarragon mayonnaise and tomato sorbet or else a terrine of wood pigeon. Chicken and braised chicory with a raspberry vinaigrette is yet another appetizer. Main courses that we highly recommend include roast quail with spinach, ricotta cake, and a sage cream sauce, or else roast filet of brill with caviar butter and a sweet potato fondant.

In the Old Priory Hotel, Church Sq., Midsomer Norton, outside Bath. ✆ **01761/416784.** www.moodygoose.co.uk. Reservations required. Main courses £19–£21 ($38–$42); 2-course fixed-price lunch £15 ($30); 3-course fixed-price lunch £20 ($40); table d'hôte dinner menu £25 ($50). MC, V. Mon–Sat noon–1:30pm and 7–9:30pm.

Pimpernel's ★★ BRITISH The Royal Crescent contains this city's most stunning collection of Georgian architecture. In a discreet hotel, the unmarked door of the Royal Crescent Hotel leads to this on-site restaurant, Pimpernel's, now hailed as one of the West Country's finest dining choices. With his garden and cozy inside dining room, Chef Steven Blake dazzles the discerning palates of Bath with a series of perfectly prepared and innovative dishes. His contemporary British menu roams the world for inspiration. The setting is romantic, with hand-painted wall coverings and distinctive pottery from Dartington. Through elegant French windows, tables overlook the private gardens. Sterling craftsmanship marks a menu that includes roasted sea bass with a funnel purée; corn-fed chicken poached in a coriander and ginger butter sauce; or roe venison with potatoes *dauphinoise,* baby spinach, and wild mushrooms. To finish, opt for the delightful cherry soufflé with vanilla bean ice cream.

15–16 Royal Crescent. ✆ **01225/823333.** Reservations required. Fixed-price lunch £18–£25 ($32–$45); 3-course fixed-price dinner £49 ($88). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily noon–2pm and 7–9:30pm (10:30pm Sat).

The Olive Tree ★ MODERN ENGLISH/MEDITERRANEAN This is one of the most sophisticated little restaurants in Bath. Head Chef Marc Salmon uses the best local produce, with an emphasis on freshness. The menu is changed to reflect the season, with game and fish being the specialties. You might begin with a tomato tart with goat cheese fritters or a galatine of wood pigeon, duck, and rainbow chard set off with a spiced gooseberry chutney. You can then proceed to such good-tasting mains as roast rum of West Country lamb with sweetbreads or Aberdeen Angus rib-eye steak with a tarragon gnocchi, perhaps roast loin of venison with beets in a Port wine sauce.

In the Queensberry Hotel, Russel St. ✆ **01225/447928.** Reservations highly recommended. Main courses £16–£22 ($32–$44). AE, MC, V. Mon–Sat noon–2pm and 7–10pm; Sun noon–2pm and 7–9:30pm.

Moderate

The Moon and Sixpence INTERNATIONAL One of the leading restaurants and wine bars of Bath, The Moon and Sixpence occupies a stone structure east of Queen Square. The food may not be as good as that served at more acclaimed choices, including The Hole in the Wall, but the value is unbeatable. At lunch, a large cold buffet with a selection of hot dishes is featured in the wine bar section. In the upstairs restaurant overlooking the bar, full service is offered. Main courses may include filet of lamb with caramelized garlic or roast breast of duck with Chinese vegetables. Look for the daily specials on the Continental menu.

6A Broad St. ✆ **01225/460962.** Reservations recommended. Main courses £14–£20 ($28–$40). AE, MC, V. Daily noon–2:30pm; Mon–Sat 5:30–10:30pm; Sun noon–2:45 and 6–10:30pm.

Woods Value MODERN ENGLISH/FRENCH/ASIAN Named after John Wood the Younger, architect of Bath's famous Assembly Room, which lies across the street, this restaurant is run by horse-racing enthusiast David Price and his French-born wife, Claude. A fixed-price menu is printed on paper, whereas the seasonal array of à la carte items is chalked onto a frequently changing blackboard. Good bets include the slow-roasted belly of pork with port-braised cabbage and cinnamon sauce, or else filet of cod with a white wine, cream, and coriander sauce.

9–13 Alfred St. ✆ **01225/314812.** Reservations recommended. Main courses £12–£20 ($24–$40). 2-course fixed-price lunch £14 ($28); 2-course fixed-price dinner £19 ($38). MC, V. Mon–Sat noon–2:30pm and 6–10:30pm; Sun noon–2pm.

EXPLORING BATH

Stroll around to see some of the buildings, crescents, and squares in town. The **North Parade** (where Goldsmith lived) and the **South Parade** (where English novelist and diarist Frances Burney once resided) represent harmony, as well as the work of John Wood the Elder, who also designed beautiful **Queen Square,** where both Jane Austen and Wordsworth once lived. Also of interest is **The Circus** ★★★, built in 1754, as well as the shop-lined **Pulteney Bridge,** designed by Robert Adam and often compared to the Ponte Vecchio of Florence.

The younger John Wood designed the **Royal Crescent** ★★★, an elegant half-moon row of town houses (copied by Astor architects for their colonnade in New York City in the 1830s). At **No. 1 Royal Crescent** (✆ **01225/428126**), the interior has been redecorated and furnished by the Bath Preservation Trust to look as it might have toward the end of the 18th century. The house lies at one end of Bath's most magnificent crescents, west of the Circus. Admission is £5 ($10) for adults, £4 ($8) for students and seniors, and £2.50 ($5) for children aged 5 to 16; a family ticket is £12 ($24). Open from mid-March to October, Tuesday to Sunday 10:30am to 5pm, and November, Tuesday to Sunday from 10:30am to 4pm (last admission 30 min. before closing); closed Good Friday and December to mid-February.

The **Jane Austen Centre,** 40 Gay St. (✆ **01225/443000;** www.janeausten.co.uk), is located in a Georgian town house on an elegant street where Miss Austen once lived. Exhibits and a video convey a sense of what life was like in Bath during the Regency

Two More Magnificent Houses: Longleat House & Stourhead

Between Bath and Salisbury, 6.5km (4 miles) southwest of Warminster and 7km (4⅓ miles) southeast of Frome on A-362, is **Longleat House** ★★★, Warminster, Wiltshire (✆ **01985/844400;** www.longleat.co.uk), owned by the seventh marquess of Bath. The first view of this Elizabethan house, built in the early Renaissance style, is romantic enough, but the wealth of paintings and furnishings in its lofty rooms is dazzling. From the Elizabethan Great Hall to the library, state rooms, and grand staircase, the house is filled with fine tapestries and paintings. The library contains the finest private collection in the country. The Victorian kitchens are open, and various exhibitions are mounted in the stable yard.

Admission to Longleat House is £10 ($20) adults, £6 ($12) children. The house is open daily from 10am to 5:30pm. A separate safari park is open April through November 2, daily from 10am to 6pm (last cars admitted at 5pm or sunset).

After a visit to Longleat, you can drive 10km (6¼ miles) down B-3092 to Stourton, a village just off the highway 5km (3 miles) northwest of Mere (A-303). A Palladian house, **Stourhead** ★★★ (✆ **01747/841152**) was built in the 18th century by the banking family of Hoare. The fabulous gardens, blending art and nature, became known as *le jardin anglais.* Set around an artificial lake, the grounds are decorated with temples, bridges, islands, and grottoes, as well as statuary. From March to October, admission to the garden and house is £11 ($22) adults, £5.50 ($11) children, £26 ($52) family ticket; from November to February the house is closed; admission to the garden is £6.60 ($13) adults, £3.60 ($7.20) children, £16 ($32) family ticket. The house is open Friday to Tuesday from 11:30am to 4:30pm (last admission 4pm); the garden's open daily from 9am to 7pm.

period. The center is open mid-February to October daily from 10am to 5:30pm, and November to mid-February Sunday to Friday 11am to 4:30pm, and Saturday 10am to 5:30pm. Admission is £6.50 ($13) for adults, £4.95 ($9.90) students and seniors, £3.50 ($7) children, and £18 ($36) family ticket.

The American Museum ★★ Some 4km (2½ miles) outside Bath, get an idea of what life was like in America prior to the mid-1800s. The first American museum established outside the U.S., it sits proudly on extensive grounds high above the Somerset Valley. Among the authentic exhibits shipped over from the States are a New Mexico room, a Conestoga wagon, the dining room of a New York town house of the early 19th century, and (on the grounds) a copy of Washington's flower garden at Mount Vernon. Throughout the summer, the museum hosts various special events, from displays of Native American dancing to very realistic reenactments of the Civil War.

Claverton Manor, Bathwick Hill. ✆ **01225/460503.** www.americanmuseum.org. Admission £7.50 ($15) adults, £6.50 ($13) students and seniors, £4 ($8) children 5–16, £20 ($40) family ticket, free for 4 and younger. Late Mar to Oct Tues–Sun noon–5:30pm for the museum; Nov to late Mar closed. Bus: 18.

Bath Abbey ★ Built on the site of a much larger Norman cathedral, the present-day abbey is a fine example of the late Perpendicular style. When Queen Elizabeth I came to Bath in 1574, she ordered a national fund to be set up to restore the abbey. The west front is the sculptural embodiment of a Jacob's Ladder dream of a 15th-century bishop. When you go inside and see its many windows, you'll understand why the abbey is called the "Lantern of the West." Note the superb fan vaulting with its scalloped effect. Beau Nash was buried in the nave and is honored by a simple monument totally out of keeping with his flamboyant character. The Bath Abbey Heritage Vaults opened in 1994 on the south side of the abbey. This subterranean exhibition traces the history of Christianity at the abbey site since Saxon times.

Orange Grove. ✆ **01225/422462.** www.bathabbey.org. £2.50 ($5) donation requested, children under 16 free. Abbey Apr–Oct Mon–Sat 9am–6pm; Nov–Mar Mon–Sat 9am–4:30pm; year-round Sun 1–2:30pm and Apr–Oct 4:30–5:30pm. The Heritage Vaults Mon–Sat 10am–3:30pm (last entrance).

The Pump Room ★ & Roman Baths ★★ Founded in A.D. 75 by the Romans, the baths were dedicated to the goddess Sulis Minerva; in their day, they were an engineering feat. Even today, they're among the finest Roman remains in the country, and they are still fed by Britain's most famous hot-spring water. After centuries of decay, the original baths were rediscovered during Queen Victoria's reign. The site of the Temple of Sulis Minerva has been excavated and is now open to view. The museum displays many interesting objects from Victorian and recent digs (look for the head of Minerva).

Coffee, lunch, and tea, usually with music from the Pump Room Trio, can be enjoyed in the 18th-century pump room, overlooking the hot springs. You can also find a drinking fountain with hot mineral water (it tastes horrible).

In the Bath Abbey churchyard, Stall St. ✆ **01225/477785.** www.romanbaths.co.uk. Admission £10–£11 ($20–$22) adults, £8.75 ($18) seniors, £6.50 ($13) children, £29 ($58) family ticket. Apr–June and Sept daily 9am–6pm; July–Aug daily 8am–10pm; Oct–Mar Mon–Sat 9:30am–5:30pm.

ORGANIZED TOURS

Free 1¾-hour walking tours are conducted throughout the year by the **Mayor's Honorary Society** (✆ **01225/477411**). Tours depart from outside the Pump Room in the Abbey churchyard (look for the WALKING TOURS sign) Sunday to Friday at 10:30am and 2pm, Saturday at 10:30am; May to September, another tour is added on Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday at 7pm.

THE SHOPPING SCENE

Bath is loaded with markets and fairs, antiques centers, and small shops, with literally hundreds of opportunities to buy (and ship) anything you want (including the famous spa waters, for sale by the bottle). Prices, however, are comparable to London's.

The Bartlett Street Antiques Centre, Bartlett Street, encompasses 20 dealers and 50 showcases displaying furniture, silver, antique jewelry, paintings, toys, military items, and collectibles.

Near Bath Abbey, the **Beaux Arts Gallery,** 12–13 York St. (✆ **01225/464850;** www.beauxartsbath.co.uk), is the largest and most important gallery of contemporary art in Bath, specializing in well-known British artists including Ray Richardson, John Bellany, and Nicola Bealing. Closely linked to the London art scene, the gallery occupies a pair of interconnected, stone-fronted Georgian houses. Its half-dozen showrooms exhibit objects beginning at £30 ($60).

The very upscale **Rossiter's,** 38–41 Broad St. (✆ **01225/462227**), sells very traditional English tableware and home decor items. They'll ship anywhere in the world. Look especially for the display of Moorcraft ginger jars, vases, and clocks, as well as the Floris perfumes.

BATH AFTER DARK

To gain a very different perspective of Bath, you may want to take the **Bizarre Bath Walking Tour** (✆ **01225/335124;** www.bizarrebath.co.uk), a 1½-hour improvisational tour of the streets during which the tour guides pull pranks, tell jokes, and behave in a humorously annoying manner toward tourgoers and unsuspecting residents. The tour runs nightly at 8pm from Easter to October, no reservations necessary; just show up, ready for anything, at the Huntsman Inn at North Parade Passage. Cost is £7 ($14) for adults, £5 ($10) for students and children.

After your walk, you may need a drink or want to check out the local club and music scene. At **The Bell,** 103 Walcot St. (✆ **01225/460426;** www.walcotstreet.com), music ranges from jazz and country to reggae and blues on Monday and Wednesday nights and Sunday at lunch and dinner. On music nights, the band performs in the center of the long, narrow 400-year-old room.

7

France

by Darwin Porter & Danforth Prince

Though France is slightly smaller than Texas, no other country has such a diversity of sights and scenery in such a compact area. A visitor can travel to Paris, one of the world's great cities; drive among the Loire Valley's green hills; or head south to sunny Provence and the French Riviera. Discover the attractions (and transport, lodging, and dining offerings) in each of these regions in this chapter.

1 Paris ★★★

The City of Light always lives up to its reputation as one of the world's most romantic cities. Ernest Hemingway referred to the splendors of Paris as a "moveable feast" and wrote, "There is never any ending to Paris, and the memory of each person who has lived in it differs from that of any other."

Here you can stroll along the Seine and the broad tree-lined boulevards; browse the chic shops and relax over coffee or wine at a cafe; visit the museums, monuments, and cathedrals; or sample the cuisine.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **By Plane** Paris has two international airports: **Aéroport d'Orly,** 14km (8⅔ miles) south of the city, and **Aéroport Roissy–Charles de Gaulle,** 23km (14 miles) northeast. A shuttle (16€/$23) makes the 50- to 75-minute journey between the two airports about every 30 minutes.

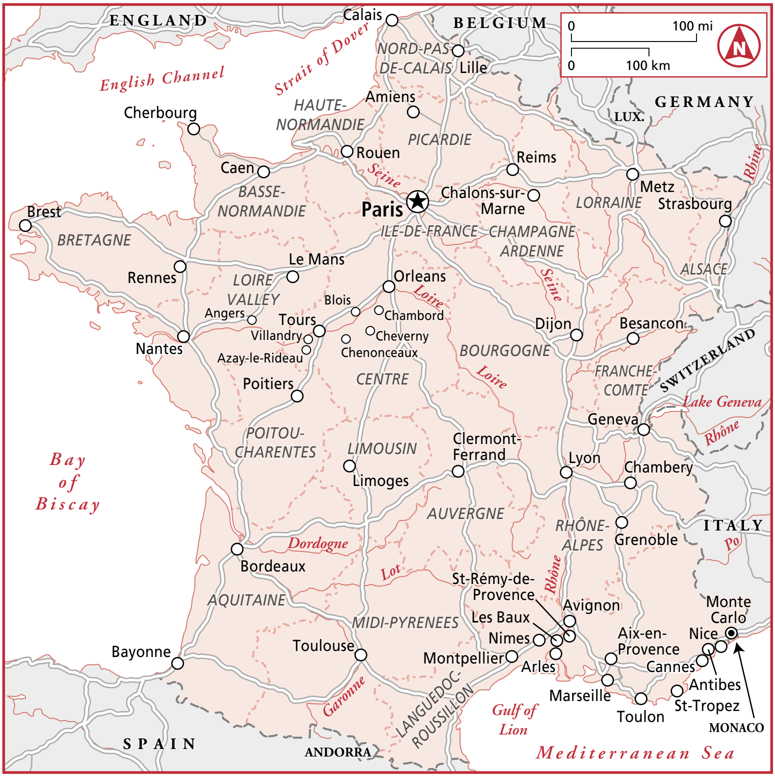
At **Charles de Gaulle Airport** (✆ **01-48-62-22-80**), foreign carriers use Aérogare 1, Air France Aérogare 2. From Aérogare 1, you take a moving walkway to the passport checkpoint and the Customs area. A *navette* (shuttle bus) links the two terminals.

The free shuttle buses also transports you to the **Roissy rail station,** from which fast RER (Réseau Express Régional) trains leave every 10 minutes between 5am and midnight for Métro stations including Gare du Nord, Châtelet, Luxembourg, Port-Royal, and Denfert-Rochereau. A typical fare from Roissy to any point in central Paris is 8.20€ ($12) per person (5.60€/$8.10 children 4–10). Travel time from the airport to central Paris is around 35 to 40 minutes.

You can also take an **Air France shuttle bus** (✆ **08-92-35-08-20** or 01-48-64-14-24; www.cars-airfrance.com) to central Paris for 13€ ($19) one-way, 20€ ($29) round-trip. It stops at the Palais des Congrès (Port Maillot) and continues to place Charles-de-Gaulle–Étoile, where subway lines can carry you to any point in Paris. That ride, depending on traffic, takes 45 to 55 minutes. The shuttle departs about every 20 minutes between 5:40am and 11pm.

The **Roissybus** (✆ **01-58-76-16-16**), operated by the RATP, departs from the airport daily 6am to 11:45pm and costs 8.60€ ($12) for the 45- to 50-minute ride.

France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HAUTE-NORMANDIE
Amiens
PICARDIE
Rouen
Reims
Rhine
Caen
Seine
Metz
BASSE-NORMANDIE
Paris
Chalons-sur-Marne
LORRAINE
Strasbourg
Brest
BRETAGNE
ILE-DE-FRANCE
CHAMPAGNE-ARDENNE
Le Mans
ALSACE
Rennes
LOIRE VALLEY
Orleans
Seine
Loire
Blois
Angers
Tours
Chambord
Dijon
Besancon
Villandry
Cheverny
Nantes
Azay-le-Rideau
Chenonceaux
BOURGOGNE
SWITZERLAND
Loire
FRANCHE-COMTE
Poitiers
CENTRE
Lake Geneva
Geneva
Rhône
POITOU-CHARENTES
LIMOUSIN
Clermont-Ferrand
Bay of Biscay
Lyon
Chambery
Limoges
AUVERGNE
RHÔNE-ALPES
Grenoble
ITALY
Po
Dordogne
Bordeaux
Lot
St-Rémy-de-Provence
Rhône
AQUITAINE
Avignon
Monte Carlo
MIDI-PYRENEES
Les Baux
Aix-en-Provence
Nice
Nimes
Toulouse
Bayonne
Montpellier
Arles
Cannes
Antibes
LANGUEDOC-ROUSSILLON
Marseille
St-Tropez
Garonne
Gulf of Lion
Toulon
MONACO
SPAIN
ANDORRA
Mediterranean Sea

Departures are about every 15 minutes, and the bus leaves you near the corner of rue Scribe and place de l'Opéra in the heart of Paris.

A **taxi** from Roissy into the city will cost about 47€ to 60€ ($68–$87); from 8pm to 7am the fare is 40% higher. Long orderly lines for taxis form outside each of the airport's terminals.

Orly Airport (**✆ 01-49-75-15-15**) has two terminals—Orly *Sud* (south) for international flights and Orly *Ouest* (west) for domestic flights. A free shuttle bus (trip time: 3 min.) connects them.

Air France buses leave from Exit E of Orly Sud and from Exit F of Orly Ouest every 12 minutes between 6am and 11:30pm for Gare des Invalides; the fare is 9€ ($13) one-way, 14€ ($20) round-trip. Returning to the airport (about 30 min.), buses leave both the Montparnasse and the Invalides terminal for Orly Sud or Orly Ouest every 15 minutes.

Another way to get to central Paris is to take the RER from points throughout central Paris to the station at Pont-de-Rungis/Aéroport d'Orly for a per-person one-way fare of 6€ ($8.70), and from here, take the free shuttle bus that departs every 15 minutes from Pont-de-Rungis to both of Orly's terminals. Combined travel time is about 45 to 55 minutes.

Tips The Paris Airport Shuttle

The **Paris Airport Shuttle** (✆ **01-53-39-18-18;** fax 01-53-39-13-13; www.parishuttle.com) charges 25€ ($36) for one person or 19€ ($28) per person for two or more going to and from Charles de Gaulle or Orly. Both shuttles accept American Express, Visa, and MasterCard, with 1-day advance reservations required.

A **taxi** from Orly to central Paris costs about 30€ to 50€ ($44–$73), more at night. Don't take a meterless taxi from Orly—it's much safer (and usually cheaper) to hire one of the metered cabs, which are under the scrutiny of a police officer.

By Train Paris has six major stations: **Gare d'Austerlitz,** 55 quai d'Austerlitz, 13e (serving the southwest, with trains to and from the Loire Valley, Bordeaux, the Pyrénées, and Spain); **Gare de l'Est,** place du 11-Novembre-1918, 10e (serving the east, with trains to and from Strasbourg, Reims, and beyond, to Zurich and Austria); **Gare de Lyon,** 20 bd. Diderot, 12e (serving the southeast, with trains to and from the Côte d'Azur [Nice, Cannes, St-Tropez], Provence, and beyond, to Geneva and Italy); **Gare Montparnasse,** 17 bd. Vaugirard, 15e (serving the west, with trains to and from Brittany); **Gare du Nord,** 18 rue de Dunkerque, 15e (serving the north, with trains to and from London, Holland, Denmark, and northern Germany); and **Gare St-Lazare,** 13 rue d'Amsterdam, 8e (serving the northwest, with trains to and from Normandy). Buses operate between the stations, and each station has a Métro stop. For train information and to make reservations, call ✆ **08-92-35-35-35** from abroad, or **36 35** from France between 8am and 8pm daily. From Paris, one-way rail passage to Tours costs 30€ to 51€ ($44–$74); one-way to Strasbourg 55€ or 80€ ($80 or $116), depending on the routing.

Warning: The stations and surrounding areas are usually seedy and frequented by pickpockets, hustlers, hookers, and addicts. Be alert, especially at night.

By Bus Most buses arrive at the **Eurolines France** station, 28 av. du Général-de-Gaulle, Bagnolet (✆ **08-92-89-90-91;** www.eurolines.fr; Métro: Gallieni).

By Car Driving in Paris is *not* recommended. Parking is difficult and traffic dense. If you drive, remember that Paris is encircled by a ring road, the *périphérique.* Always obtain detailed directions to your destination, including the name of the exit on the *périphérique* (exits aren't numbered). Avoid rush hours.

The major highways into Paris are A1 from the north; A13 from Rouen, Normandy, and other points northwest; A10 from Spain and the southwest; A6 and A7 from the French Alps, the Riviera, and Italy; and A4 from eastern France.

VISITOR INFORMATION The **Paris Convention and Visitors Bureau** (✆ **08-92-68-30-00;** .35€ (50¢) per minute; www.paris-info.com) has offices throughout the city, with the main headquarters at 25–27 rue des Pyramides, 1er (Métro: Pyramides). It's open Monday to Saturday 10am to 7pm (June–Oct from 9am), Sunday and holidays from 11am to 7pm. Less comprehensive branch offices include Clémenceau Welcome Center, corner of av. Champs-Elysées and av. Marigny (8th; Metro: Champs-Elysées), open April 6 to October 20 daily 9am to 7pm. **Espace Tourisme Ile-de-France,** in the Carrousel du Louvre, 99 rue de Rivoli, 1er (Métro: Palais-Royal–Louvre), open daily 10am to 6pm; in the **Gare de Lyon,** 20 bd. Diderot, Paris 12e (Métro: Gare de Lyon), open Monday to Saturday 8am to 6pm; in the **Gare du Nord,** 18 rue de

Dunkerque, 10e (Métro: Gare du Nord), open daily 8am to 6pm; and in **Montmartre,** 21 place du Tertre, 18e (Métro: Abbesses or Lamarck-Caulaincourt), open daily 10am to 7pm. You can walk in at any branch to make a hotel reservation; the service charge is free. The offices are extremely busy year-round, especially in midsummer, so be prepared to wait in line.

CITY LAYOUT Paris is surprisingly compact. Occupying 168 sq. km (65 sq. miles), it's home to more than 10 million people. The River Seine divides Paris into the ***Rive Droite*** **(Right Bank)** to the north and the ***Rive Gauche*** **(Left Bank)** to the south. These designations make sense when you stand on a bridge and face downstream (west)—to your right is the north bank, to your left the south. A total of 32 bridges link the Right Bank and the Left Bank. Some provide access to the two islands at the heart of the city—**Ile de la Cité,** the city's birthplace and site of Notre-Dame; and **Ile St-Louis,** a moat-guarded oasis of 17th-century mansions.

The "main street" on the Right Bank is **avenue des Champs-Elysées,** beginning at the Arc de Triomphe and running to place de la Concorde. Avenue des Champs-Elysées and 11 other avenues radiate like the arms of an asterisk from the Arc de Triomphe, giving it its original name, place de l'Etoile (*étoile* means "star"). It was renamed place Charles-de-Gaulle following the general's death; today, it's often referred to as place Charles-de-Gaulle-Etoile.

Maps If you're staying more than 2 or 3 days, purchase an inexpensive pocket-size book called *Paris par arrondissement* at a newsstand or bookshop; prices start at 10€ ($15). This guide provides you with a Métro map, a foldout map of the city, and maps of each arrondissement, with all streets listed and keyed.

Arrondissements in Brief The heart of medieval Paris was the **Ile de la Cité** and the areas immediately surrounding it. As Paris grew, it absorbed many of the once-distant villages, and today each of these ***arrondissements*** (districts) retains a distinct character. They're numbered 1 to 20 starting at the center and progressing in a clockwise spiral. The key to finding any address in Paris is to look for the arrondissement number, rendered as a number followed by "er" or "e" (1er, 2e, and so on). If the address is written out more formally, you can tell what arrondissement it's in by looking at the postal code. For example, the address may be written with the street name, and then "75014 Paris." The last two digits, "14," indicate that the address is in the 14th arrondissement, Montparnasse.

On the Right Bank, the **1er** is home to the Louvre, place Vendôme, rues de Rivoli and St-Honoré, Palais Royal, and Comédie-Française—an area filled with grand institutions and grand stores. At the center of the **2e,** the city's financial center, is the Bourse (Stock Exchange). Most of the **3e** and the **4e** is referred to as the Marais, the old Jewish quarter that in the 17th century was home to the aristocracy. Today it's a trendy area of boutiques and restored mansions as well as the center of Paris's gay and lesbian community. On the Left Bank, the **5e** is known as the Latin Quarter, home to the Sorbonne and associated with the intellectual life that thrived in the 1920s and 1930s. The **6e,** known as St-Germain-des-Prés, stretches from the Seine to boulevard du Montparnasse. It is associated with the 1920s and 1930s and known as a center for art and antiques; it boasts the Palais and Jardin du Luxembourg. The **7e,** containing both the Eiffel Tower and Hôtel des Invalides, is a residential district for the well-heeled.

Back on the Right Bank, the **8e** epitomizes monumental Paris, with the triumphal avenue des Champs-Elysées, the Elysées Palace, and the fashion houses along avenue Montaigne and the Faubourg St-Honoré. The **18e** is home to

Value

Discount Transit Passes

The **Paris-Visite** (✆ **32 46**) is valid for 1, 2, 3, or 5 days on public transport, including the Métro, buses, the funicular ride to Montmartre, and RER trains. For access to zones 1 to 3, which includes central Paris and its nearby suburbs, its cost ranges from 8.50€ ($12) for 1 day to 27€ ($39) for 5 days. Get it at RATP (Régie Autonome des Transports Parisiens) offices, the tourist office, and Métro stations.

Another discount pass is **Carte Mobilis,** which allows unlimited travel on bus, subway, and RER lines during a 1-day period for 5.50€ to 16€ ($8–$23) depending on the zone. Ask for it at any Métro station.

Most economical is a **Carte Orange.** Sold at large Métro stations, it allows 1 week of unlimited Métro or bus transit within central Paris and its immediate outskirts for 16€ to 36€ ($23–$52). The pass is valid from any Monday to the following Sunday, and it's sold only on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. You'll have to submit a passport-size photo.

Sacré-Coeur and Montmartre and all that the name conjures of the bohemian life painted most notably by Toulouse-Lautrec. The **14e** incorporates most of Montparnasse, including its cemetery. The **20e** is where the city's famous lie buried in Père-Lachaise and where today recent immigrants from North Africa live. Beyond the arrondissements stretch the vast *banlieue,* or suburbs, of Greater Paris, where the majority of Parisians live.

GETTING AROUND Paris is a city for strollers, whose greatest joy is rambling through unexpected alleys and squares. Given a choice of conveyance, try to make it on your own two feet whenever possible.

By Métro (Subway) The Métro (✆ **32-46** from France, or 08-92-69-32-46 from abroad; www.ratp.fr) is the most efficient and fastest way to get around Paris. All lines are numbered, and the final destination of each line is clearly marked on subway maps, in the system's underground passageways, and on the train cars. The Métro runs daily from 5:30am to 1:15am (last departure at 2am on Sat). It's reasonably safe at any hour, but beware of pickpockets.

Most stations display a map of the Métro at the entrance. To locate your correct train on a map, find your destination, follow the line to the end of its route, and note the name of the final stop, which is that line's direction. In the station, follow the signs for your direction in the passageways until you see the label on a train. Many larger stations have maps with push-button indicators that light up your route when you press the button for your destination.

Transfer stations are *correspondances*—when transferring, follow the orange CORRESPONDANCE signs to the proper platform. Don't follow a SORTIE (exit) sign, or you'll have to pay again to get back on the train.

On the urban lines, one ticket for 1.50€ ($2.20) lets you travel to any point. On the Sceaux, Boissy-St-Léger, and St-Germain-en-Laye lines to the suburbs, fares are based on distance. A *carnet* is the best buy—10 tickets for about 11€ ($16).

At the turnstile entrances to the station, insert your ticket and pass through. At some exits, tickets are also checked, so hold onto yours. There are occasional ticket checks on trains and platforms and in passageways, too.

By Bus Buses are much slower than the Métro. The majority run from 6:30am to 9:30pm (a few operate until 12:30am, and 10 operate during early morning hours). Service is limited on Sundays and holidays. Bus and Métro fares are the same; you can use the same tickets on both. Most bus rides require one ticket, but some destinations require two (never more than two within the city limits).

At certain stops, signs list destinations and bus numbers serving that point. Destinations are usually listed north to south and east to west. Most stops are also posted on the sides of the buses. During rush hours, you may have to take a ticket from a dispensing machine, indicating your position in the line at the stop.

If you intend to use the buses a lot, pick up an RATP bus map at the office on place de la Madeleine, 8e, or at the tourist offices at RATP headquarters, 54 Quai de La Rapée, 12e. For detailed recorded information (in English) on bus and Métro routes, call ✆ **01-58-76-16-16** (or 32-46), open Monday to Friday 7am to 9pm.

The RATP also operates the **Balabus,** big-windowed orange-and-white motorcoaches that run only during limited hours: Sunday and national holidays from noon to 8:30pm, from April 15 to the end of September. Itineraries run in both directions between Gare de Lyon and the Grande Arche de La Défense, encompassing some of the city's most beautiful vistas. It's a great deal—three Métro tickets, for 1.50€ ($2.20) each, will carry you the entire route. You'll recognize the bus and the route it follows by the Bb symbol emblazoned on each bus's side and on signs posted beside the route it follows.

By Taxi It's virtually impossible to get a taxi at rush hour, so don't even try. Taxi drivers are organized into a lobby that limits their number to 15,000.

Watch out for common rip-offs: Always check the meter to make sure you're not paying the previous passenger's fare; beware of cabs without meters, which often wait outside nightclubs for tipsy patrons; and settle the tab in advance.

You can hail regular cabs on the street when their signs read LIBRE. Taxis are easier to find at the many stands near Métro stations. The flag drops at 5.50€ ($8), and from 10am to 5pm, you pay .80€ ($1.20) per kilometer. From 5pm to 10am, you pay 1.10€ ($1.60) per kilometer. On airport trips, you're not required to pay for the driver's empty return ride.

You're allowed several pieces of luggage free if they're transported inside and are less than 5 kilograms (11 lb.). Heavier suitcases carried in the trunk cost 1€ to 1.50€ ($1.50–$2.20) apiece. Tip 12% to 15%—the latter usually elicits a *merci.* For radio cabs, call **Les Taxis Bleus** (✆ **08-25-16-10-10**) or **Taxi G7** (✆ **01-47-39-47-39**) — but note that you'll be charged from the point where the taxi begins the drive to pick you up.

By Car Don't even consider driving in Paris. The streets are narrow and parking is next to impossible.

By Boat The **Batobus** (✆ **01-44-11-33-99**) is a 150-passenger ferry with big windows. Every day between April and November, the boats operate along the Seine, stopping at points of interest: the **Eiffel Tower,** the **Musée d'Orsay,** the **Louvre, Notre-Dame,** and the **Hôtel de Ville.** The only fare option available is a day pass valid for either 1, 2, or 5 days, each allowing as many entrances and exits as you want. A

1-day pass costs 12€ ($17) for adults, 6€ ($8.70) for children under 16. Boats operate daily (closed most of Jan) every 15 to 30 minutes, starting between 10 and 10:30am and ending between 4:30 and 10:30pm, depending on the season of the year. The views are panoramic, but the Batobus isn't really a sightseeing tour (there's no recorded commentary); it simply offers a way to move from one attraction to another.

FAST FACTS: Paris

American Express The office at 11 rue Scribe (✆ **01-47-77-79-28**) is open as a travel agency, a tour operator, and a mail pickup service every Monday to Friday from 9:30am to 6:30pm, Saturday 9am to 5:30pm. Its banking section, for issues involving American Express credit cards, transfers of funds, and credit-related issues, is open Monday to Saturday from 9am to 6:30pm.

Area Code All French telephone numbers consist of 10 digits, the first two of which are like an area code. If you're calling anywhere in France from within France, just dial all 10 digits—no additional codes are needed. If you're calling from the United States, drop the initial 0 (zero).

Currency France fell under the euro (€) umbrella in 2002. At press time, 1€ = $1.45.

Currency Exchange American Express can fill most banking needs. Most banks in Paris are open Monday through Friday from 9am to 4:30pm, and a few are open Saturday; ask at your hotel for the location of the one nearest you. For the best exchange rate, cash your traveler's checks at banks or foreign-exchange offices, not at shops and hotels. Most post offices will change traveler's checks or convert currency. Currency exchanges are also at Paris airports and train stations and along most of the major boulevards. They charge a small commission.

Dentists For emergency dental service, call **S.O.S. Dentaire,** 87 bd. du Port-Royal, 13e (✆ **01-43-37-51-00;** Métro: Gobelins), Monday to Friday from 8pm to midnight and Saturday and Sunday from 9am to midnight. You can also call or visit the **American Hospital** (see "Doctors," below).

Doctors Some large hotels have a doctor on staff. You can also try the **American Hospital,** 63 bd. Victor-Hugo, in the suburb of Neuilly-sur-Seine (✆ **01-46-41-25-25;** www.american-hospital.org; Métro: Pont-de-Levallois or Pont-de-Neuilly; bus no. 82), which operates a 24-hour emergency service. The bilingual staff accepts Blue Cross and other American insurance plans.

Drugstores After hours, have your concierge contact the Commissariat de Police for the nearest 24-hour pharmacy. French law requires one pharmacy in any given neighborhood to stay open 24 hours. You'll find the address posted on the doors or windows of all other drugstores. One of the most central all-nighters is **Pharmacie Les Champs "Derhy,"** 84 av. des Champs-Elysées, 8e (✆ **01-45-62-02-41;** Métro: George V).

Embassies & Consulates If you have a passport, immigration, legal, or other problem, contact your consulate. Call *before* you go—they often keep odd hours and observe both French and home-country holidays. The Embassy of the

United States, 2 av. Gabriel, 8e (✆ **01-43-12-22-22;** Métro: Concorde), is open Monday to Friday 8:30am to 5pm. The Embassy of **Canada** is at 35 av. Montaigne, 8e (✆ **01-44-43-29-00;** Métro: F-D-Roosevelt or Alma-Marceau), open Monday to Friday 9am to noon and 2 to 5pm. The Embassy of the **United Kingdom** is at 35 rue du Faubourg St-Honoré, 8e (✆ **01-44-51-31-00;** Métro: Concorde or Madeleine), open Monday to Friday 9:30am to 1pm and 2:30 to 5pm. The Embassy of **Ireland** is at 4 rue Rude, Paris 75116 (✆ **01-44-17-67-00;** Métro: Etoile), open Monday to Friday 9:30am to 1pm and 2:30 to 5:30pm. The Embassy of **Australia** is at 4 rue Jean-Rey, 15e (✆ **01-40-59-33-00;** Métro: Bir Hakeim), open Monday to Friday 9:15am to noon and 2:30 to 4:30pm. The embassy of **New Zealand** is at 7 ter rue Léonard-de-Vinci, Paris 75116 (✆ **01-45-01-43-43;** Métro: Victor Hugo), open Monday to Friday 9am to 1pm and 2:30 to 6pm. The embassy of **South Africa,** 59 quai d'Orsay, 7e (✆ **01-53-59-23-89;** Métro: Invalides), is open Monday to Friday 9am to noon.

Emergencies For the police, call ✆ **17;** to report a fire, call ✆ **18.** For an ambulance, call ✆ **15** or 01-45-67-50-50.

Police In an emergency, call ✆ **17.** For nonemergency situations, the principal prefecture is at 9 bd. du Palais, 4e (✆ **01-53-73-53-73;** Métro: Cité).

Post Office Most post offices in Paris are open Monday to Friday from 8am to 7pm and every Saturday from 8am to noon. One of the biggest and most central is the main post office for the 1st arrondissement, at 52 rue du Louvre (✆ **01-40-28-76-00;** Métro: Musée du Louvre). It maintains the hours noted above for services that include sale of postal money orders, mail collection and distribution, and expedition of faxes. For buying stamps and accepting packages, it's open on a limited basis 24 hours a day. If you find it inconvenient to go to the post office just to buy stamps, they're sold at the reception desks of many hotels and at cafes designated with red TABAC signs.

Safety Beware of child pickpockets, who prey on visitors around sites such as the Louvre, Eiffel Tower, Notre-Dame, and Montmartre. They like to pick pockets in the Métro, often blocking the entrance and exit to the escalator. Women should hang on to their purses.

Telephones The country code for France is **33.** All phone numbers in France have 10 digits, including the **area code** (or regional prefix). For example, the phone number for the Paris police, 01-53-73-53-73, contains the area code **(01)** for Paris and the Ile de France. To make a **long-distance call within France,** dial the 10-digit number. **When calling from outside France,** dial the international prefix for your country (**011** for the United States and Canada), the country code for France, and then the last nine digits of the number, dropping the 0 (zero) from the regional prefix.

The French use a ***télécarte,*** or phone debit card, which you can purchase at rail stations, post offices, and other places. Sold in two versions, it allows you to use either 50 or 120 charge units (depending on the card) by inserting the card into the slot of most public phones. Depending on the type of card you buy, the cost starts at 10€ ($13) and goes up from there. You must use this card when making calls within France; coins are no longer accepted. You can use a major credit card in much the same way as a télécarte, but there's a catch: To do so involves a minimum charge of 20€ ($26). The phone system gives you 30 days to use up this 20-euro credit. If possible, avoid making calls from your hotel; some establishments will double or triple the charges.

For information, dial ✆ **12.**

Tipping The law requires all bills to say *service compris,* which means the total includes the tip. But French diners often leave some small change as an additional tip, especially if service has been exceptional.

Some general guidelines: For hotel staff, tip 1.05€ to 1.50€ ($1.50–$2.20) for every item of baggage the porter carries on arrival and departure, and 1.50€ ($2.20) per day for the maid. In cafes, service is usually included. Tip taxi drivers 10% to 15% of the amount on the meter. Give cinema and theater ushers about .50€ (75¢). For guides for group visits to museums and monuments, 1.50€ ($2.20) is a reasonable tip.

WHERE TO STAY

Although Paris hotels are quite expensive, there is some good news. Scores of lackluster lodgings have been renovated and offer much better value in the moderate-to-inexpensive price range. The most outstanding example is in the **7th arrondissement,** where several good-value hotels have blossomed from dives.

Hot weather doesn't last long in Paris, so most hotels (except the deluxe ones) don't provide air-conditioning. To avoid the noise problem when you have to open windows, request a room in the back when making a reservation.

Most hotels offer a continental breakfast of coffee, tea, or hot chocolate; a freshly baked croissant and roll; and limited quantities of butter and jam or jelly. The word *breakfast* in the following entries refers to this continental version.

Rates quoted include service and value-added tax, unless otherwise specified. Unless otherwise specified, all hotel rooms have a private bathroom.

RIGHT BANK: 1ST ARRONDISSEMENT

Very Expensive

Hôtel Ritz ★★★ The Ritz is Europe's greatest hotel, an enduring symbol of elegance on one of Paris's most beautiful and historic squares. César Ritz, the "little shepherd boy from Niederwald," converted the Hôtel de Lazun into a luxury hotel in 1898. With the help of the culinary master Escoffier, he made the Ritz a miracle of luxury. In 1979, the Ritz family sold the hotel to Mohammed al Fayed, who refurbished it and added a cooking school. The hotel annexed two town houses, joined by an arcade lined with display cases representing 125 of Paris's leading boutiques. The public salons are furnished with museum-caliber antiques. Each guest room is uniquely decorated, most with Louis XIV or XV reproductions; all have fine rugs, marble fireplaces, tapestries, brass beds, and more. Ever since Edward VII got stuck in a too-narrow bathtub with his lover, the tubs at the Ritz have been deep and big.

15 place Vendôme, 75001 Paris. ✆ **800/223-6800** in the U.S. and Canada, or 01-43-16-30-30. Fax 01-43-16-31-78. www.ritzparis.com. 168 units. 710€–810€ ($1,030–$1,175) double; from 910€ ($1,320) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 44€ ($64). Métro: Opéra, Concorde, or Madeleine. **Amenities:** Restaurant; 4 bars; nightclub; indoor pool; health club; sauna; room service; in-room massage; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, iron, safe, Wi-Fi.

Expensive

Hôtel Burgundy ★ The Burgundy is one of the less expensive hotels in a mortgage-the-house sea of superpriced accommodations. The frequently renovated building was constructed in the 1830s as two adjacent town houses—one a pension where Baudelaire wrote poetry in the 1860s, the other a bordello. British-born managers who insisted on using the English name linked the houses. The hotel hosts many North and South Americans and has conservatively decorated rooms.

8 rue Duphot, 75001 Paris. ☎ **01-42-60-34-12.** Fax 01-47-03-95-20. www.burgundyhotel.com. 89 units. 173€–273€ ($251–$396) double; 323€–353€ ($468–$512) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Métro: Madeleine or Concorde. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; room service; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer.

Moderate

Hôtel Britannique *Value* Conservatively modern and plush, this is a much-renovated 19th-century hotel near Les Halles and Notre-Dame. The place is not only British in name, but also seems to cultivate English graciousness. The guest rooms are small, but immaculate and soundproof, with comfortable beds. A satellite receiver gets U.S. and U.K. television shows. The reading room is a cozy retreat.

20 av. Victoria, 75001 Paris. ☎ **01-42-33-74-59.** Fax 01-42-33-82-65. www.hotel-britannique.fr. 39 units. 178€–215€ ($258–$312) double; 263€–315€ ($381–$457) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Métro: Châtelet. **Amenities:** Bar; room service; laundry service; dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Inexpensive

Timhôtel Le Louvre *Kids* This hotel and its sibling in the 2nd Arrondissement, the Timhôtel Palais-Royal, are part of a new breed of government-rated, two-star, family-friendly hotels cropping up in France. These Timhôtels share the same manager and temperament. Though the rooms at the Palais-Royal branch are a bit larger than the ones here, this branch is so close to the Louvre that it's almost irresistible. The ambience is modern, with monochromatic rooms and wall-to-wall carpeting.

4 rue Croix des Petits-Champs, 75001 Paris. ☎ **01-42-60-34-86.** Fax 01-42-60-10-39. www.timhotel.fr. 56 units. 119€–170€ ($173–$247) double. AE, DC, MC, V. Métro: Palais-Royal. The 46-room **Timhotel Palais-Royal** is at 3 rue de la Banque, 75002 Paris (☎ **01-42-61-53-90;** fax 01-42-60-05-39; Métro: Bourse). **Amenities** (at both branches): Restaurant (breakfast only); nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV.

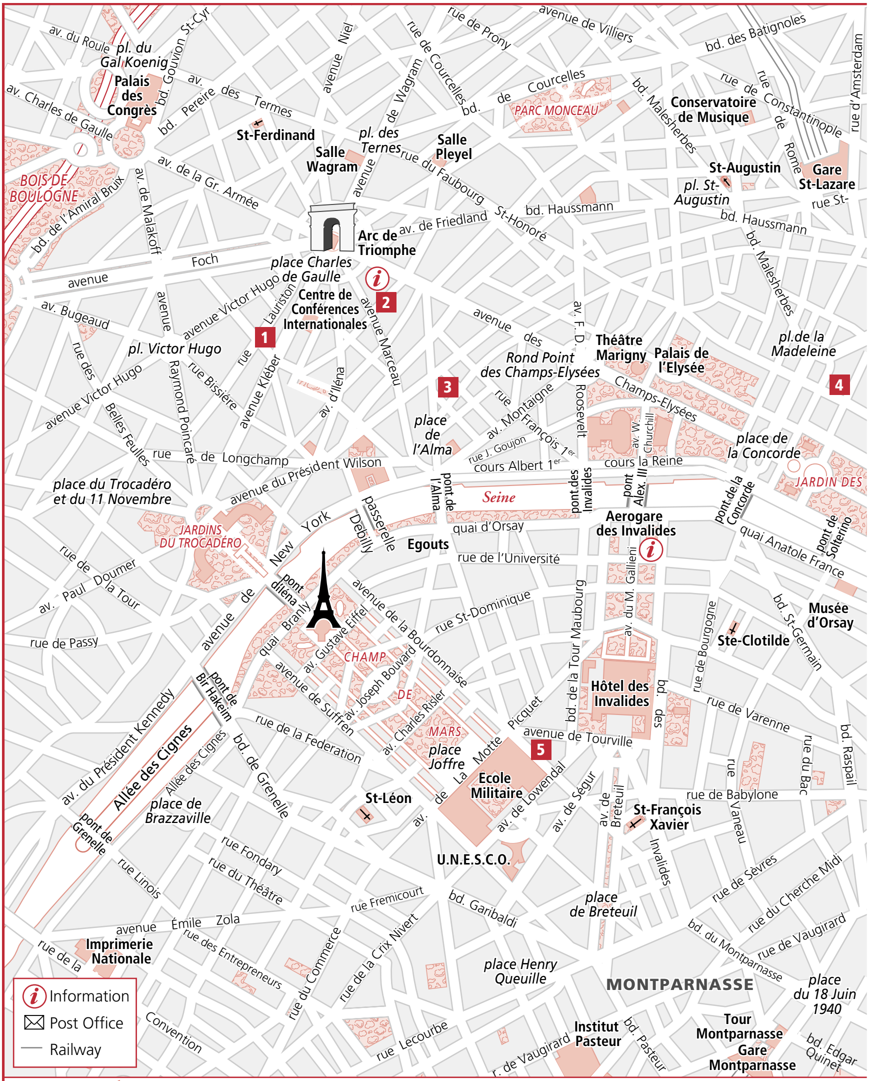
RIGHT BANK: 3RD, 4TH & 8TH ARRONDISSEMENTS

Very Expensive

Four Seasons Hotel George V ★★★ *Kids* In its latest reincarnation, with all its glitz and glamour, this hotel is one of the best in the world. The George V opened in 1928 in honor of George V of England, grandfather of Queen Elizabeth. During the liberation of Paris, it housed Dwight D. Eisenhower. The guest rooms are about as close as you'll come to residency in a well-upholstered private home where teams of decorators have lavished vast amounts of attention and money. The beds rival those at the Ritz and Meurice in comfort. The largest units are magnificent; the smallest are, in the words of a spokesperson, *"très agreeable."* Security is tight—a fact appreciated by sometimes-notorious guests. The staff pampers children with bathrobes, bedtime milk and cookies, and even special menus.

31 av. George V, 75008 Paris. ☎ **800/332-3442** in the U.S. and Canada, or 01-49-52-70-00. Fax 01-49-52-70-10. www.fourseasons.com. 245 units. 730€–995€ ($1,059–$1,443) double; from 1,350€ ($1,958) suite. Parking 40€ ($58). AE, DC, MC, V. Métro: George V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; 2 lounges; indoor pool; fitness center; spa; sauna; room service; massage; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

Paris Accommodations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rue de Courcelles
rue de Prony
avenue de Villiers
bd. des Batignoles
bd. de Courcelles
PARC MONCEAU
avenue de Wagram
pl. des Ternes
Salle Wagram
Salle Pleyel
rue du Faubourg St-Honoré
bd. Malesherbes
Conservatoire de Musique
rue de Constantinople
rue de Rome
rue d'Amsterdam
St-Augustin
pl. St-Augustin
Gare St-Lazare
rue St-
BOIS DE BOULOGNE
bd. de l'Amiral Bruix
av. de Malakoff
av. de la Gr. Armée
Arc de Triomphe
av. de Friedland
bd. Haussmann
avenue Foch
place Charles de Gaulle
Centre de Conférences Internationales
av. Bugeaud
avenue Victor Hugo
rue Lauriston
avenue Marceau
avenue des Champs-Elysées
av. F. D. Roosevelt
Théâtre Marigny
Palais de l'Elysée
pl. de la Madeleine
pl. Victor Hugo
rue Bissière
avenue Kléber
av. d'Iéna
Rond Point des Champs-Elysées
rue des Belles Feuilles
avenue Raymond Poincaré
place de l'Alma
av. Montaigne
rue François 1er
rue J. Goujon
av. W. Churchill
place de la Concorde
rue de Longchamp
avenue du Président Wilson
cours Albert 1er
cours la Reine
JARDIN DES
place du Trocadéro et du 11 Novembre
Seine
pont de l'Alma
pont des Invalides
pont Alex. III
pont de la Concorde
pont de Solferino
JARDINS DU TROCADÉRO
avenue de New York
passerelle Debilly
quai d'Orsay
Aerogare des Invalides
quai Anatole France
Egouts
rue de l'Université
rue de la Tour
av. Paul Doumer
pont d'Iéna
quai Branly
avenue de la Bourdonnaise
rue St-Dominique
bd. de la Tour Maubourg
av. du M. Gallieni
rue de Bourgogne
bd. St-Germain
Musée d'Orsay
Ste-Clotilde
rue de Passy
avenue de
av. Gustave Eiffel
CHAMP DE MARS
av. Joseph Bouvard
avenue de Suffren
av. Charles Risler
Hôtel des Invalides
bd. des Invalides
rue de Varenne
av. du Président Kennedy
pont de Bir Hakeim
Allée des Cygnes
rue de la Fédération
place Joffre
av. de La Motte Picquet
avenue de Tourville
rue du Bac
bd. Raspail
bd. de Grenelle
place de Brazzaville
St-Léon
Ecole Militaire
av. de Lowendal
av. de Ségur
av. de Breteuil
St-François Xavier
rue de Babylone
rue Vaneau
pont de Grenelle
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rue Fondary
rue du Théâtre
rue Linois
rue Fremicourt
bd. Garibaldi
place de Breteuil
rue de Sèvres
rue du Cherche Midi
avenue Émile Zola
rue des Entrepreneurs
rue du Commerce
rue de la Croix Nivert
bd. du Montparnasse
rue de Vaugirard
Imprimerie Nationale
rue de la Convention
place Henry Queuille
MONTPARNASSE
place du 18 Juin 1940
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Tour Montparnasse
Gare Montparnasse
bd. Edgar Quinet
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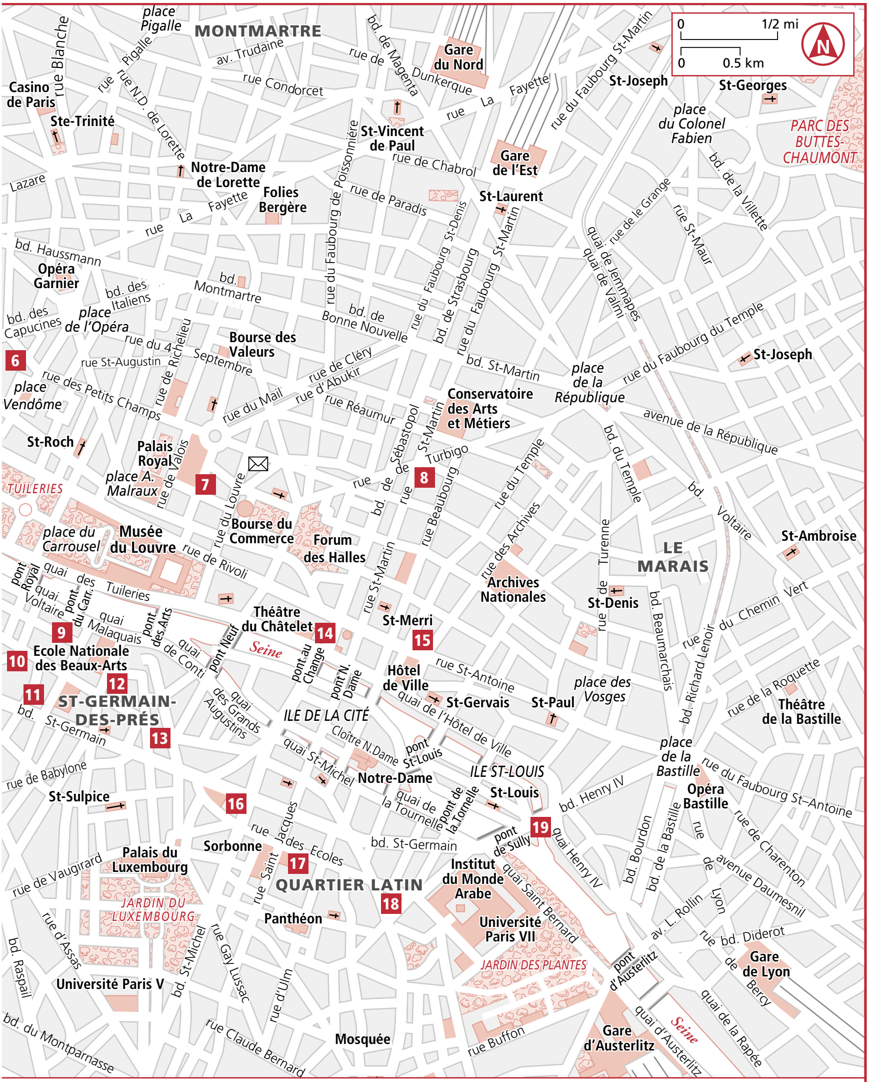
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rue La Fayette
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bd. Haussmann
Opéra Garnier
bd. des Italiens
bd. des Capucines
place de l'Opéra
bd. Montmartre
rue du 4 Septembre
rue St-Augustin
rue de Richelieu
Bourse des Valeurs
place Vendôme
rue des Petits Champs
St-Roch
Palais Royal
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rue de Valois
TUILERIES
place du Carrousel
Musée du Louvre
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rue de Rivoli
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Forum des Halles
rue du Mail
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rue d'Abukir
rue Réaumur
pont Royal
quai Voltaire
quai des Tuileries
pont du Carr.
quai Malaquais
pont des Arts
quai de Conti
pont Neuf
Seine
Théâtre du Châtelet
pont au Change
pont N. Dame
Ecole Nationale des Beaux-Arts
ST-GERMAIN-DES-PRÉS
bd. St-Germain
quai des Grands Augustins
ILE DE LA CITÉ
Cloître N.Dame
quai St-Michel
Notre-Dame
pont St-Louis
ILE ST-LOUIS
St-Louis
quai de la Tournelle
pont de la Tournelle
pont de Sully
rue de Babylone
St-Sulpice
rue de Vaugirard
Palais du Luxembourg
JARDIN DU LUXEMBOURG
Sorbonne
rue des Ecoles
rue Saint Jacques
bd. St-Germain
QUARTIER LATIN
Panthéon
Institut du Monde Arabe
Université Paris VII
quai Saint Bernard
JARDIN DES PLANTES
rue d'Assas
bd. Raspail
Université Paris V
bd. St-Michel
rue Gay Lussac
rue d'Ulm
bd. du Montparnasse
rue Claude Bernard
Mosquée
rue Buffon
pont d'Austerlitz
Gare d'Austerlitz
quai d'Austerlitz
Seine
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rue de Dunkerque
bd. de Magenta
St-Vincent de Paul
rue du Faubourg Poissonnière
rue de Chabrol
rue de Paradis
Gare de l'Est
St-Laurent
rue du Faubourg St-Denis
bd. de Strasbourg
rue du Faubourg St-Martin
bd. de Bonne Nouvelle
bd. St-Martin
Conservatoire des Arts et Métiers
rue St-Martin
bd. de Sébastopol
rue Turbigo
rue Beaubourg
rue du Temple
rue des Archives
Archives Nationales
St-Merri
rue St-Martin
Hôtel de Ville
rue St-Antoine
quai de l'Hôtel de Ville
St-Gervais
St-Paul
place des Vosges
rue de Turenne
St-Denis
LE MARAIS
bd. du Temple
place de la République
avenue de la République
rue du Faubourg du Temple
St-Joseph
quai de Jemmapes
quai de Valmi
rue de le Grange
rue St-Maur
bd. de la Villette
place du Colonel Fabien
St-Georges
St-Joseph
rue du Faubourg St-Martin
PARC DES BUTTES-CHAUMONT
bd. Voltaire
St-Ambroise
rue du Chemin Vert
bd. Beaumarchais
bd. Richard-Lenoir
rue de la Roquette
Théâtre de la Bastille
place de la Bastille
Opéra Bastille
rue du Faubourg St-Antoine
bd. Henry IV
quai Henry IV
bd. Bourdon
bd. de la Bastille
rue de Lyon
rue de Charenton
avenue Daumesnil
av. L. Rollin
bd. Diderot
Gare de Lyon
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Expensive

Hôtel Saint-Louis ★ *Value* Proprietors Guy and Andrée Record maintain a charming family atmosphere at this antiques-filled hotel in a 17th-century town house. The hotel represents an incredible value, considering its prime location on Ile St-Louis. Expect cozy, slightly cramped rooms, each with a small bathroom containing a tub/shower combination. With mansard roofs and old-fashioned moldings, the top-floor units sport tiny balconies that afford sweeping views. The breakfast room is in the cellar, which has 17th-century stone vaulting.

75 rue St-Louis-en-l'Ile, 75004 Paris. ✆ **01-46-34-04-80.** Fax 01-46-34-02-13. 19 units. 145€–260€ ($210–$377) double. MC, V. Métro: Pont Marie or St-Michel-Notre-Dame. **Amenities:** Babysitting. *In room:* TV, hair dryer, safe.

Moderate

Galileo Hotel ★ *Finds* This is one of the 8th's most charming hotels. Proprietors Roland and Elisabeth Buffat have won friends from all over with their Hôtel des Deux-Iles and Hôtel de Lutèce on St-Louis-en-l'Ile (see earlier in this chapter). A short walk from the Champs-Elysées, this town house is the epitome of French elegance and charm. The medium-size rooms are a study in understated taste. Within this hotel, rooms with numbers ending in 3 (i.e., 103, 203, 303, 403, and 503) are more spacious than the others. Rooms 501 and 502 have private glassed-in verandas that you can use even in winter.

54 rue Galilée, 75008 Paris. ✆ **01-47-20-66-06.** Fax 01-47-20-67-17. www.galileo-paris-hotel.com. 27 units. 185€ ($268) double. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 23€ ($33). Métro: Charles-de-Gaulle–Etoile or George V. **Amenities:** Laundry service; dry cleaning; 1 room for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Hôtel Saint-Merry ★ *Finds* The rebirth of this once-notorious brothel as a charming, upscale hotel is an example of how the area has been gentrified. It contains only a dozen rooms, each relatively small but accented with neo-Gothic detail: exposed stone, 18th-century ceiling beams, and lots of quirky architecture. Suites, much larger than doubles, have upgraded furnishings. According to the staff, the clientele here is about 50% gay males; the other half is straight and tends to be involved in the arts scene in the surrounding neighborhood. Before it became a bordello, it was created as the presbytery of the nearby Church of Saint-Merry.

78 rue de la Verrerie, 75004 Paris. ✆ **01-42-78-14-15.** Fax 01-40-29-06-82. www.hotel-saintmerry.com. 12 units. 130€–230€ ($189–$334) double; 250€–400€ ($363–$580) suite. AE, MC, V. Métro: Hôtel de Ville or Châtelet. **Amenities:** Room service; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning. *In room:* TV (in some), minibar (in some), hair dryer, safe.

Inexpensive

Hôtel Bellevue & du Chariot d'Or Originally built in 1860 as part of the majestic redevelopment of central Paris by Baron Haussmann, this hotel has a grand facade and inexpensive, relatively comfortable and cozy, simple bedrooms. The hotel has become more desirable because of its location in the once-neglected Arts et Métiers district north of the Pompidou Center. The second part of its name—"Chariot d'Or" (Golden Carriage)—derives from the medieval custom of placing brides-to-be (along with their dowries) in a flower-draped ceremonial carriage. During the occupation of Paris during World War II, the site was commandeered as a garrison for rank-and-file Nazi troops.

39 rue de Turbigo, 75003 Paris. ✆ **01-48-87-45-60.** Fax 01-48-87-95-04. www.hotelbellevue75.com. 59 units. 70€–72€ ($102–$104) double. AE, DC, MC, V. Métro: Châtelet–Les Halles or Réaumur-Sebastopol. **Amenities:** Bar; babysitting; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* TV, safe.

RIGHT BANK: 16TH ARRONDISSEMENT

Expensive

Hôtel Sofitel Trocadéro Dokhan's ★★ If not for the porters walking through its public areas carrying luggage, you might suspect that this well-accessorized hotel was a private home. It's in a stately, 19th-century Haussmann-styled building vaguely inspired by Palladio and contains accessories such as antique paneling, Regency-era armchairs, and chandeliers. Each guest room has a different decorative style, with antiques or good reproductions, lots of personalized touches and triple-glazed windows. Beds are often antique reproductions with maximum comfort. Suites have larger living space and spacious bathrooms with such extras as make-up mirrors and luxe toiletries.

117 rue Lauriston, 75116 Paris. ✆ **01-53-65-66-99.** Fax 01-53-65-66-88. www.sofitel.com. 45 units. 220€–450€ ($319–$653) double; from 850€ ($1,233) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 30€ ($44). Métro: Trocadéro. **Amenities:** Champagne bar; room service; massage; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, fax, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

LEFT BANK: 5TH ARRONDISSEMENT

Inexpensive

Familia-Hôtel As the name implies, this hotel has been family-run for decades. Many personal touches make the place unique. Finely executed sepia-colored frescoes of Parisian scenes grace the walls of 14 rooms. Eight units have restored stone walls, and seven boast balconies with delightful views over the Latin Quarter. The dynamic owners renovate the rooms as often as needed to maintain the highest level of comfort.

11 rue des Ecoles, 75005 Paris. ✆ **01-43-54-55-27.** Fax 01-43-29-61-77. www.hotel-paris-familia.com. 30 units. 99€–129€ ($144–$187) double; 167€ ($242) triple; 179€ ($260) quad. Parking 20€ ($29). AE, DC, MC, V. Métro: Jussieu or Maubert-Mutualité. **Amenities:** Car rental; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer.

Hôtel Moderne Saint-Germain ★ In the heart of the Latin Quarter, between the Pantheon and Saint-Michel, the Hôtel Moderne is better than ever since it ended the 20th century with a complete overhaul. Though the rooms are small, this is still one of the neighborhood's better hotels. Its charming owner, Mme Gibon, welcomes guests to her spotless accommodations. In the units fronting rue des Ecoles, double-glazed windows hush the traffic. Guests can use the sauna and Jacuzzi at the Hôtel Sully next door.

33 rue des Ecoles, 75005 Paris. ✆ **01-43-54-37-78.** Fax 01-43-29-91-31. www.hotel-paris-stgermain.com. 45 units. 150€ ($218) double; 180€ ($261) triple. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 26€ ($38). Métro: Maubert-Mutualité. **Amenities:** Fitness center; room service; laundry service; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer.

LEFT BANK: 6TH ARRONDISSEMENT

Very Expensive

L'Hôtel ★ This is one of the Left Bank's most charming boutique hotels. It was once a 19th-century fleabag whose major distinction was that Oscar Wilde died in one of its bedrooms, but today's guests aren't anywhere near destitution. In 2000, superstar aesthete Jacques Garcia redecorated the hotel, retaining its Victorian-baroque sense. Guest rooms vary in size, style, and price; all have decorative fireplaces and fabric-covered walls. About half the bathrooms are small, tubless nooks. Room themes reflect China, Russia, Japan, India, or high-camp Victorian.

13 rue des Beaux-Arts, 75006 Paris. ✆ **01-44-41-99-00.** Fax 01-43-25-64-81. www.l-hotel.com. 20 units. 345€–640€ ($500–$928) double; 640€–740€ ($928–$1,073) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Métro: St-Germain-des-Prés. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; indoor pool; steam room; room service; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Expensive

Hôtel de Fleurie ★ Kids Off the boulevard St-Germain on a colorful little street, the Fleurie is one of the best of the city's "new" old hotels; its statuary-studded facade recaptures 17th-century elegance, and the stone walls in the salon have been exposed. Many of the guest rooms have elaborate draperies and antique reproductions. Because some rooms are larger than others and contain an extra bed for one or two children, the hotel has long been a family favorite.

32–34 rue Grégoire-de-Tours, 75006 Paris. ✆ **01-53-73-70-00.** Fax 01-53-73-70-20. www.fleurie-hotel-paris.com. 29 units. 195€–320€ ($283–$464) double; 395€ ($573) family room. Children under 13 stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, MC, V. Métro: Odéon or Mabillon. **Amenities:** Bar; car rental; room service; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Moderate

Hôtel du Pas-de-Calais The Pas-de-Calais dates from the 17th century. It retains its elegant facade, with wooden doors. Novelist Chateaubriand lived here from 1811 to 1814, but its most famous guest was Jean-Paul Sartre, who struggled with the play *Les Mains Sales (Dirty Hands)* in room no. 41. The hotel is a bit weak on style, but as one longtime guest confided, "We still stay here for the memories." Rooms are small; inner units surround a courtyard with two garden tables and several trellises.

59 rue des Sts-Pères, 75006 Paris. ✆ **01-45-48-78-74.** Fax 01-45-44-94-57. www.hotelpasdecalais.com. 38 units. 165€–240€ ($239–$348) double; 300€ ($435) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 25€ ($36). Métro: St-Germain-des-Prés or Sèvres-Babylone. **Amenities:** Bar; room service; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer, safe.

Inexpensive

Grand Hotel des Balcons ★ Value The Corroyer-André family welcomes you to this restored 19th-century building, once patronized by Baudelaire and the poets Henri Michaux and Endré Ady. You enter an Art Nouveau setting with stained-glass windows and tulip-shaped molten glass lamps and chandeliers. The hotel lies behind a restored facade studded with small balconies—hence its name. Bedrooms are not only affordable, but harmonious in decor and big on comfort and good maintenance. Close to the gardens of Luxenbourg, the rooms are not large but ample enough with big closets and full-length dressing mirrors.

3 Casimir Delavigne, 75006 Paris. ✆ **01-46-34-78-50.** www.balcons.com. 50 units. 110€ ($160) double. AE, MC, V. Metro: Odéon. RER: Luxembourg. **Amenities:** Breakfast room. *In room:* TV, hair dryer, Wi-Fi.

LEFT BANK: 7TH ARRONDISSEMENT

Very Expensive

Hôtel Montalembert ★★ Unusually elegant for the Left Bank, the Montalembert dates from 1926, when it was built in the Beaux Arts style. Its beige, cream, and gold decor borrows elements of Bauhaus and postmodern design. The guest rooms are spacious except for some standard doubles that are small unless you're a very thin model. Frette linens decorate roomy beds topped with cabana-stripe duvets that crown deluxe French mattresses.

3 rue de Montalembert, 75007 Paris. ✆ **800/786-6397** in the U.S. and Canada, or 01-45-49-68-68. Fax 01-45-49-69-49. www.montalembert.com. 56 units. 370€–470€ ($537–$682) double; 600€–830€ ($870–$1,204) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 39€ ($57). Métro: Rue du Bac. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; access to nearby health club; room service; laundry service; dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

Moderate

Derby Eiffel This hotel faces the Ecole Militaire and contains airy public areas. Our favorite is a glass-roofed conservatory in back, filled year-round with plants and used as a breakfast area. The soundproof and modern guest rooms employ thick fabrics and soothing neutral colors. Most front-facing rooms have views of the Eiffel Tower. In 1998, enormous sums were spent upgrading the rooms and bathrooms and improving the hotel's interior aesthetics, and renovations have been going on ever since. All bathrooms have showers and half-tubs.

5 av. Duquesne, 75007 Paris. ☎ **01-47-05-12-05**. www.hotelsderby.com. Fax 01-47-05-43-43. 43 units. 135€–180€ ($196–$261) double; 165€–196€ ($239–$284) triple. AE, DC, MC, V. Métro: Ecole Militaire. **Amenities:** Bar; room service; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Inexpensive

Hôtel du Quai Voltaire Built in the 1600s as an abbey and transformed into a hotel in 1856, the Quai Voltaire is best known for such illustrious guests as Wilde, Richard Wagner, and Baudelaire, who occupied room nos. 47, 55, and 56, respectively. Camille Pissarro painted *Le Pont Royal* from the window of his fourth-floor room. Guest rooms in this modest inn were renovated in 2008; most overlook the bookstalls and boats of the Seine.

19 quai Voltaire, 75007 Paris. ☎ **01-42-61-50-91.** Fax 01-42-61-62-26. www.quaivoltaire.fr. 33 units. 130€–138€ ($189–$200) double; 165€ ($239) triple. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 25€ ($36). Métro: Musée d'Orsay or Rue du Bac. **Amenities:** Bar; room service; laundry service. *In room:* Hair dryer.

WHERE TO DINE

Our best piece of advice—even if your budget is lean—is to splurge on one grand French meal (and to make reservations well in advance). A meal at a place such as **Taillevent, Alain Ducasse,** or **Carré des Feuillants** is something you'll always remember.

In the past, suits and ties for men were a given, and women always wore smart dresses or suits. Well, you can kiss your suits au revoir. Except in first-class and deluxe places, attire is more relaxed. Relaxed doesn't mean sloppy jeans and workout clothes! Parisians still value style, even when dressing informally.

Restaurants are required by law to post their menus outside, so peruse them carefully. The prix-fixe menu remains a solid choice if you want to have some idea of what your bill will be when it's presented by the waiter (whom you call *monsieur,* not *garçon*).

RIGHT BANK: 1ST ARRONDISSEMENT

Very Expensive

Carré des Feuillants ★★★ MODERN FRENCH This is a bastion of perfection, an enclave of haute gastronomy. When chef Alain Dutournier turned this 17th-century convent between the place Vendôme and the Tuileries into a restaurant, it was an overnight success. The interior is artfully simple and even, in the eyes of some diners, spartan-looking. It has a vaguely Asian feel, shared by a series of small, monochromatic dining rooms that are mostly outfitted in tones of off-white, black, and beige, and that overlook a flowering courtyard and a glass-enclosed kitchen. You'll find a sophisticated reinterpretation of cuisine from France's southwest, using seasonal ingredients and lots of know-how. Some of the best dishes include roasted rack of milk-fed Pyrenées lamb cooked in a clay pot or slices of John Dory with potatoes and a tender cabbage lasagna. Milk-fed veal with flap mushrooms and purple artichokes is yet another specialty. For dessert try the mango and passion fruit ravioli.

14 rue de Castiglione (near place Vendôme and the Tuileries), 1er. ☎ **01-42-86-82-82.** Fax 01-42-86-07-71. www.carredesfeuillants.fr. Reservations required far in advance. Main courses 55€–70€ ($80–$102); fixed-price lunch 65€–165€ ($94–$239); fixed-price dinner 165€ ($239). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri noon–2:30pm and 7:30–10pm. Closed Aug. Métro: Tuileries, Concorde, Opéra, or Madeleine.

Expensive

Goumard ★★★ SEAFOOD Opened in 1872, this landmark is one of Paris's leading seafood restaurants. It's so devoted to the fine art of preparing fish that other food is banned from the menu (the staff will verbally present a limited roster of meat dishes). The decor consists of a collection of Lalique crystal fish in artificial aquariums. Even more unusual are the restrooms, classified as historic monuments; the Art Nouveau master cabinetmaker Majorelle designed the commodes in the early 1900s. Much of the seafood is flown in from Brittany daily. Examples: flaky crab cakes, flash-fried scallops with black truffles, sautéed wild squid, and grilled John Dory. Nothing (no excess butter, spices, or salt) is allowed to interfere with the natural flavor of the sea.

9 rue Duphot, 1er. ✆ **01-42-60-36-07.** Fax 01-42-60-04-54. www.goumard.com. Reservations required far in advance. Main courses 39€–75€ ($57–$109); fixed-price menu 46€ ($67). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily noon–2:30pm and 7:30–10:30pm. Métro: Madeleine or Concorde.

Moderate

Au Pied de Cochon ★★ LATE NIGHT/TRADITIONAL FRENCH Their famous onion soup and namesake specialty (grilled pigs' feet with béarnaise sauce) still lure visitors, and where else in Paris can you get such a good meal at 3am? Other specialties include a platter named after the medieval patron saint of sausage makers, *la temptation de St-Antoine,* which includes grilled pig's tail, pig's snout, and half a pig's foot, all served with béarnaise and french fries; and *andouillettes* (chitterling sausages) with béarnaise. Two flavorful but less unusual dishes: a *jarret* (shin) of pork, caramelized in honey and served on a bed of sauerkraut, and grilled pork ribs with sage sauce. On the street outside, you can buy some of the freshest oysters in town.

6 rue Coquillière, 1er. ✆ **01-40-13-77-00.** www.pieddecochon.com. Reservations recommended for lunch and dinner hours. Main courses 17€–46€ ($25–$67). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 24 hr. Métro: Les Halles or Louvre.

Inexpensive

Angélina ★★ TEA/TRADITIONAL FRENCH In the high-rent area near the InterContinental, this *salon de thé* (tea salon) combines fashion-industry glitter and bourgeois respectability. The carpets are plush, the ceilings high, and the accessories have the right amount of patina. This place has no equal when it comes to viewing the lionesses of haute couture over tea and sandwiches. The waitresses bear silver trays with pastries, drinks, and tea or coffee to marble-topped tables. Lunch usually offers a salad and a *plat du jour* (dish of the day) such as *salade gourmande* (gourmet salad) with foie gras and smoked breast of duck on a bed of fresh salad greens. An enduring specialty here is hot chocolate, priced at 6.70€ ($9.80) for a pot suitable for one person. Another specialty, designed to go well with tea, is the Mont Blanc, a combination of chestnut cream and meringue.

226 rue de Rivoli, 1er. ✆ **01-42-60-82-00.** Reservations not accepted for tea. Pot of tea for 1 7€ ($10); sandwiches and salads 10€–15€ ($15–$22); main courses 16€–30€ ($23–$44). AE, MC, V. Mon–Fri 8am–6:45pm; Sun 9am–6:45pm. Métro: Tuileries or Concorde.

RIGHT BANK: 3RD ARRONDISSEMENT (LE MARAIS)

Inexpensive

L'Ambassade d'Auvergne ★ AUVERGNAT/TRADITIONAL FRENCH You enter this rustic tavern through a bar with heavy oak beams, hanging hams, and ceramic plates. It showcases the culinary bounty of France's most isolated region, the Auvergne, whose pork products are widely celebrated. Try chicory salad with apples and pieces of country ham; pork braised with cabbage, turnips, and white beans; or grilled tripe sausages with mashed potatoes and Cantal cheese with garlic. Nonpork specialties are pan-fried duck liver with gingerbread, perch steamed in verbena tea, and roasted rack of lamb with wild mushrooms.

22 rue de Grenier St-Lazare, 3e. ☎ **01-42-72-31-22.** www.ambassade-auvergne.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses 14€–22€ ($20–$32); fixed-price menu 28€ ($41). AE, MC, V. Daily noon–2pm and 7:30–10:30pm. Métro: Rambuteau.

RIGHT BANK: 4TH ARRONDISSEMENT

Moderate

Georges ★ INTERNATIONAL The Centre Pompidou is again in the spotlight; all of artsy Paris is talking about this place. Georges is in a large space on the top floor of Paris's most comprehensive arts complex, with views through bay windows over most of the city. The decor is minimalist and postmodern, with lots of brushed aluminum and stainless steel. Tables are made from sandblasted glass, lit from below, and accessorized with hypermodern cutlery. Menu items are mostly Continental, with hints of Asia. Some combinations surprise—macaroni with lobster, for example. Others seem exotic, including roasted ostrich steak. Aside from these dishes, some of the best items on the menu are king crab with coconut milk and curry. To get here, head for the exterior elevator to the left of the Centre Pompidou's main entrance. Tell the guard you have a reservation; otherwise, you might not be allowed up.

Centre Pompidou, 6th Floor, 19 rue Beaubourg, 4e. ☎ **01-44-78-47-99.** Reservations required for dinner, recommended for lunch. Main courses 15€–43€ ($22–$62). AE, DC, MC, V. Wed–Mon 11am–1am. Métro: Rambuteau.

RIGHT BANK: 8TH ARRONDISSEMENT

Very Expensive

Pierre Gagnaire ★★★ MODERN FRENCH If you're able to get a reservation, it's worth the effort. The menus are seasonal to take advantage of France's rich bounty; owner Pierre Gagnaire demands perfection, and the chef has a dazzling way with flavors and textures. Stellar examples are roast duck; and turbot cooked in a bag and served with fennel and Provençal lemons. Chicken with truffles comes in two stages—first the breast in wine-based aspic and then the thighs, chopped into roughly textured pieces.

6 rue Balzac, 8e. ☎ **01-58-36-12-50.** Fax 01-58-36-12-51. www.pierre-gagnaire.com. Reservations required. Main courses 65€–120€ ($94–$174); fixed-price menu 95€ ($138) lunch, 250€ ($363) dinner. AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri noon–1:30pm; Sun–Fri 7:30–10pm. Métro: George V.

Restaurant Plaza Athénée (Alain Ducasse) ★★★ MODERN AND TRADITIONAL FRENCH Few other chefs have been catapulted to international fame as quickly as Alain Ducasse. The six-star chef divides his time among Paris, Monaco, New York, and Tokyo. In this, his Parisian stronghold, he places a special emphasis on "rare and precious ingredients," whipping up flavorful and very expensive combinations of caviar, lobster, crayfish, truffles (both black and white), and shellfish. Cuisine is vaguely Mediterranean and decidedly contemporary, yet based on traditional models. Some of the best examples include smoked, tea-glazed pigeon or line-caught sea bass with green asparagus. For appetizers, try the creamy pasta with truffles and giblets. Desserts are perhaps the finest in all of Paris's luxe restaurants. The wine list is superb, with some selections deriving from the best vintages of France, Germany, Switzerland, Spain, California, and Italy.

In the Hôtel Plaza Athénée, 25 av. Montaigne, 8e. ☎ **01-53-67-65-00.** Fax 01-53-67-65-12. www.alain-ducasse.com. Reservations required 4–6 weeks in advance. Main courses 70€–160€ ($102–$232); fixed-price menus 220€–350€ ($319–$508). AE, DC, MC, V. Thurs–Fri 12:45–2:15pm; Mon–Fri 7:45–10:15pm. Closed mid-July to Aug 22 and 10 days in late Dec. Métro: Alma-Marceau.

Taillevent ★★★ MODERN AND TRADITIONAL FRENCH This is the Parisian *ne plus ultra* of gastronomy. Taillevent opened in 1946 and has climbed steadily in excellence; today it ranks as Paris's outstanding all-around restaurant, challenged only by Lucas-Carton and Pierre Gagnaire. It's in a grand 19th-century town house off the Champs-Elysées, with paneled rooms and crystal chandeliers. The place is small, which permits the owner to give personal attention to every facet of the operation and maintain a discreet atmosphere. Each dish is supreme in flavor, including John Dory with olives or lamb saddle seasoned with wild herbs. A cassoulet of crayfish, if featured, is also divine. Chefs dare serve that old standard, *baba au rhum,* but it's perhaps the best you'll ever taste. The wine list is among the best in Paris.

15 rue Lamennais, 8e. ✆ **01-44-95-15-01.** Fax 01-42-25-95-18. www.taillevent.com. Reservations required 4–6 weeks in advance. Main courses 34€–90€ ($49–$131); fixed-price lunch 70€ ($102); *menu dégustation* 140€–190€ ($203–$276). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri noon–2:30pm and 7–10pm. Closed Aug. Métro: George V.

Expensive

L'Angle du Faubourg ★★ TRADITIONAL FRENCH Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, a reservation at the ultraupscale Taillevent was sought after by diplomats, billionaires, and *demi-mondains* from around Europe. In 2001, the Taillevent's owner, M. Vrinat, opened a cost-conscious bistro that capitalizes on Taillevent's reputation, but at much lower prices. Lunches here tend to be efficient, relatively quick, and businesslike; dinners are more leisurely, even romantic. The restaurant has an ultramodern dining room, additional seating in the cellar, and a menu that simplifies Taillevent's lofty culinary ideas. The best examples include braised lamb with the juice of black olives; risotto with ingredients that change weekly (during our visit, it was studded with braised radicchio); and a grilled, low-fat version of *daurade* (bream), served with artichokes and a reduction of mushrooms, appreciated by the many diet-conscious *photo-modèles* who stop in.

195 rue du Faubourg St-Honoré, 8e. ✆ **01-40-74-20-20.** www.taillevent.com. Reservations required. Main courses 19€–35€ ($28–$51); fixed-price menu 35€–70€ ($51–$102). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri noon–2:30pm and 7–10:30pm. Métro: Terme or Etoile.

Spoon, Food & Wine ★ INTERNATIONAL This hypermodern venture by star chef Alain Ducasse is both hailed as a "restaurant for the millennium" and condemned as surreal and a bit absurd. Despite that, there can be a 2-week wait for a dinner reservation. This upscale but affordable restaurant may be the least pretentious and most hip of Ducasse's ventures. The somewhat claustrophobic dining room blends Parisian and Californian references, and the menu (which changes every 2 months) roams the world. Examples include deliberately undercooked grilled squid (part of it evokes sushi) with curry sauce; grilled lamb cutlets; and spareribs with a spicy marmalade. Vegetarians appreciate stir-fried dishes in which you can mix and match up to 15 ingredients.

In the Hôtel Marignan-Elysée, 14 rue Marignan, 8e. ✆ **01-40-76-34-44.** www.spoon.tm.fr. Reservations recommended 1–2 weeks in advance. Main courses 28€–47€ ($41–$68); fixed-price lunch 47€ ($68). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri noon–2pm and 7–10:30pm. Métro: Franklin-D-Roosevelt.

RIGHT BANK: 9TH, 10TH & 12TH ARRONDISSEMENTS

Expensive

Chez Jean ★ TRADITIONAL FRENCH The crowd is young, the food is sophisticated, and the vintage 1950s aura makes you think that American expatriate novelist James Baldwin will arrive any minute. Surrounded by well-oiled pine panels and polished copper, you can choose from some of grandmother's favorites as well as more modern dishes. Owner Jean-Frederic Guidoni worked for more than 20 years at one of the world's most expensive restaurants, Taillevent, but within his own milieu, he demonstrates his own innovative touch at prices that are much more reasonable. For starters, consider a chicken consommé with endives and chorizo; a savory version of a cheesy alpine staple, *raclette,* made with mustard sauce and *Curé Nantais* cheese; and slow-braised pork cooked for 7 hours and served on a bed of carrots, apricots, and confit of lemon.

8 rue St-Lazare, 9e. ✆ **01-48-78-62-73.** www.restaurantjean.fr. Reservations recommended far in advance. Main courses 27€–38€ ($39–$55); fixed-price menu 45€ ($65). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri noon–2:30pm and 7:30–10:30pm. Métro: Notre-Dame de Lorette, Opéra, or Cadet.

Moderate

Brasserie Flo ★ ALSATIAN This remote restaurant is hard to find, but once you arrive (after walking through passageway after passageway), you'll see that *fin de siècle* Paris lives on. The restaurant opened in 1860 and has changed its decor very little. The specialty is *la formidable choucroute* (a mound of sauerkraut with boiled ham, bacon, and sausage) for two. Onion soup and *sole meunière* (sole in lemon butter sauce) are always good, as are warm foie gras and guinea hen with lentils. Look for the *plats du jour,* ranging from roast pigeon to tuna steak with hot peppers.

7 cour des Petites-Ecuries, 10e. ✆ **01-47-70-13-59.** www.flobrasserie.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses 17€–38€ ($25–$55); fixed-price menus 22€–32€ ($32–$46). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily noon–3pm and 7pm–1am. Métro: Château d'Eau or Strasbourg-St-Denis.

LEFT BANK: 5TH ARRONDISSEMENT

Moderate

Marty ★ *Finds* MODERN FRENCH Charming, with a stone-trimmed decor that's authentic to the era (1913) when it was established, this restaurant has been "discovered" by new generations of restaurantgoers. Named after its founders, Etienne and Marthe Marty, its fame now extends beyond the 5th Arrondissement. Service is attentive, and lots of Jazz Age murals grace the walls. Food is savory, satisfying, and unfussy. Views from the hideaway tables on the mezzanine sweep over the entire human comedy, which is loud, large, and animated, unfolding above and below you. Begin a meal with duckling terrine or Andalusian gazpacho. Continue with suprême of guinea fowl with vegetable moussaka; a rump steak in black pepper sauce or perhaps fried scallops sauté in the Provençal style.

20 av. des Gobelins, 5e. ✆ **01-43-31-39-51.** www.marty-restaurant.com. Main courses 21€–33€ ($30–$48); fixed-price menu 34€ ($49). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily noon–3pm and 7–11pm. Métro: Gobelins.

Inexpensive

Coco de Mer ★ *Finds* SEYCHELLE ISLANDS The theme of this restaurant tugs at the emotions of Parisians who have spent their holidays on the beaches of the Seychelles, in the Indian Ocean. It contains several dining rooms, one of which is outfitted like a beach, with a sand-covered floor, replicas of palm trees, and a scattering of conch shells. Menu items feature such exotic dishes as tartare of tuna flavored with ginger, olive oil, salt, and pepper; and smoked swordfish, served as carpaccio or in thin slices with mango mousse and spicy sauce. Main courses focus on fish, including a species of red snapper *(boirzoes)* imported from the Seychelles.

34 bd. St-Marcel, 5e. ✆ **01-47-07-06-64.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 14€–20€ ($20–$29); fixed-price menus 23€–30€ ($33–$44). AE, DC, MC, V. Tues–Sat noon–3pm; Mon–Sat 7:30pm–midnight. Métro: Les Gobelins or St-Marcel.

LEFT BANK: 6TH ARRONDISSEMENT

Moderate

Alcazar Restaurant ★ MODERN FRENCH Paris's highest-profile *brasserie de luxe* is this high-tech place funded by British restaurateur Sir Terence Conran. It features a red-and-white futuristic decor in a street-level dining room and a busy upstairs bar (La Mezzanine de l'Alcazar). The menu includes rack of veal sautéed with wild mushrooms, roasted rack of lamb with thyme, and shellfish and oysters from the waters of Brittany. The wines are as stylish and diverse as you'd expect.

62 rue Mazarine, 6e. ✆ **01-53-10-19-99.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 18€–32€ ($26–$46); fixed-price lunch 20€–30€ ($29–$44); fixed-price dinner 42€ ($61). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily noon–3pm and 7pm–midnight. Métro: Odéon.

Ze Kitchen Galerie ★ Finds INTERNATIONAL/MODERN FRENCH The owner and head chef of this restaurant, William Ledeuil, trained in haute Parisian gastronomy under culinary czar Guy Savoy. The setting is a colorful loft space in an antique building, with an open-to-view showcase kitchen. Most of the paintings on display are for sale (the place doubles as an art gallery). Menu items, like the paintings, change about every 5 weeks; appetizers are subdivided into pastas, soups, and fish; and main courses are divided into meats and fish that are usually *à la plancha* (grilled). For starters, ever had beet gazpacho with candied ginger, cucumber, and fresh shrimp? The grilled chicken and veal sweetbreads with a carrot-and-mustard *jus* (flavored with ginger) is heavenly, as are platters of oysters, mussels, and sea urchins. Sometimes grilled shoulder of wild boar with tamarind sauce is featured. A meal might also be followed with the restaurant's "cappuccino of the month," a frothy dessert concoction whose ingredients change with the seasons.

4 rue des Grands-Augustins, 6e. ✆ **01-44-32-00-32.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 26€–30€ ($38–$44); fixed-price lunch with wine 24€–35€ ($35–$51). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri noon–2:30pm; Mon–Sat 7–11pm. Métro: St-Michel.

Inexpensive

Crémerie-Restaurant Polidor ★ Kids TRADITIONAL FRENCH Crémerie Polidor is the most traditional bistro in the Odéon area, serving *cuisine familiale.* Its name dates from the early 1900s, when it specialized in frosted cream desserts, but the restaurant can trace its history to 1845. The Crémerie was André Gide's favorite, and Joyce, Hemingway, Valéry, Artaud, and Kerouac also dined here. Peer beyond the lace curtains and brass hat racks to see drawers where in olden days, regular customers used to lock up their cloth napkins. Try the day's soup followed by kidneys in Madeira sauce, *boeuf bourguignon, confit de canard,* or *blanquette de veau.* For dessert, order a chocolate, raspberry, or lemon tart.

41 rue Monsieur-le-Prince, 6e. ✆ **01-43-26-95-34.** Main courses 11€–22€ ($16–$32); fixed-price menus 22€–32€ ($32–$46). No credit cards. Daily noon–2:30pm; Mon–Sat 7pm–12:30am; Sun 7–11pm. Métro: Odéon.

LEFT BANK: 7TH & 14TH ARRONDISSEMENTS

Very Expensive

L'Arpège ★★★ MODERN FRENCH L'Arpège is best known for Alain Passard's specialties—no restaurant in the 7th serves better food. Surrounded by etched glass, burnished steel, monochromatic oil paintings, and pearwood paneling, you can enjoy such specialties as couscous of vegetables and shellfish, lobster braised in the yellow wine of the Jura, braised monkfish in an Orléans mustard sauce, pigeon roasted with almonds and honey-flavored mead, and carpaccio of crayfish with caviar-flavored cream sauce. Although Passard is loath to include red meat on his menus, Kobe

The Top Cafes

Whatever your pleasure—reading, meeting a lover, writing your memoirs, nibbling a hard-boiled egg, or drinking yourself into oblivion—you can do it at a French cafe.

Jean-Paul Sartre came to **Café de Flore,** 172 bd. St-Germain, 6e (✆ **01-45-48-55-26;** Métro: St-Germain-des-Prés), where it's said he wrote his trilogy *Les Chemins de la Liberté (The Roads to Freedom).* The cafe is still going strong, though celebrities have moved on.

Next door, the legendary **Deux Magots,** 6 place St-Germain-des-Prés, 6e (✆ **01-45-48-55-25;** Métro: St-Germain-des-Prés), is still the hangout for sophisticated residents and a tourist favorite in summer. Inside are two Asian statues that give the cafe its name.

Fouquet's, 99 av. des Champs-Elysées, 8e (✆ **01-47-23-50-00;** Métro: George V), is the premier cafe on the Champs-Elysées. Outside, a barricade of potted flowers separates cafe tables from the sidewalk. Inside are a grill room, private rooms, and a restaurant.

At **La Coupole,** 102 bd. Montparnasse, 14e (✆ **01-43-20-14-20;** Métro: Vavin), the crowd ranges from artists' models to young men dressed like Rasputin. People come here to see and be seen. Perhaps order a coffee or cognac VSOP at a sidewalk table, repeating a ritual that has continued since the place was established in 1927. The dining room serves food that is sometimes good, sometimes indifferent. It serves a buffet breakfast Monday through Friday.

In the Marais, **La Belle Hortense,** 31 rue Vieille du Temple, 4e (✆ **01-48-04-71-60;** Métro: Hôtel de Ville or St-Paul), is the most literary cafe in a legendary literary neighborhood. It offers an erudite and accessible staff; an inventory of French literary classics as well as modern tomes about art, psychoanalysis, history, and culture; and two high-ceilinged, 19th-century rooms little changed since the days of Baudelaire and Balzac. The zinc-covered bar serves wine for 3€ to 9€ ($4.40–$13) a glass.

beef and venison sometimes appear. He focuses on fish, shellfish, poultry, and—his passion—vegetables. These he elevates to levels unequaled by any other chef in Paris. 84 rue de Varenne, 7e. ✆ **01-47-05-09-06.** Fax 01-44-18-98-39. www.alain-passard.com. Reservations required 2 weeks in advance. Main courses 48€–180€ ($70–$261). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri 12:30–2:30pm and 8–10:30pm. Métro: Varenne.

Expensive

Le Violon d'Ingres ★★★ MODERN FRENCH This restaurant is Paris's pièce de résistance. Chef-owner Christian Constant is "the new Robuchon." Those fortunate enough to dine in Violon's warm atmosphere rave about the artistic dishes. They range from wood pigeon cooked on the grill and served with a fricassee of mushrooms to such hearty fare as veal's head with the tongue and brain poached in a sauce of capers and hard-boiled eggs. If you're not man (or woman) enough for that, you can opt for the spit-roasted turbot with baby vegetables or the Norman sea bass with almonds and a sauce ravigote. The service is charming and discreet; the wine selection, well chosen.

The Constant family has tied up the dining rituals along this street, with less expensive, less formal restaurants flanking Le Violon d'Ingres.

135 rue St-Dominique, 7e. ✆ **01-45-55-15-05.** Fax 01-45-55-48-42. Reservations required at least 2 days in advance. Main courses 26€–38€ ($38–$55); *menu dégustation* 65€ ($94); fixed-price lunch 50€–110€ ($73–$160); fixed-price dinner 80€–110€ ($116–$160). AE, DC, MC, V. Tues–Sat noon–2:30pm and 7–10:30pm. Métro: Invalides or Ecole-Militaire.

SEEING THE SIGHTS IN THE CITY OF LIGHT

The best way to discover Paris is on foot. Walk along the grand avenue des Champs-Elysées, tour the quays of the Seine, wander around Ile de la Cité and Ile St-Louis, browse through the countless shops and stalls, wander through the famous squares and parks. Each turn will open a new vista.

SIGHTSEEING SUGGESTIONS FOR FIRST-TIME VISITORS

If You Have 1 Day Get up early and find a cafe for a typical Parisian breakfast of coffee and croissants. The two most popular museums are the **Louvre** and the **Musée d'Orsay;** the three most enduring monuments are the **Eiffel Tower,** the **Arc de Triomphe,** and **Notre-Dame.** If it's a tossup between the Louvre and the d'Orsay, we'd choose the Louvre if you're a first-timer; if it's a tossup between monuments, we'd make it the Eiffel Tower, for the view of the city. If your day is too short to visit museums, then spend your time strolling—the streets of Paris are live theater. The most elegant place for a walk is Ile St-Louis, filled with 17th-century mansions. On the **Left Bank,** wander St-Germain-des-Prés or place St-Michel, the heart of the student quarter. As the sun sets over Paris, head for **Notre-Dame** along the banks of the Seine, and watch the shadows fall over Paris and the lights come on.

If You Have 2 Days Spend your second day taking in the Right Bank. Begin at the **Arc de Triomphe** and stroll down the **Champs-Elysées,** the main boulevard of Paris, until you reach the Egyptian obelisk at **place de la Concorde.** Some of France's most notable figures met the guillotine here; it affords terrific views of the **Madeleine,** the **Palais Bourbon,** the Arc de Triomphe, and the Louvre. Then we'd suggest a rest stop in the **Jardin de Tuileries,** or lunch in a Right Bank bistro. After exploring the heart of elegant, monumental Paris, why not go for a walk on the seedy side? Our favorite is a stroll along rue des Rosiers in the **Marais,** the heart of the Jewish community. After a rest, follow Hemingway's footsteps and head down to **Montparnasse** for a lively dinner.

If You Have 3 Days This is the day to follow your special interests. Many will want to visit the **Centre Pompidou.** You might explore the **Musée Picasso** as well, along with some of the galleries of the Marais. At midday, head for lunch in Paris's most charming square, **place des Vosges.** Reserve the afternoon for the **Ile de la Cité;** you can see the **Conciergerie,** where Marie Antoinette and others were held prisoner, and the **Sainte-Chapelle** in the Palais de Justice, with its stunning stained glass. For dinner, we suggest a bistro in Le Marais.

If You Have 4 or 5 Days On your fourth day, go on your own or take an organized tour to **Versailles.** Then head back to the city for dinner and an evening stroll in the **Latin Quarter.** On your fifth day, devote at least a morning to **Montmartre,** on top of the highest of Paris's seven hills. Visit the **Basilica du Sacré-Coeur,** for the view if nothing else.

THE TOP MUSEUMS

Musée du Louvre ★★★ The Louvre is one of the world's largest and greatest museums—and now more beautiful than ever since the facade has been thoroughly cleaned. The $1.2-billion Grand Louvre Project, a 15-year undertaking, is officially complete, but refurbishment of individual galleries and paintings continues. For up-to-the-minute data on what is open and about to open, check out the museum's website (www.louvre.fr).

The collection is staggering. You'll have to resign yourself to missing some masterpieces; you simply can't see everything. People on one of those Paris-in-a-day tours race to glimpse the *Mona Lisa* (in her own special room) and the *Venus de Milo.* Those with an extra 5 minutes go in pursuit of *Winged Victory,* the headless statue discovered at Samothrace that dates from about 200 B.C.

The collections are divided into eight departments: Asian antiquities; Egyptian antiquities; Greek, Etruscan, and Roman antiquities; Islamic art; sculpture; paintings; prints and drawings; and objets d'art. In 1997, President Jacques Chirac inaugurated nearly 10,000 sq. m (about 107,000 sq. ft.) of gallery space, most of it in the Sully wing, including a new presentation of Egyptian antiquities. It gave 60 percent more space to the world of the pharaohs, a culture that has fascinated the French since Napoleon's occupation of Egypt in 1798.

Other areas include freshly restored rooms of Greek, Etruscan, and Roman antiquities. **The Grand Galerie,** a 180m (591-ft.) hall opening onto the Seine, is dedicated to mostly Italian paintings from the 1400s to the 1700s, including works by Raphael and Leonardo da Vinci.

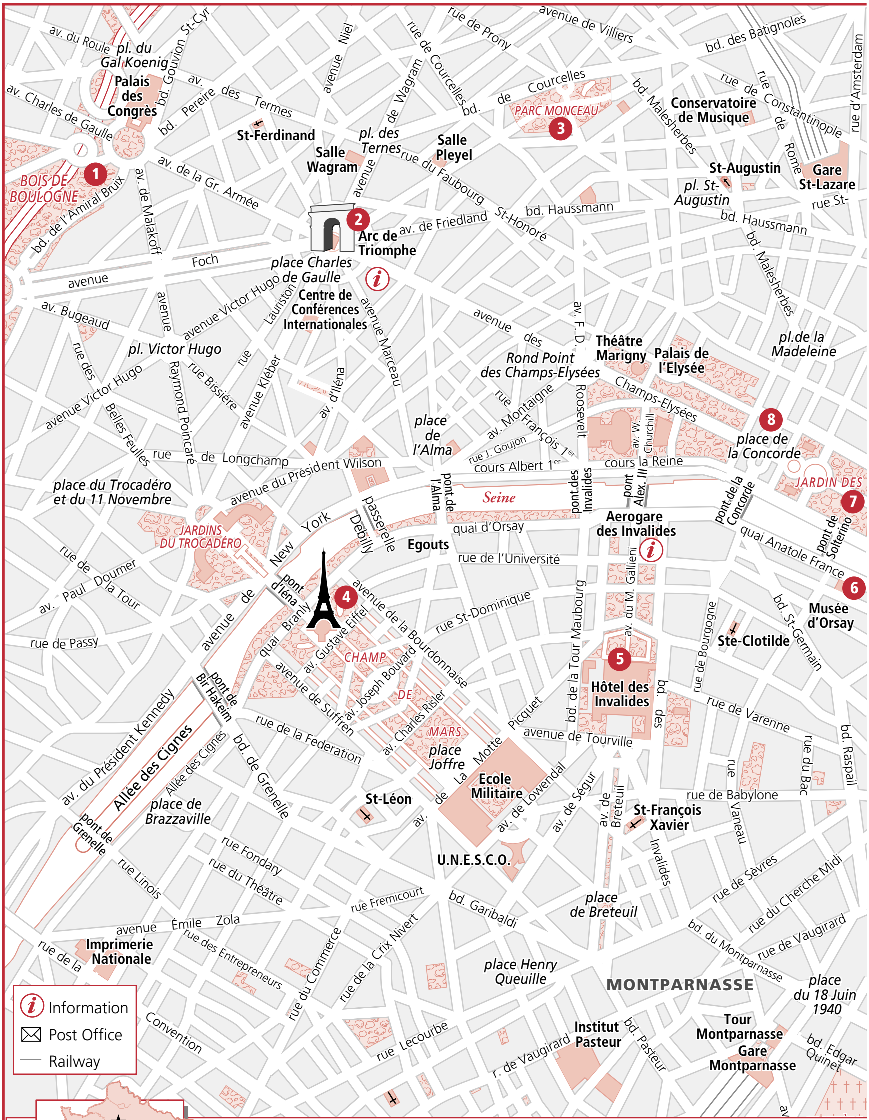
The **Richelieu Wing** houses the collection of northern European and French paintings, decorative arts, French sculpture, Oriental antiquities (a rich collection of Islamic art), and the grand salons of Napoleon III. Originally constructed from 1852 to 1857, this wing has been virtually rebuilt. In its 165 rooms, plus three covered courtyards, some 12,000 works of art are displayed. Of the Greek and Roman antiquities, the most notable (aside from *Venus* and *Winged Victory*) are fragments of the Parthenon's frieze.

34–36 quai du Louvre, 1er. Main entrance in the glass pyramid, Cour Napoléon. ✆ **01-40-20-53-17,** 01-40-20-50-50 for operator, or 08-92-68-46-94 for advance credit card sales. www.louvre.fr. Admission 9€ ($13), free for children under 18; free to all 1st Sun of every month. Sat–Mon and Thurs 9am–6pm; Wed and Fri 9am–10pm. 1½-hr. English-language tours (Mon and Wed–Sun) 6€ ($8.70), free for children under 13 with museum ticket. Métro: Palais-Royal–Musée du Louvre.

Musée d'Orsay ★★★ The neoclassical Gare d'Orsay train station has been transformed into one of the world's great museums. It contains an important collection devoted to the pivotal years from 1848 to 1914. Across the Seine from the Louvre and the Tuileries, it is a repository of works by the Impressionists as well as the Symbolists, Pointillists, Realists, and late Romantics. Artists represented include van Gogh, Manet, Monet, Degas, and Renoir. It houses thousands of sculptures and paintings across 80 galleries, plus Belle Epoque furniture, photographs, objets d'art, architectural models, and a cinema.

One of Renoir's most joyous paintings is here: *Moulin de la Galette* (1876). Another celebrated work is by the American James McNeill Whistler—*Arrangement in Gray and Black: Portrait of the Painter's Mother.* The most famous piece in the museum is Manet's 1863 *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* (Picnic on the Grass), which created a scandal when it was first exhibited; it depicts a nude woman picnicking with two fully clothed men

Paris Attractions



BOIS DE BOULOGNE
1
Palais des Congrès
pl. du Gal Koenig
St-Ferdinand
Salle Wagram
pl. des Ternes
Salle Pleyel
PARC MONCEAU
3
Conservatoire de Musique
St-Augustin
pl. St-Augustin
Gare St-Lazare
2
Arc de Triomphe
place Charles de Gaulle
Centre de Conférences Internationales
pl. Victor Hugo
Théâtre Marigny
Palais de l'Elysée
pl.de la Madeleine
Rond Point des Champs-Elysées
place de l'Alma
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place de la Concorde
JARDIN DES
7
Seine
place du Trocadéro et du 11 Novembre
JARDINS DU TROCADÉRO
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place Joffre
Ecole Militaire
St-Léon
St-François Xavier
place de Brazzaville
Allée des Cygnes
U.N.E.S.C.O.
place de Breteuil
Imprimerie Nationale
place Henry Queuille
MONTPARNASSE
place du 18 Juin 1940
Institut Pasteur
Tour Montparnasse
Gare Montparnasse
av. du Roule
av. Charles de Gaulle
bd. Gouvion St-Cyr
av. des Termes
bd. Pereire
av. de la Gr. Armée
bd. de l'Amiral Bruix
av. de Malakoff
avenue Foch
av. Bugeaud
avenue Victor Hugo
rue Lauriston
avenue Kléber
avenue Marceau
av. d'Iéna
rue des Belles Feuilles
rue Raymond Poincaré
rue Bissière
rue de Longchamp
avenue du Président Wilson
avenue de New York
passerelle Debilly
pont d'Iéna
quai Branly
rue de la Tour
av. Paul Doumer
rue de Passy
avenue de Suffren
av. Gustave Eiffel
av. Joseph Bouvard
av. Charles Risler
avenue de la Bourdonnaise
rue de la Federation
av. du Président Kennedy
pont de Bir Hakeim
pont de Grenelle
bd. de Grenelle
rue Fondary
rue du Théâtre
rue Linois
avenue Émile Zola
rue des Entrepreneurs
rue du Commerce
rue de la Crix Nivert
rue Fremicourt
bd. Garibaldi
rue Lecourbe
rue de la Convention
r. de Vaugirard
bd. Pasteur
av. de La Motte Picquet
avenue de Tourville
av. de Lowendal
av. de Ségur
av. de Breteuil
bd. des Invalides
rue de Babylone
rue Vaneau
rue de Sèvres
rue du Cherche Midi
rue de Vaugirard
bd. du Montparnasse
bd. Edgar Quinet
bd. Raspail
rue du Bac
rue de Varenne
rue de Bourgogne
bd. St-Germain
quai Anatole France
pont de Solferino
pont de la Concorde
cours la Reine
pont Alex. III
pont des Invalides
pont de l'Alma
cours Albert 1er
quai d'Orsay
rue de l'Université
rue St-Dominique
bd. de la Tour Maubourg
av. du M. Gallieni
av. W. Churchill
av. F. D. Roosevelt
rue François 1er
rue J. Goujon
av. Montaigne
avenue des Champs-Elysées
avenue Niel
avenue de Wagram
rue de Courcelles
rue de Prony
avenue de Villiers
bd. de Courcelles
bd. des Batignoles
rue de Rome
rue de Constantinople
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bd. Malesherbes
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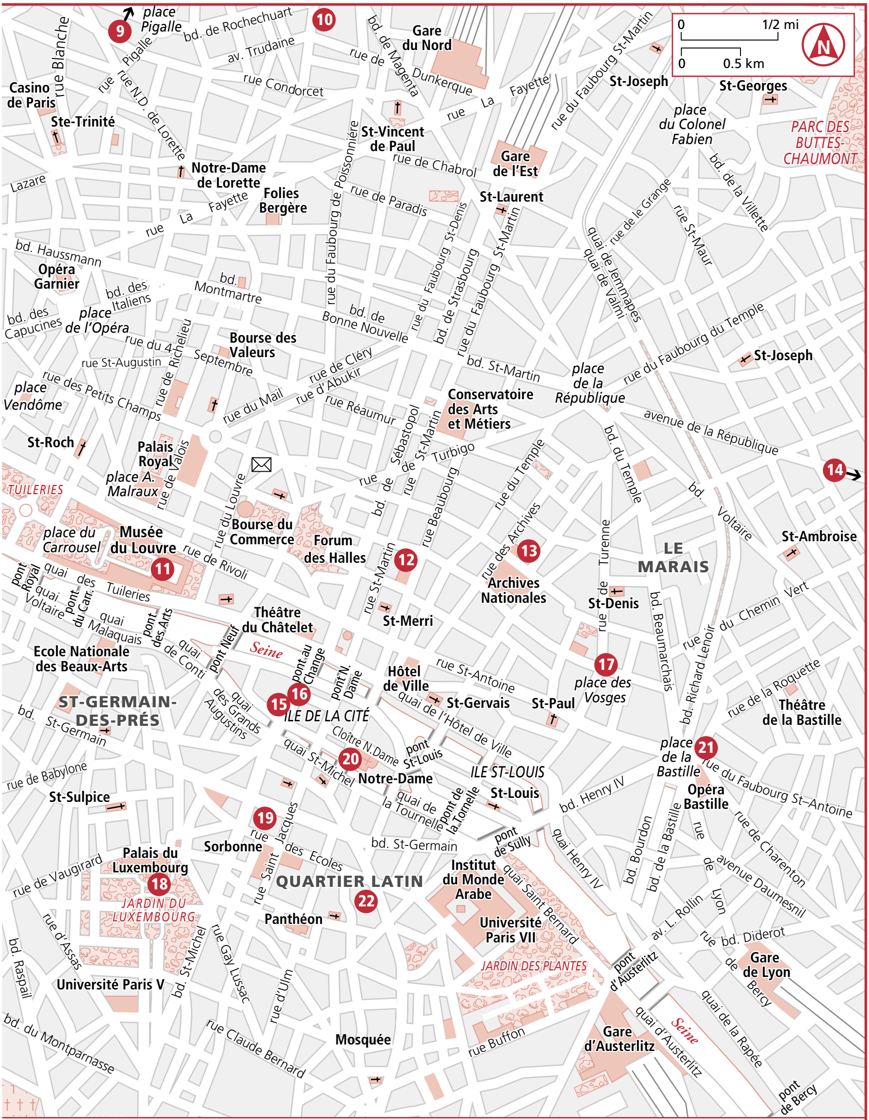
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rue du Faubourg St-Martin
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bd. Raspail
rue d'Assas
bd. St-Michel
rue Gay Lussac
Université Paris V
rue d'Ulm
pont d'Austerlitz
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in a forest. Two years later, his *Olympia,* lounging on her bed wearing nothing but a flower in her hair and high-heeled shoes, met with the same response.

1 rue de Bellechasse or 62 rue de Lille, 7e. ✆ **01-40-49-48-14.** www.musee-orsay.fr. Admission 7.50€ ($11) adults, 5.50€ ($8) ages 18–24, free for ages 17 and under. Tues–Wed and Fri–Sun 9:30am–6pm; Thurs 9:30am–9:45pm. Closed Dec 25, Jan 1, and May 1. Métro: Solférino. RER: Musée d'Orsay.

Musée Picasso ★★★ This museum offers an unparalleled view of the artist's career, including his fabled gaunt blue figures and harlequins. The world's greatest Picasso collection, acquired by the state in lieu of $50 million in inheritance taxes, consists of 203 paintings, 158 sculptures, 16 collages, 19 bas-reliefs, 88 ceramics, and more than 1,500 sketches and 1,600 engravings, plus 30 notebooks. These works span some 75 years of Picasso's life and changing styles. Paintings include a 1901 self-portrait and such masterpieces as *Le Baiser (The Kiss).* Another masterpiece is *Reclining Nude and the Man with a Guitar.*

In the Hôtel Salé, 5 rue de Thorigny, 3e. ✆ **01-42-71-25-21.** www.musee-picasso.fr. Admission 7.70€ ($11) adults, 5.70€ ($8.30) ages 18–25, free for children under 18. Apr–Sept Wed–Mon 9:30am–6pm; Oct–Mar Wed–Mon 9:30am–5:30pm. Closed Dec 25 and Jan 1. Métro: St-Paul, Filles du Calvaire, or Chemin Vert.

Centre Pompidou ★★★ This center for 20th-century art, designed by Richard Rogers and Renzo Piano, opened in 1977 and became the focus of controversy. Its bold exoskeletal architecture and the brightly painted pipes and ducts crisscrossing its transparent facade (green for water, red for heat, blue for air, and yellow for electricity) were jarring in the old Beaubourg neighborhood. The Centre Pompidou encompasses four separate attractions. The **Musée National d'Art Moderne (National Museum of Modern Art)** offers a large collection of 20th-century art. With some 40,000 works, this is the big draw, although only some 850 works can be displayed at one time. If you want to view some real charmers, see Alexander Calder's 1926 *Josephine Baker,* one of his earlier versions of the mobile, an art form he invented. Marcel Duchamp's *Valise* is a collection of miniature reproductions of his fabled Dada sculptures and drawings; they're displayed in a carrying case.

You can visit a re-creation of **l'Atelier Brancusi,** the Jazz Age studio of the Romanian sculptor; it's configured as a mini-museum slightly separate from the rest of the action.

Place Georges-Pompidou, 4e. ✆ **01-44-78-12-33.** www.centrepompidou.fr. Admission 10€ ($15) adults, 8€ ($12) students, free for children under 18. Wed–Mon 11am–9pm. Métro: Rambuteau, Hôtel de Ville, or Châtelet–Les Halles.

ON THE CHAMPS-ELYSEES

Arc de Triomphe ★★★ At the western end of the Champs-Elysées, the Arc de Triomphe is the largest triumphal arch in the world, about 49m (161 ft.) high and 44m (144 ft.) wide. Don't cross the square to reach it! With a dozen streets radiating from the "Star," the traffic circle is vehicular roulette. Take the underground passage. Commissioned by Napoleon in 1806 to commemorate his Grande Armée's victories, the arch wasn't completed until 1836, under Louis-Philippe. Of the sculptures decorating the monument, the best known is Rude's *Marseillaise,* also called *The Departure of the Volunteers.* J. P. Cortot's *Triumph of Napoléon in 1810,* along with the *Resistance of 1814* and *Peace of 1815,* both by Etex, also adorn the facade. The arch is engraved with the names of hundreds of generals who commanded troops in Napoleonic victories. You can take an elevator or climb the stairway to the top, where there's an exhibition hall with lithographs and photos depicting the arch throughout its history.

From the observation deck, you have a panoramic view of the Champs-Elysées as well as such landmarks as the Louvre, the Eiffel Tower, and Sacré-Coeur.

Place Charles-de-Gaulle–Etoile, 8e. ✆ **01-55-37-73-77.** www.monum.fr. Admission 8€ ($12) adults, 5€ ($7.30) under 25, free for children 18 and under. Apr–Sept daily 10am–11pm; Oct–Mar daily 10am–10:30pm. Métro: Charles-de-Gaulle–Etoile. Bus: 22, 30, 31, 52, 73, or 92.

ILE DE LA CITE: WHERE PARIS WAS BORN

Medieval Paris, that architectural blending of grotesquerie and Gothic beauty, began on this island in the Seine. Explore as much of it as you can, but if you're in a hurry, try to visit at least Notre-Dame, the Sainte-Chapelle, and the Conciergerie.

Notre-Dame ★★★ For 6 centuries, it has stood as a Gothic masterpiece of the Middle Ages. You'll have to walk around the entire structure to appreciate this "vast symphony of stone" with its classic flying buttresses. Better yet, cross the bridge to the Left Bank and view it from the quay. From the square parvis (the courtyard in front), you can view the trio of 13th-century sculpted portals. On the left, the Portal of the Virgin depicts the signs of the zodiac and the Virgin's coronation. The central Portal of the Last Judgment is in three levels: the first shows Vices and Virtues; the second, Christ and his Apostles; and the third, Christ in triumph after the Resurrection. On the right is the Portal of Ste-Anne, depicting such scenes as the Virgin enthroned with Child. It's Notre-Dame's most perfect piece of sculpture. Over the central portal is a remarkable rose window, 9m (30 ft.) in diameter, forming a showcase for a statue of the Virgin and Child. Equally interesting is the Cloister Portal (around on the left), with its 13th-century Virgin, a unique survivor of many that originally adorned the facade. (Unfortunately, the child she's holding is decapitated.) In the **treasury** are displayed vestments and gold objects, including crowns.

If possible, view the interior at sunset. Of the three giant medallions that warm the austere cathedral, the north rose window in the transept, from the mid–13th century, is best. To visit the gargoyles immortalized by Victor Hugo (where Quasimodo lurked), you have to scale steps leading to the twin square towers, rising to a height of 68m (223 ft.). Once here, you can inspect those devils (some sticking out their tongues), hobgoblins, and birds of prey.

Approached through a garden behind Notre-Dame is the **Memorial des Martyrs Français de la Déportation.** This memorial honors the French martyrs of World War II, deported to camps like Auschwitz and Buchenwald. In blood red are the words (in French): FORGIVE, BUT DON'T FORGET. Open daily June to September 10am to noon and 2 to 7pm, October to May 10am to noon and 2 to 5pm. Admission is free.

6 place du parvis Notre-Dame, 4e. ✆ **01-42-34-56-10.** www.notredamedeparis.fr. Free admission to the cathedral. Towers 3.30€ ($4.80) adults, 2.20€ ($3.20) seniors and 1.60€ ($2.30) ages 13–25, free for children under 18. Treasury 3€ ($4.40) adults, 2€ ($2.90) ages 12–25, 1€ ($1.50) ages 6–12, free for children under 6. Cathedral year-round Mon–Fri 8am–6:45pm (7:15pm Sat–Sun). Towers and crypt year-round Tues–Sun 10am– 6pm (until 11pm Sat–Sun June–Aug). Museum Wed and Sat–Sun 2–5pm. Treasury open Mon–Fri 9:30am–6pm, Sat 9:30am–6:30pm, Sun 1:30–6:30pm. Métro: Cité or St-Michel. RER: St-Michel.

Sainte-Chapelle ★★★ Come here if for no other reason than to see one of the world's greatest examples of Flamboyant Gothic architecture—"the pearl among them all," as Proust called it—and brilliant stained-glass windows with a lacelike delicacy. Sainte-Chapelle is Paris's second-most-important monument of the Middle Ages (after Notre-Dame); it was erected to enshrine relics from the First Crusade, including the Crown of Thorns, two pieces from the True Cross, and the Roman lance that pierced the side of Christ.

Viewed on a bright day, the 15 stained-glass windows depicting Bible scenes seem to glow ruby red and Chartres blue. The walls consist almost entirely of the glass. Built in only 5 years, beginning in 1246, the chapel has two levels. You enter through the lower chapel, supported by flying buttresses and ornamented with fleurs-de-lis. The servants of the palace used the lower chapel, and the upper chamber was for the king and his courtiers; the latter is reached by ascending a narrow spiral staircase. Sainte-Chapelle stages **concerts** in summer; tickets range from 19€ to 25€ ($28–$36). Call ✆ **01-42-77-65-65,** 11am to 6pm daily, for details.

Palais de Justice, 4 bd. du Palais, 4e. ✆ **01-53-40-60-80.** www.monum.fr. 7.50€ ($11) adults, 4.80€ ($7) ages 18–25, free for children 17 and under. Mar–Oct 9:30am–6pm; Nov–Feb 9am–5pm. Métro: Cité, St-Michel, or Châtelet–Les Halles. RER: St-Michel.

THE EIFFEL TOWER & ENVIRONS ★★★

From place du Trocadéro, you can step between the wings of the Palais de Chaillot and gaze out on a panoramic view. At your feet lie the Jardins du Trocadéro. Directly in front of you, the Pont d'Iéna spans the Seine, leading to the Eiffel Tower. Beyond, stretching as far as your eye can see, is the Champ-de-Mars, a garden with arches, grottoes, lakes, and cascades.

Eiffel Tower ★★★ This may be the single most recognizable structure in the world—it's the symbol of Paris. Gustave-Alexandre Eiffel built it for the Universal Exhibition of 1889. The tower, including its 17m (56-ft.) TV antenna, is 317m (1,040 ft.) tall. Its open-framework construction ushered in the almost-unlimited possibilities of steel construction, paving the way for skyscrapers.

You can visit the tower in three stages: Taking the elevator to the first landing, you'll have a view over the rooftops of Paris; here, a cinema, museum, restaurants, and a bar are open year-round. The second landing provides a panoramic look at the city (on this level is Le Jules Verne restaurant). The third landing offers the best view, allowing you to identify monuments and buildings. To get to **Le Jules Verne** (✆ **01-45-55-61-44**), take the private south foundation elevator. You can enjoy an aperitif in the piano bar, and then take a seat at one of the dining room's tables, all of which provide an inspiring view. Reservations are recommended. As of 2004, you can ice-skate inside the Eiffel Tower, doing figure eights while taking in views of the rooftops of Paris. Skating takes place on an observation deck 57m (187 ft.) aboveground. Skate rentals and admission to the rink, open for 6 weeks during December and January, are free once you pay the initial entry fee below. ***Insider tip:*** The least expensive way to visit the tower is to walk up the first two floors for 4€ ($5.80) adults or 3.10€ ($4.50) ages 25 and under. With this route, you also bypass the long lines for the elevator.

Champ de Mars, 7e. ✆ **01-44-11-23-23.** www.tour-eiffel.fr. Admission to 1st landing 4.50€ ($6.60), 2nd landing 7.80€ ($11), 3rd landing 12€ ($17). Stairs to 2nd floor 4€ ($5.80). Sept–May daily 9:30am–11:45pm; June–Aug daily 9am–12:45am. Oct–June stairs open only to 6:30pm. Métro: Trocadéro, Ecole Militaire, or Bir Hakeim. RER: Champ de Mars–Tour Eiffel.

Hôtel des Invalides (Napoleon's Tomb) ★★★ The glory of the French military lives on in the **Musée de l'Armée.** Included in the collections (begun in 1794) are Viking swords, Burgundian basinets, 14th-century blunderbusses, Balkan khanjars, American Browning machine guns, war pitchforks, salamander-engraved Renaissance serpentines, musketoons, and grenadiers. As a sardonic touch, there's even General Daumesnil's wooden leg. There are suits of armor worn by kings and dignitaries. The famous "armor suit of the lion" was made for François I. The displays of swords are among the world's finest.

Crossing the Cour d'Honneur (Court of Honor), you'll come to **Eglise du Dôme,** designed by Hardouin-Mansart for Louis XIV. He began work on the church in 1677, though he died before its completion. In the Napoléon Chapel is the hearse used at the emperor's funeral on May 9, 1821. To accommodate the Tomb of Napoléon—made of red porphyry, with a green granite base—the architect Visconti had to redesign the high altar. First buried at St. Helena, Napoleon's remains were returned to Paris in 1840.

Place des Invalides, 7e. ✆ **01-44-42-37-72.** www.invalides.org. Admission to Musée de l'Armée, Napoleon's Tomb, and Musée des Plans-Reliefs 8€ ($12) adults, 6€ ($8.70) students, free for children under 18. Oct–Mar daily 10am–5pm; Dome Apr–Sept daily 10am–6pm. Closed Jan 1, May 1, Nov 1, and Dec 25. Métro: Latour-Maubourg, Varenne, Invalides, or St-Francois-Xavier.

MONTMARTRE ★★★

From the 1880s to just before World War I, Montmartre enjoyed its golden age as the world's best-known art colony, where *la vie de bohème* reigned supreme.

Before its discovery, Montmartre was a sleepy farming community, with windmills dotting the landscape. Those who find the trek up to Paris's highest elevations too much of a climb may prefer to ride **Le Petit Train de Montmartre,** which passes all the major landmarks; it seats 55 and offers English commentary. Board at place Blanche (near the Moulin Rouge); the fare is 5.50€ ($8) adults, 3.50€ ($5.10) children under 11. Trains run daily 10am to 7pm; until midnight in July and August. For information, contact **Promotrain,** 131 rue de Clignancourt, 18e (✆ **01-42-62-24-00**).

The simplest way to reach Montmartre is to take the Métro to Anvers, and then walk up rue du Steinkerque to the **funicular,** which runs to the precincts of Sacré-Coeur every day from 5:30am to 12:30am. The fare is one Métro ticket. Except for Sacré-Coeur, Montmartre has only minor attractions; it's the architecture and the atmosphere that are compelling. Specific attractions to look for include the **Bateau-Lavoir (Boat Warehouse),** on place Emile-Goudeau. Although gutted by fire in 1970, it has been reconstructed. Picasso once lived here and, in the winter of 1905 and 1906, painted one of the world's most famous portraits, *The Third Rose* (Gertrude Stein).

L'Espace Montmartre Salvador-Dalí, 11 rue Poulbot, 18e (✆ **01-42-64-40-10;** www.daliparis.com), presents Dalí's phantasmagorical world with 330 original works, including his 1956 *Don Quixote* lithograph. It's open daily from 10am to 6pm (July to August until 9:30pm); admission is 10€ ($15) for adults, 7€ ($10) seniors, 6€ ($8.70) for ages 8 to 18 and students, and free for children under 8.

Basilique du Sacré-Coeur ★★★ Montmartre's crowning achievement is Sacré-Coeur, though its view of Paris takes precedence over the basilica itself. Its gleaming white domes and campanile tower over Paris like a Byzantine church of the 12th century. But it's not that old: After France's defeat by the Prussians in 1870, the basilica was planned as an offering to cure the country's misfortunes; rich and poor alike contributed. Construction began in 1873, but the church wasn't consecrated until 1919. The interior is decorated with mosaics, the most striking of which are the ceiling depiction of Christ and the mural of the Passion at the back of the altar. The crypt contains what some believe is a piece of the sacred heart of Christ—hence the church's name. On a clear day, the vista from the dome can extend for 56km (35 miles).

Place St-Pierre, 18e. ✆ **01-53-41-89-09.** www.sacre-coeur-montmartre.com. Free admission to basilica; joint ticket to dome and crypt 5€ ($7.30) adults. Basilica daily 6am–11pm; dome and crypt daily 9am–6pm. Métro: Abbesses; take elevator to surface and follow signs to funicular.

Cimetière de Montmartre ★ Novelist Alexandre Dumas and Russian dancer Vaslav Nijinsky are just a few of the famous composers, writers, and artists interred here. The remains of the great Stendhal are here, along with Hector Berlioz, Heinrich Heine, Edgar Degas, Jacques Offenbach, and even François Truffaut.

20 av. Rachel (west of the Butte Montmartre and north of bd. de Clichy), 18e. ✆ **01-53-42-36-30.** Mon–Fri 8am–6pm; Sat 8:30am–6pm; Sun 9am–6pm (until 5:30pm in winter). Métro: La Fourche.

IN THE LATIN QUARTER ★★

This is the Left Bank precinct of the **University of Paris (the Sorbonne).** Rabelais called it the *Quartier Latin* because of the students and professors who spoke Latin in the classrooms and on the streets. The sector teems with belly dancers, restaurants from Vietnamese to Balkan, sidewalk cafes, bookstalls, and clubs in smoky cellars.

A good starting point is **place St-Michel** (Métro: St-Michel), where the young Balzac got water from the fountain. The quarter centers around **boulevard St-Michel,** to the south (the students call it "Boul Mich").

Musée National du Moyen Age (Thermes de Cluny) ★★ There are two reasons to come here: the world's finest collection of art from the Middle Ages, including jewelry and tapestries; and the well-preserved manor house, built atop Roman baths, that holds the collection. The Cluny was the mansion of a 15th-century abbot. By 1515, it was the home of Mary Tudor, the widow of Louis XII and daughter of Henry VII of England and Elizabeth of York. Most people come to see the **Unicorn Tapestries** ★★★, discovered a century ago in the Château de Boussac in the Auvergne. Five seem to deal with the senses (one depicts a unicorn looking into a mirror held by a maiden). The sixth shows a woman under an elaborate tent, her pet dog resting on an embroidered cushion beside her. The lovable unicorn and its friendly companion, a lion, hold back the flaps. Downstairs are the ruins of the Roman baths, dating from around A.D. 200.

Insider tip: The garden represents a return to the Middle Ages. It was inspired by the luxuriant detail of the museum's most fabled treasure, the 15th-century tapestry of *The Lady of the Unicorn.* It's small, but richly planted.

In the Hôtel de Cluny, 6 place Paul-Painlevé, 5e. ✆ **01-53-73-78-00** or 01-53-73-78-16. www.musee-moyenage.fr. Admission 7.50€ ($11) adults, 5.50€ ($8) ages 18–25, free for children under 18. Wed–Mon 9:15am–5:45pm. Métro: Cluny–La Sorbonne, Saint-Michel, or Odéon.

HISTORIC GARDENS & SQUARES

GARDENS Bordering place de la Concorde, the statue-studded **Jardin des Tuileries** ★★, 1er (✆ **01-44-50-75-01;** Métro: Tuileries), are as much a part of Paris as the Seine. Le Nôtre, Louis XIV's gardener and planner of the Versailles grounds, was the designer. **Jardin du Luxembourg** ★★, 6e (✆ **01-44-61-20-89;** Métro: Odéon; RER: Luxembourg), has always been associated with artists; students from the Sorbonne and children predominate nowadays. The gardens are the best on the Left Bank (if not in all of Paris).

SQUARES In **place de la Bastille** ★, 3e, on July 14, 1789, a mob of Parisians attacked the Bastille and sparked the French Revolution. Nothing remains of the historic Bastille, built in 1369. Many prisoners were kept within its walls, the best known being the "Man in the Iron Mask." Bastille Day is celebrated with great festivity on July 14. In the center of the square is the Colonne de Juillet (July Column), but it doesn't commemorate the revolution. It honors the victims of the 1830 July revolution, which put Louis-Philippe on the throne.

Place des Vosges ★★★, 4e (Métro: St-Paul or Chemin Vert), is Paris's oldest square and once its most fashionable. In the heart of the Marais, it was called the Palais Royal in the days of Henri IV, who planned to live here—but his assassin, Ravaillac, had other ideas. Henry II was killed while jousting on the square in 1559. Its *grand siècle* red-brick houses are ornamented with white stone. Its covered arcades allowed people to shop at all times, even in the rain—an innovation at the time.

The Champs-Elysées begins at **place de la Concorde** ★★★, an octagonal traffic hub built in 1757 to honor Louis XV and one of the world's grandest squares. The statue of the king was torn down in 1792 and the name of the square changed to place de la Révolution. Floodlit at night, it's dominated by an Egyptian obelisk from Luxor, the oldest man-made object in Paris; it was carved around 1200 B.C. and presented to France in 1829 by the viceroy of Egypt. During the Reign of Terror, Dr. Guillotin's little invention was erected on this spot and claimed thousands of lives.

For a spectacular sight, look down the Champs-Elysées—the view is framed by Coustou's Marly horses, which once graced the gardens at Louis XIV's Château de Marly (these are copies—the originals are in the Louvre).

HISTORIC PARKS & A CEMETERY

PARKS One of the most spectacular parks in Europe is the **Bois de Boulogne** ★★, Porte Dauphine, 16e (✆ **01-40-67-90-82;** Métro: Les-Sablons, Porte-Maillot, or Porte-Dauphine). Horse-drawn carriages traverse it, but you can also drive through. Many of its hidden pathways, however, must be discovered by walking. The park was once a forest for royal hunts. When Napoleon III gave the grounds to the city in 1852, Baron Haussmann developed them. Separating Lac Inférieur from Lac Supérieur is the Carrefour des Cascades (you can stroll under its waterfall). The Lower Lake contains two islands connected by a footbridge.

Parc Monceau ★, 8e (✆ **01-42-27-39-56;** Métro: Monceau or Villiers), is ringed with 18th- and 19th-century mansions, some evoking Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past.* It was built in 1778 by the duc d'Orléans (or Philippe-Egalité, as he became known). Parc Monceau was laid out with an Egyptian-style obelisk, a thatched alpine farmhouse, a Chinese pagoda, a Roman temple, an enchanted grotto, various chinoiseries, and a waterfall. The park was opened to the public during Napoleon III's Second Empire.

A CEMETERY **Cemetière du Père-Lachaise** ★★, 16 rue de Repos, 20e (✆ **01-55-25-82-10;** Métro: Père-Lachaise or Phillipe Auguste), contains more illustrious dead than any other cemetery. When it comes to name-dropping, this cemetery knows no peer—it's been called the "grandest address in Paris." Everybody from Sarah Bernhardt to Oscar Wilde is buried here. So are Balzac, Delacroix, and Bizet. Colette's body was taken here in 1954, and her black granite slab always bears flowers (legend has it that cats replenish the red roses). In time, the "little sparrow," Edith Piaf, followed. Marcel Proust's black tombstone rarely lacks a bunch of violets. Some tombs are sentimental favorites—Jim Morrison's reportedly draws the most visitors. Another stone is marked Gertrude Stein on one side and Alice B. Toklas on the other. The cemetery is open Monday through Friday from 8am to 6pm, Saturday from 8:30am to 6pm, and Sunday from 9am to 6pm (until 5:30pm Nov to early Mar).

ORGANIZED TOURS

BY BUS **Cityrama,** 149 rue St-Honoré, 1er (✆ **01-44-55-61-00;** Métro: Palais-Royal–Musée du Louvre), offers the most popular get-acquainted tour. A double-decker bus takes you on a 2-hour ride through the city. You don't go inside any attractions, but you get a look at the outside of Notre-Dame and the Eiffel Tower, among other sights. There's commentary in 16 languages on earphones. Tours depart daily at 10am, 11am, 2pm, and 3pm. A 1½-hour orientation tour is 18€ ($26) adults and 9.50€ ($14) children. A morning tour with interior visits to the Louvre costs 40€ ($58). A tour of the nighttime illuminations leaves daily at 10pm in summer, 7pm in winter, and costs 23€ ($33); it tends to be tame and touristy.

The **RATP** (☎ **08-92-68-77-14;** www.ratp.fr) operates the **Balabus,** a fleet of motorcoaches, on Sunday and national holidays only. For information, see "Getting Around," earlier in this chapter.

BY BOAT **Bateaux-Mouches** (☎ **01-40-76-99-99;** www.bateaux-mouches.fr; Métro: Alma-Marceau) cruises depart from the Right Bank of the Seine, adjacent to Pont de l'Alma, and last about 75 minutes. Tours leave daily at 20- to 30-minute intervals from 10am to 11pm between May and October. Between November and April, there are at least five departures daily between 11am and 9pm, with a schedule that changes according to demand and the weather. Fares are 9€ ($13) for adults and 4€ ($5.80) for children 4 to 13. Dinner cruises depart daily at 8:30pm, last 2 hours, and cost 95€ to 125€ ($138–$181). On dinner cruises, jackets and ties are required for men.

Batobus (☎ **01-44-11-33-99**) boats are 150-passenger ferries with big windows. See "Getting Around," earlier in this chapter, for information.

THE SHOPPING SCENE

The City of Light is one of the rare places in the world where you don't go anywhere in particular to shop—shopping surrounds you on almost every street. You don't have to buy anything; just peer in the *vitrines* (display windows), absorb cutting-edge ideas, witness trends, and take home an education in style.

Shops are usually open Monday through Saturday from 10am to 7pm, but hours vary, and Paris doesn't run at full throttle on Monday morning. Small shops sometimes take a 2-hour lunch break. Thursday is the best day for late-night shopping, with stores open until 9 or 10pm. Sunday shopping is currently limited to tourist areas and flea markets, though there's growing demand for full-scale Sunday hours, a la the United States and the United Kingdom. The big department stores are now open for the five Sundays before Christmas; otherwise, they're dead on *dimanche.*

THE BEST BUYS

Perfumes and **cosmetics,** including such famous brands as Guerlain, Chanel, Schiaparelli, and Jean Patou, are almost always cheaper in Paris than in the United States. Paris is also a good place to buy Lalique and Baccarat **crystal.** They're expensive but still priced below international market value.

From Chanel to Yves Saint Laurent, Nina Ricci to Sonia Rykiel, the city overflows with **fashion** boutiques, ranging from haute couture to the truly outlandish. Accessories, such as those by Louis Vuitton and Céline, are among the finest in the world. Smart Parisians know how to dress in style without mortgaging their condos: They head for discount and resale shops. **Anna Lowe,** 104 rue du Faubourg St-Honoré, 8e (☎ **01-42-66-11-32;** Métro: Miromesnil), is one of the top boutiques for women who wish to purchase a Chanel or a Versace at a discount, *bien sur.* Many clothes are runway samples; some have been gently worn. French film stars often shop at **Défilé des Marques,** 171 rue de Grenelles, 7e (☎ **01-45-55-63-47;** Métro: Latour-Maubourg), but anyone can pick up discounted Laurent, Dior, Lacroix, Prada, Chanel, Versace, Hermès, and others.

Lingerie is another great French export. All the top lingerie designers are represented in boutiques as well as in the major department stores, Galeries Lafayette and Le Printemps.

Chocolate lovers will find much to tempt them in Paris. **Christian Constant,** 37 rue d'Assas, 6e (✆ **01-53-63-15-15;** Métro: St-Placide), produces some of Paris's most sinfully delicious chocolates. Racks and racks of chocolates are priced individually or by the kilo at **Maison du Chocolat,** 225 rue du Faubourg St-Honoré, 8e (✆ **01-42-27-39-44;** Métro: Ternes), though it'll cost you about 100€ ($120) for a kilo (2.2 lb.). There are five other branches around Paris.

GREAT SHOPPING AREAS

1er & 8e These two quartiers adjoin each other and form the heart of Paris's best Right Bank shopping neighborhood. This area includes the famed **rue du Faubourg St-Honoré,** with the big designer houses, and **avenue des Champs-Elysées,** where the mass-market and teen scenes are hot. At one end of the 1er is the **Palais Royal**, where an arcade of boutiques flanks the garden of the former palace.

On the other side of town, at the end of the 8e, is **avenue Montaigne,** 2 blocks of the fanciest shops in the world, where you float from one big name to another.

2e Behind the Palais Royal lies the **Garment District** (Sentier) and a few upscale shopping secrets such as **place des Victoires.** This area also holds a few *passages,* alleys filled with tiny stores such as **Galerie Vivienne** on rue Vivienne.

3e & 4e On the surface, the shopping includes the real-people stretch of **rue de Rivoli** (which becomes **rue St-Antoine**). **BHV** (Bazar de l'Hôtel de Ville), which opened in 1856, is the major department store in this area; it has seven floors and lies adjacent to Paris's City Hall at 52–64 rue de Rivoli (✆ **01-42-74-90-00**).

Hidden in the **Marais** is a medieval warren of tiny, twisting streets chockablock with cutting-edge designers and up-to-the-minute fashions and trends. Start by walking around place des Vosges to see galleries, designer shops, and fabulous finds, and then dive in and get lost in the area leading to the Musée Picasso.

Finally, the 4e is also home of **place de la Bastille,** an up-and-coming area for artists and galleries where you'll find the newest entry on the retail scene, the **Viaduc des Arts** (which stretches into the 12e).

6e & 7e Whereas the 6e is one of the most famous shopping districts in Paris—it's the soul of the Left Bank—much of the good stuff is hidden in the zone that becomes the wealthy residential 7e. **Rue du Bac,** stretching from the 6e to the 7e in a few blocks, stands for all that wealth and glamour can buy. The street is jammed with art galleries, home-decor stores, and gourmet food shops.

9e To add to the fun of shopping the Right Bank, the 9e sneaks in behind the 1er, so if you choose not to walk toward the Champs-Elysées and the 8e, you can head to the big department stores in a row along **boulevard Haussmann** in the 9e. Here you'll find the two big French icons, **Au Printemps** and **Galeries Lafayette,** and a large branch of Britain's **Marks & Spencer.**

PARIS AFTER DARK

THE PERFORMING ARTS

Announcements of shows, concerts, and operas are on kiosks all over town. You can find listings in ***Pariscope,*** a weekly entertainment guide, and the English-language ***Boulevard,*** a bimonthly magazine.

There are many ticket agencies in Paris, but most are near the Right Bank hotels. *Avoid them if possible.* You can buy the cheapest tickets at the theater box office. Tip the usher who shows you to your seat in a theater or movie house.

Several agencies sell tickets for cultural events and plays at discounts of up to 50%. One is the **Kiosque Théâtre,** 15 place de la Madeleine, 8e (no phone; www.kiosquetheatre.com; Métro: Madeleine), offering day-of-performance tickets for about half-price (average price is 20€/$29). Tickets for evening performances are sold Tuesday to Saturday 12:30 to 8pm. For matinees, tickets are sold Saturday 12:30 to 2pm and Sunday 12:30 to 4pm.

For easy access to tickets for festivals, concerts, and the theater, try one of two locations of the **FNAC** electronics store chain: 136 rue de Rennes, 6e (✆ **08-25-02 00-20;** Métro: St. Placide); or 1–7 rue Pierre-Lescot, in the Forum des Halles, 1er (✆ **08-25-02-00-20;** Métro: Châtelet–Les Halles).

Even those with only a modest understanding of French can delight in a sparkling production of Molière at the **Comédie-Française,** 2 rue de Richelieu, 1er (✆ **08-25-10-16-80;** www.comedie-francaise.fr; Métro: Palais-Royal–Musée du Louvre), established to keep the classics alive and to promote important contemporary authors. The box office is open daily from 11am to 6pm; the hall is dark from July 21 to September 5. The Left Bank annex is the **Comédie-Française-Théâtre du Vieux-Colombier,** 21 rue du Vieux-Colombier, 4e (✆ **01-44-39-87-00;** Métro: Sèvres-Babylone or Saint-Sulpice). Although its repertoire can vary, it's known for presenting some of the most serious French dramas in town.

The **Opéra Bastille,** place de la Bastille, 120 rue de Lyon, 12e (✆ **08-92-89-90-90;** Métro: Bastille), was inaugurated in July 1989, for the Revolution's bicentennial. Since its much-publicized opening, the opera house has presented works like Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro* and Tchaikovsky's *Queen of Spades.* The main hall is the largest French opera house, with 2,700 seats, but music critics have lambasted the acoustics. The building contains two additional concert halls, including an intimate room seating 250, usually used for chamber music. Both traditional opera performances and symphony concerts are presented here. There are sometimes free concerts on French holidays; call before your visit.

Opéra Garnier, place de l'Opéra, 9e (✆ **08-92-89-90-90;** Métro: Opéra), is the premier stage for dance and opera. Because of the competition from the Opéra Bastille, the original opera has made great efforts to present more up-to-date works. Charles Garnier designed this rococo wonder in the heyday of the empire. The facade is adorned with marble and sculpture, including *The Dance* by Carpeaux. Restoration has returned the Garnier to its former glory, the ceiling (painted by Marc Chagall) has been cleaned, and air-conditioning has been added. The box office is open Monday through Saturday from 10:30am to 6:30pm.

Conceived by the Mitterrand administration, **Cité de la Musique,** 221 av. Jean-Jaurès, 19e (✆ **01-44-84-45-00,** or 01-44-84-44-84 for tickets and information; Métro: Porte-de-Pantin), has been widely applauded. At the city's northeastern edge in what used to be a run-down neighborhood, the $120-million stone-and-glass structure, designed by Christian de Portzamparc, incorporates a network of concert halls, a library and research center, and a museum. The complex stages a variety of concerts, ranging from Renaissance to 20th-century programs.

New York has its Carnegie Hall, but for years Paris lacked a permanent home for its orchestra. That is, until 2006 when the restored **Salle Pleyel** ★★★, 252 rue du

Faubourg-St-Honoré, 8e (✆ **01-42-56-13-13;** www.sallepleyel.fr; Métro: Miromesnil), opened once again. Built in 1927 by the piano-making firm of the same name, Pleyel was the world's first concert hall designed exclusively for a symphony orchestra, but was devastated by fire. In 1998, real estate developer Hubert Martigny purchased the concert hall and pumped $38 million into it, restoring the Art Deco spirit of the original and also refining the acoustics it once knew. The Orchestre Philarmonique de Radio France and the Orchestre de Paris now have a home worthy of their reputations, and the London Symphony Orchestra makes Pleyel its venue in Paris. Tickets range from 10€ to 130€ ($15–$189), and seniors and young people under 27 can arrive an hour before a concert and fill any available seat for just 10€ ($15). Reservations are made by phone Monday to Saturday 11am to 7pm.

NIGHTCLUBS & CABARETS

The **Folies-Bergère,** 34 rue Richer, 9e (✆ **01-44-79-98-60** or 08-92-68-16-50; www.foliesbergere.com; Métro: Grands Boulevards or Cadet) has been an institution since 1869. Josephine Baker, the African-American singer who danced in a banana skirt and threw bananas into the audience, became "the toast of Paris" here. Today, it's a conventional 1,600-seat theater devoted to a frequently changing roster of big-stage performances in French, many of which are adaptations of Broadway blockbusters. If you're looking for artful nudity presented with unabashed Parisian permissiveness, head for the Crazy Horse Saloon or the Lido. Shows are usually given Tuesday to Saturday at 9pm and Sunday at 3pm. Tickets cost 25€ to 84€ ($36–$122).

The **Moulin Rouge** (82 bd. Clichy, place Blanche, 18e; ✆ **01-53-09-82-82;** www.moulinrouge.fr; Métro: Blanche) is a camp classic. The establishment that Toulouse-Lautrec immortalized is still here, but the artist would probably have a hard time recognizing it. Come here for strip routines and the saucy sexiness of *la Belle Epoque*. Handsome men and girls, girls, girls, virtually all topless, keep the place going. Revues begin nightly at 9 and 11pm. Cover including champagne 89€ to 99€ ($129–$144); 7pm dinner and show 140€–170€ ($203–$247).

LIVE MUSIC & DANCING

JAZZ The great jazz revival is still going strong here. Most clubs are on the Left Bank near the Seine, between rue Bonaparte and rue St-Jacques. For the latest details, see *Jazz Hot, Jazz Magazine,* or *Pariscope.*

It's hard to say which is more intriguing at **Caveau des Oubliettes,** 52 rue Galande, 5e (✆ **01-46-34-23-09;** Métro: St-Michel)—the entertainment and drinking or the environment. Located in the Latin Quarter, just across the river from Notre-Dame, this nightspot is housed in a genuine 12th-century prison, complete with dungeons *(oubliettes),* spine-tingling passages, and scattered skulls. Free jam sessions are held nightly, perhaps Latin jazz or rock; at some point on Friday and Saturday nights concerts are staged and a 12€ ($17) cover is charged. Open daily 5pm to 2am.

DANCE CLUBS The area around the Eglise St-Germain-des-Prés is full of dance clubs. For the most up-to-date information, see *Time Out, Pariscope,* or *L'Officiel des Spectacles.* **Batofar,** facing 11 quai François Mauriac, 13e (✆ **01-56-29-10-33;** www.batofar.org; Métro: Quai de la Gare), sits on a converted barge that floats on the Seine. Hundreds of dancers, most of whom are in their 20s and 30s, gyrate to house, garage, techno, and live jazz by groups that hail from (among other places) Morocco, Senegal, and Germany. The cover ranges from 12€ to 16€ ($17–$23). Hours are Tuesday through Saturday from 6pm to 3 or 4am; closed November through March.

ROCK **Bus Palladium,** 6 rue Fontaine, 9e (✆ **01-53-21-07-33;** Métro: Blanche or Pigalle), is a single room with a long bar, a rock-'n'-roll temple with varnished hardwoods and fabric-covered walls that barely absorb the reverberations of nonstop recorded music. It appeals to hard-core rock wannabes ages 25 to 35.

GAY & LESBIAN BARS Gay life centers on Les Halles and Le Marais, with the greatest concentration of establishments between the Hôtel-de-Ville and Rambuteau Métro stops.

The function and crowd of the **Amnesia Café,** 42 rue Vieille-du-Temple, 4e (✆ **01-42-72-16-94;** Métro: Hôtel de Ville or St. Paul), may change during the day, but you'll always find a cadre of local gays. This cafe/tearoom/bistro/bar includes two bar areas, a mezzanine, and a cellar bar, Amni-Club, open in the evening. The drinks of choice are beer, cocktails, and *café amnesia,* a specialty coffee with whiskey and Chantilly cream. Deep armchairs, soft pillows, and 1930s accents create an ambience conducive to talk and laughter.

With dim lighting, background music, and comfortable banquettes, **La Champmeslé,** 4 rue Chabanais, 2e. (✆ **01-42-96-85-20;** Métro: Pyramides or Bourse), offers a cozy meeting place for women and a few "well-behaved" men. Paris's leading women's bar is in a 300-year-old building with exposed stone, ceiling beams, and 1950s-style furnishings. Thursday night, one of the premier lesbian events in Paris, a cabaret, begins at 10pm.

DAY TRIPS FROM PARIS: THE ILE DE FRANCE

VERSAILLES ★★★ Within 50 years the **Château de Versailles** (✆ **01-30-83-78-00;** www.chateauversailles.fr) was transformed from Louis XIII's simple hunting lodge into an extravagant palace. What you see today is the greatest living museum of a vanished way of life. Begun in 1661, the construction of the château involved 32,000 to 45,000 workmen, some of whom had to drain marshes—often at the cost of their lives—and move forests. Louis XIV set out to create a palace that would awe all Europe, and the result was a symbol of pomp and opulence that has been copied yet never duplicated.

The six magnificent **Grands Appartements** ★★★ are in the Louis XIV style; each takes its name from the allegorical painting on its ceiling. The most famous room is the 72m (236-ft.) **Hall of Mirrors** ★★★. Begun by Mansart in 1678 in the Louis XIV style, it was decorated by Le Brun with 17 arched windows matched by beveled mirrors in simulated arcades.

Spread across 100 hectares (247 acres), the **Gardens of Versailles** ★★★ were laid out by the great landscape artist André Le Nôtre. A long walk across the park will take you to the **Grand Trianon** ★★★, in pink-and-white marble, designed by Hardouin-Mansart for Louis XIV in 1687. Traditionally it's been a place where France has lodged important guests. Gabriel, the designer of place de la Concorde in Paris, built the **Petit Trianon** ★★ in 1768 for Louis XV; its construction was inspired by Mme de Pompadour, who died before it was completed. In time, Marie Antoinette adopted it as her favorite residence.

In 2005, a previously off-limits section of the vast palace was made available to the public for the first time by an act of the Parliament. The decision adds some 25,084 sq. m (270,000 sq. ft.) of the south wing to public access. Up to now, the area had been reserved for use by Parliament itself. Among the rooms opened up is the mammoth **Battle Gallery,** which at 119m (390 ft.) is the longest hall at Versailles. The gallery displays monumental paintings depicting all of France's great battles ranging from the founding of the monarchy by Clovis, who reigned in the 5th and 6th centuries, through the Napoleonic wars in the early 19th century.

The château is open from April through October, Tuesday through Sunday from 9am to 6:30pm (5:30pm the rest of the year). It's closed December 25 and January 1. Call or visit the website for a complete schedule of fees, which vary depending on which attractions you visit. The grounds are open daily from dawn to dusk. The individual attractions may have earlier opening and closing times.

Getting There To get to Versailles, catch the **RER** line C5 to Versailles-Rive Gauche at the Gare d'Austerlitz, St-Michel, Musée d'Orsay, Invalides, Ponte de l'Alma, Champ de Mars, or Javel stop, and take it to the Versailles Rive Gauche station. The trip takes 35 to 40 minutes. The round-trip fare is 5.60€ ($8.10); Eurailpass holders travel free on the RER but need to show the pass at the ticket kiosk to receive an RER ticket. **SNCF trains** make frequent runs from Gare St-Lazare and Gare Montparnasse in Paris to Versailles: Trains departing from Gare St-Lazare arrive at the Versailles Rive Droite railway station; trains departing from Gare Montparnasse arrive at Versailles Chantiers station.

Both Versailles stations are within a 10-minute walk of the château, and we recommend the walk as a means of orienting yourself to the town, its geography, its scale, and its architecture. If you can't or don't want to walk, you can take bus B, or (in midsummer) a shuttle bus marked CHATEAU, from either station to the château for either a cash payment of around 2€ ($2.90; drop the coins directly into the coin box near the driver) or the insertion of a valid ticket for the Paris metro. Because of the vagaries of the bus schedules, we highly recommend the walk. Directions to the château are clearly signposted from each railway station.

If you're **driving,** exit the *périphérique* (the ringed road around Paris) on N10 (av. du Général-Leclerc), which will take you to Versailles; park on place d'Armes in front of the château.

Visitor Information The **Office de Tourisme** is at 2 bis av. de Paris (✆ **01-39-24-88-88;** fax 01-39-24-88-89; www.versailles-tourisme.com).

CHARTRES ★★★ The architectural aspirations of the Middle Ages reached their highest expression in the **Cathédrale Notre-Dame de Chartres,** 16 Cloître Notre-Dame (✆ **02-37-21-59-08**). A mystical light seems to stream through this stained glass, which gave the world a new color—Chartres blue. One of the world's greatest high Gothic cathedrals, Chartres contains some of the oldest (some created as early as the 12th c.) and most beautiful medieval stained glass anywhere. It was spared in both World Wars; the glass was removed piece by piece for storage and safekeeping.

The cathedral you see today dates principally from the 13th century. It was the first to use flying buttresses, giving it a higher and lighter construction. French sculpture in the 12th century broke into full bloom when the **Royal Portal** was added; the sculptured bodies are elongated and formalized, but the faces are amazingly lifelike. Admission is free; the cathedral is open daily from 8:30am to 7:30pm. If you feel fit enough, climb to the top of the **tower.** Open daily from 8:30am to noon and 2 to 7:30pm, it costs 4.60€ ($6.70) for adults and 3.10€ ($4.50) for students. You can visit the crypt, gloomy and somber but rich with medieval history, only as part of a French-language tour. The cost is 3.10€ ($4.50) per person.

Getting There From Paris's Gare Montparnasse, **trains** run directly to Chartres, taking less than an hour. Tickets cost 27€ ($39) round-trip. Call ✆ **08-92-35-35-35.**

If **driving,** take A10/A11 southwest from the *périphérique,* and follow signs to Le Mans and Chartres. (The Chartres exit is clearly marked.)

Visitor Information The **Office de Tourisme** is on place de la Cathédrale (✆ **02-37-18-26-26;** fax 02-37-21-51-91; www.chartres-tourisme.com).

2 The Loire Valley Châteaux ★★★

Bordered by vineyards, the Loire Valley cuts through the land of castles in France's heart. When royalty and nobility built châteaux throughout this valley during the Renaissance, sumptuousness was uppermost in their minds. An era of excessive pomp reigned until Henri IV moved his court to Paris.

The Loire is blessed with abundant attractions—there's even the castle that inspired the fairy tale *Sleeping Beauty.* Tours is the traditional gateway; from there you can explore east or west, depending on your interests. From Paris, take A10 southwest to Tours.

TOURS

Tours ★, 232km (144 miles) southwest of Paris and 113km (70 miles) southwest of Orléans, is at the junction of the Loire and Cher rivers. The devout en route to Santiago de Compostela in northwest Spain once stopped here to pay homage to St. Martin, the Apostle of Gaul, bishop of Tours in the 4th century. Tours is the traditional place to begin your exploration of the medieval Loire Valley.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE Most trains bound for Tours, including all TGVs (very fast), depart from Paris's Gare Montparnasse, although a very limited number of trains depart from Gare d'Austerlitz. One-way fares range from 29€ to 49€ ($42–$71). Many, but not all, of the conventional (non-TGV) trains pull into the center of Tours, at the **Gare Tours Centre Ville,** place du Maréchal-Leclerc, 3 rue Edouard-Vaillant. Some conventional trains and virtually all the TGV trains, however, arrive at the isolated railway station of **Tours/St-Pierre-des-Corps,** about 6km (3¾ miles) east of the center of Tours. At least one (and during peak hours, several) *navettes* (buses) await every TGV train for free ongoing transport to the center of Tours.

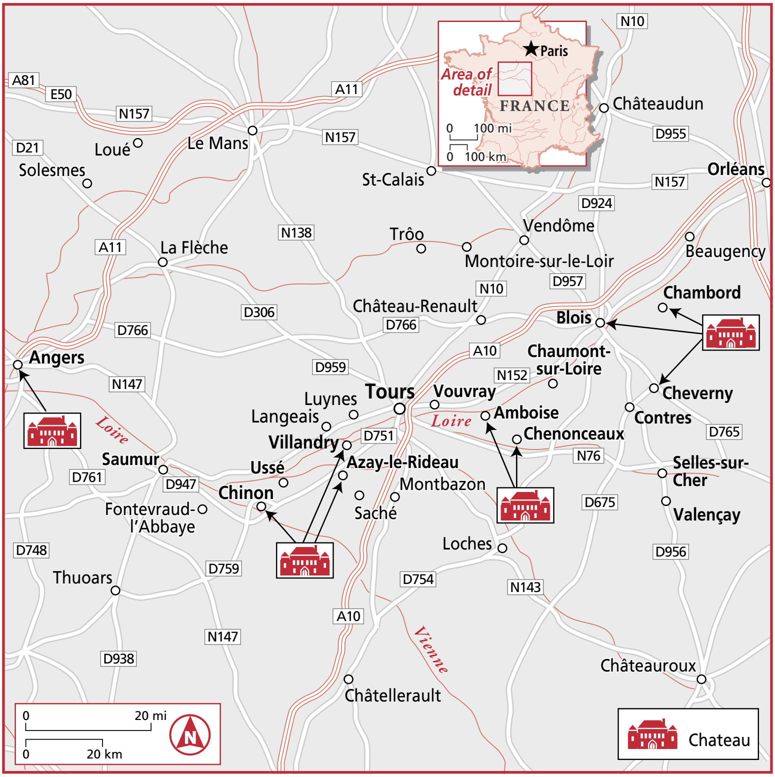
GETTING AROUND It's easy to walk from one end of central Tours to the other, and most of the good hotels are near the train station. For taxi service, call **Taxi Radio** (✆ **02-47-20-30-40**). Car-rental offices in or near the train station include **Avis,** inside the station (✆ **02-47-20-53-27**), open Monday to Friday 8am to 12:30pm and 1:30 to 6:30pm, Saturday 9am to noon and 2 to 6pm; and **Europcar,** 7 rue Bernard-Palissy (✆ **02-47-20-30-40**), open Monday to Saturday, Monday to Friday 1 to 7pm, and Saturday 1:30 to 5:30pm. You can rent a bike at **Amstercycles,** 5 rue du Rempart (✆ **02-47-61-22-23;** www.amstercycles.com), at a cost of 14€ ($20) per day. A passport deposit is required. Open May to September Monday to Saturday 9am to 12:30pm and 1 to 7pm, Sunday 9am to 12:30pm and 6 to 7pm.

VISITOR INFORMATION The **Office de Tourisme** is at 78-82 rue Bernard-Palissy (✆ **02-47-70-37-37;** www.ligeris.com).

WHERE TO STAY

Hôtel de l'Univers This hotel was erected in 1853, making it the oldest in town. It has been upgraded to government-rated four-star status, making it the best in the town center. Its midsize rooms, outfitted in a conservative contemporary style, have

The Loire Valley


Area of detail
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Solesmes
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D924
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La Flèche
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Trôo
Vendôme
Montoire-sur-le-Loir
Beaugency
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Chambord
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Château-Renault
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Blois
Angers
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Chaumont-sur-Loire
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Tours
Vouvray
Cheverny
Luynes
Langeais
Loire
Amboise
Contres
Loire
Villandry
D751
Chenonceaux
D765
Saumur
Ussé
Azay-le-Rideau
N76
Selles-sur-Cher
D761
D947
Chinon
Montbazon
Fontevraud-l'Abbaye
Saché
D675
Valençay
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Chateau

monochromatic and tasteful soft color schemes. The bathrooms, with shower and tub, have also been renewed. On weekdays, the hotel fills with business travelers; on weekends, it hosts many area brides and grooms.

5 bd. Heurteloup, Tours 37000. ✆ **02-47-05-37-12.** Fax 02-47-61-51-80. www.hotel-univers.fr. 85 units. 198€–270€ ($287–$392) double; 345€–400€ ($500–$580) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 12€ ($17). Bus: 1, 4, or 5. **Amenities:** Room service; laundry service; dry cleaning; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer.

Hôtel du Manoir On a quiet street near the train station, this 19th-century residence is a comfortable place to stay. The cheerful reception area reflects the quality of the rooms. Though small to average in size, all units have windows that let in lots of light and afford views of the neighborhood or the hotel courtyard. Most have simple furnishings. About half the rooms have tub/shower combos; the other half have only showers.

2 rue Traversière, Tours 37000. ✆ **02-47-05-37-37.** Fax 02-47-05-16-00. manoir37@wanadoo.fr. 20 units. 54€–60€ ($78–$87) double. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 5€ ($7.30). Bus: 3 or 70. *In room:* A/C, TV, Wi-Fi.

WHERE TO DINE

Château Belmont (Jean Bardet) ★ MODERN FRENCH In three rooms of a 19th-century château, this restaurant is the creation of the Michelin two-star chef Jean Bardet, who considers all meals here "an orchestration of wines, alcohol, food, and cigars." Specialties include lobster ragout, sliced sea bass with comfit of tomatoes and artichoke hearts, sliced pork with caviar, consommé of crab with squid ink, and scallops with a purée of shallots and truffle cream. The duck giblets and lobster accompanied by a red-wine and orange sauce are reason enough to visit.

57 rue Groison, Tours 37100. ✆ **02-47-41-41-11.** Fax 02-47-51-68-72. www.jeanbardet.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses 42€–72€ ($61–$104); fixed-price menu 60€–165€ ($87–$239). AE, DC, MC, V. May–Oct Wed–Thurs and Sun noon–2pm, Wed–Mon 7:30–9:30pm; Nov–Apr Thurs and Sat–Sun noon–2pm, Tues–Sat 7:30–9:30pm.

La Roche le Roy ★★ MODERN FRENCH One of the hottest chefs in town, Alain Couturier, blends new and old techniques in a gabled 15th-century manor south of the town center. Couturier's repertoire includes scalloped foie gras with lentils, cod with saffron cream sauce, pan-fried scallops with truffle vinaigrette, and *matelote* (stew) of eel with Chinon or Bourgueil wine. His masterpiece is suprême of pigeon with "roughly textured" sauce. For dessert, try a slice of warm orange-flavored chocolate served with coffee-flavored sherbet.

55 rte. St-Avertin. ✆ **02-47-27-22-00.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 26€–32€ ($38–$46); fixed-price lunch 35€ ($51); fixed-price dinner 55€–75€ ($80–$109). AE, MC, V. Tues–Sat noon–1:45pm and 7:30–9:30pm. Closed 1 week in Feb and 3 weeks in Aug. From the center of town, take av. Grammont south (follow signs to St-Avertin–Vierzon). The road crosses a bridge but doesn't change names. The restaurant is beside that road, on the southern periphery of Tours.

Les Tuffeaux Value TRADITIONAL FRENCH This restaurant in an 18th-century house is one of the best in Tours. Menu items change three times a year, depending on the inspiration of chef Gildas Marsollier. He prepares classics but also experiments, with offerings such as noisettes of roasted rabbit with bacon and almonds, crisp grilled crayfish with partridge-stuffed ravioli, and braised turbot with gratinéed *viennoise* of Comté cheese. Roasted filet of pigeon with pink grapefruit is an enduring favorite.

19 rue Lavoisier. ✆ **02-47-47-19-89.** Reservations required. Main courses 15€–24€ ($22–$35); fixed-price menu 25€–38€ ($36–$55). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Tues and Thurs–Sat noon–1:30pm; Mon–Sat 7:30–9:30pm. Bus: 1, 4, or 5.

EXPLORING TOURS

The heart of town is **place Jean-Jaurès. Rue Nationale** is the principal street (the valley's Champs-Elysées), running north to the Loire River. Head along rue du Commerce and rue du Grand-Marché to reach La Vieille Ville, the old town. One of the best ways to get an overview of Tours (in English) is a ride aboard a rubber-wheeled **train** that operates from Easter to mid-October, daily at 10am, 11am, 2pm, 3pm, 4pm, 5pm, and 6pm. Tickets, available at the tourist office or onboard, cost 6€ ($8.70) for adults and 3€ ($4.40) for children under 12. Rides (about 50 min.) begin and end in front of the tourist office, 78–82 rue Bernard-Palissy (✆ **02-47-70-37-37**).

Cathédrale St-Gatien The cathedral's Flamboyant Gothic facade is flanked by towers with bases from the 12th century, though the lanterns are Renaissance. The choir is from the 13th century, and each century through the 16th saw new additions. Some of the glorious stained-glass windows are from the 13th century.

5 place de la Cathédrale. ✆ **02-47-70-21-00.** Free admission. Daily 8:30am–7pm.

Musée des Beaux-Arts This fine provincial museum is in the Palais des Archevêques. It's worth visiting for its lovely rooms and gardens. There are works by Degas, Delacroix, Rembrandt, and Boucher, and sculpture by Houdon and Bourdelle.

18 place François-Sicard. ✆ **02-47-05-68-73.** Admission 4€ ($5.80) adults, 2€ ($2.90) seniors and students, free for children under 13. Wed–Mon 9am–12:45pm and 2–6pm. Bus: 3.

VILLANDRY ★★★

The extravagant 16th-century-style gardens of the Renaissance **Château de Villandry,** 37510 Villandry (✆ **02-47-50-02-09**), are celebrated throughout the Touraine. Forming a trio of superimposed cloisters, with a water garden on the highest level, the gardens were purchased in a decaying state and restored by Spanish doctor and scientist Joachim Carvallo, the present owner's great-grandfather. The grounds contain 17km (11 miles) of boxwood sculpture, which the gardeners must cut to style in only 2 weeks in September. Every square of the gardens seems like a geometric mosaic. The borders represent the many faces of love: for example, tender, tragic (with daggers), or crazy (with a labyrinth that doesn't get you anywhere).

A feudal castle stood at Villandry, but in 1536 Jean Lebreton, the chancellor of François I, built the present château; the buildings form a U and are surrounded by a two-sided moat.

Admission to the gardens, including a guided tour of the château, costs 8€ ($12) for adults, 5€ ($7.30) for children 8 to 18, and is free for children under 8. Visiting the gardens separately, without a guide, costs 5.50€ ($8) for adults and 3.50€ ($5.10) for children 8 to 18. The gardens are open daily from 9am to sunset (between 5 and 7:30pm); the château is open daily from 9am to between 4:30 and 6:30pm, depending on a complicated seasonal schedule. Tours are conducted in French; leaflets are available in English.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE There is no train service to Villandry. The nearest connection from Tours is at the town of Savonnières. From Savonnières, you can walk along the Loire for 4km (2½ miles) to reach Villandry, rent a **bike** at the station, or take a **taxi.** You can also **drive,** following D7 from Tours. Allow 1½ hours to see Villandry.

Where to Stay & Dine

Le Cheval Rouge MODERN FRENCH This well-known dining stopover near the château extends a congenial welcome. Specialties include Quiche Tourangel (made with pork byproducts including chitterling sausages), a flavorful version of eel stew, medallions of veal with morels, and turbot with hollandaise sauce. The inn also rents 41 rooms, all with private bathroom. A double is 48€ to 62€ ($70–$90).

9 rue Principale, 37510 Villandry. ✆ **02-47-50-02-07.** Fax 02-47-50-08-77. www.lecheval-rouge.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses 18€–32€ ($26–$46); fixed-price menu 18€–40€ ($26–$58). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily noon–2pm and 7:30–9pm.

AZAY-LE-RIDEAU ★★

This château's machicolated towers and blue-slate roof pierced with dormers shimmer in the moat, creating a reflection like a Monet painting. But the defensive medieval look is all for show; the Renaissance **Château d'Azay-le-Rideau,** 19 rue Balzac, 37190 Azay-le-Rideau (✆ **02-47-45-42-04;** www.monum.fr), was created as a residence at an idyllic spot on the Indre River. Gilles Berthelot, François I's finance minister, commissioned the castle, and his spendthrift wife, Philippa, supervised its construction. So elegant was the creation that the Chevalier King grew jealous. In time, Berthelot was forced to flee, and the château reverted to the king.

Before entering, circle the château, enjoying the perfect proportions of this crowning achievement of the Renaissance in Touraine. Its most fanciful feature is a bay enclosing a grand stairway with a straight flight of steps. The Renaissance interior is a virtual museum.

The château is open daily in July and August 9:30am to 7pm; April to June and September to October 9:30am to 6pm; and November to March 10am to 12:30pm and 2 to 5:30pm. Admission is 7.50€ ($11) for adults, 4.80€ ($7) for ages 18 to 25, and free for children under 18. Allow 2 hours for a visit.

In warm weather, *son et lumière* performances feature recorded music and lights beaming on the exterior of the château. The shows, which last about 1½ hours, begin at 10:30pm from May to July, at 10pm in August, and at 9:30pm in September. Tickets are 9€ ($13) for adults, 7€ ($10) for ages 18 to 25, 5€ ($7.30) for ages 12 to 17, and free for children under 12.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE To reach Azay-le-Rideau, take the **train** from Tours or Chinon. Trip time is about 30 minutes; the one-way fare is 4.30€ to 4.80 ($6.30–$7). Both Tours and Chinon have express service to Paris. For SNCF bus and rail schedules to Azay-le-Rideau, call ✆ **08-91-35-35-35.** If you're **driving** from Tours, take D759 southwest to Azay-le-Rideau.

Because trains arrive at Azay-le-Rideau's railway station in relatively small numbers, some visitors prefer to travel to the railway station at nearby Tours, switching to any of the frequent buses between Tours's railway station and Azay. Operated by Ste. TER, a subsidiary of the SNCF, the company charges 4.50€ ($6.60) each way. For more information, call ✆ **08-92-35-35-35.**

VISITOR INFORMATION The **Office de Tourisme** is on place de L'Europe (✆ **02-47-45-44-40;** www.ot-paysazaylerideau.com).

WHERE TO DINE

L'Aigle d'Or ★ TRADITIONAL FRENCH Owners Jean-Luc and Ghislaine Fèvre work in the kitchens and dining room of this century-old house, which has been the best restaurant in town for nearly 2 decades. The restaurant is in the village center, about .3km (¼ mile) from the château. The service is professional, the welcome charming, and the food the best in Azay. In a dining room accented with ceiling beams and a fireplace, you'll enjoy dishes including crayfish with foie gras and *blanquette* (stew) of Loire Valley whitefish prepared with one of the region's white wines. Desserts are made fresh daily. In summer, the party expands onto an outdoor terrace.

10 av. Adélaïde-Riché. ✆ **02-47-45-24-58.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 14€–23€ ($20–$33); fixed-price lunch 27€–48€ ($39–$70); children's menu 11€ ($16). V. Thurs–Tues noon–1:30pm; Thurs–Sat and Mon 7:30–9pm.

AMBOISE ★★★

On the banks of the Loire, Amboise is in the center of vineyards known as Touraine-Amboise. Leonardo da Vinci spent his last years here. Dominating the town is the **Château d'Amboise** ★★ (✆ **02-47-57-00-98;** chateau-amboise.com), the first in France to reflect the Italian Renaissance. A combination of both Gothic and Renaissance, this 15th-century château is mainly associated with Charles VIII.

You enter on a ramp, opening onto a panoramic terrace fronting the river. At one time, buildings surrounded this terrace, and fetes were staged in the enclosed courtyard. After the revolution, the castle declined, and only about a quarter of the once-sprawling edifice remains. First you come to the Flamboyant Gothic Chapelle St-Hubert, distinguished by its lacelike tracery. Tapestries cover the walls of the château's grandly furnished rooms. The *Logis du Roi* (king's apartment) is open to visitors.

The château opens daily at 9am. From April to October, closing time is between 6 and 7pm; during the winter, closing time is earlier, and the chateau also closes for a couple hours mid-day. Admission 8.50€ ($12) adults, 7€ ($10) students, 5€ ($7.30) ages 8 to 18, free for children 7 and under.

You might also wish to visit **Château du Clos-Lucé** ★, 2 rue du Clos-Lucé (✆ **02-45-57-00-73**), a 15th-century manor that contains a museum devoted to Leonardo da Vinci. In what had been an oratory for Anne de Bretagne, François I installed "the great master in all forms of art and science," Leonardo da Vinci. Venerated by the Chevalier King, Leonardo lived here for 3 years, dying at the manor in 1519. (The paintings of Leonardo dying in François's arms are symbolic; the king was supposedly away at the time.) The manor contains furniture from his era, sketches, and models for his flying machines, bridges, cannon, and even a primitive example of a machine gun. Clos-Lucé is open daily, January from 10am to 5pm; February to March and November to December 9am to 6pm; April to June and September to October 9am to 7pm; July and August 9am to 8pm. Admission is 12€ ($17) adults, 9.50€ ($14) students and seniors; 7€ ($10) children 6 to 15, 32€ ($46) family ticket (2 adults, 2 children), free for children under 6; prices are lower November to April.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE Amboise is on the Paris-Blois-Tours rail line, with about a dozen **trains** per day from both Tours and Blois. The trip from Tours takes 20 minutes and costs 4.60€ ($6.70) one-way; from Blois, it takes 20 minutes and costs 5.90€ ($8.60) one-way. About five conventional trains a day leave from Paris's Gare d'Austerlitz (trip time: 3 hr.), and several TGVs (trip time: 2 hr., 15 min.) depart from the Gare Montparnasse for St-Pierre-des-Corps, less than a kilometer (½ mile) from Tours. From St-Pierre-des-Corps, you can transfer to a conventional train to Amboise. Fares from Paris to Amboise start at 27€ ($39). For information, call ✆ **36-35** or **08-92-35-35-35.**

If you prefer to travel by bus, **Fil Vert Buses** (www.touraine-filvert.com), which operates out of the Gare Routière in Tours, just across from the railway station, runs about 8 to 11 **buses** every day between Tours and Amboise. The one-way trip takes about 35 minutes and costs 1.50€ ($2.20).

If you're **driving** from Tours, take N152 east to D32 and then turn south, following signs to Amboise.

VISITOR INFORMATION The **Office de Tourisme** is on quai du Général-de-Gaulle (✆ **02-47-57-09-28;** www.amboise-valdeloire.com).

WHERE TO STAY

Le Choiseul ★★★ This 18th-century hotel, in the valley between a hillside and the Loire, is the best address in Amboise and offers the best cuisine. Guest rooms, 25 of which are air-conditioned, are luxurious; though modernized, they retain their old-world charm. The small bathrooms contain combination tub/showers. The formal dining room has a view of the Loire and welcomes nonguests who phone ahead. The cuisine is better than that in Tours or the surrounding area: deluxe, international, classic French, and regional, utilizing the freshest ingredients (fixed-price menus at 45€–59€/$65–$86). The grounds boast a garden with flowering terraces.

36 quai Charles-Guinot, Amboise 37400. ✆ **02-47-30-45-45.** Fax 02-47-30-46-10. www.le-choiseul.com. 32 units. 125€–295€ ($182–$428) double; 295€–335€ ($428–$486) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; outdoor pool; bicycles; room service; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer.

Le Vieux Manoir ★★ *Finds* Americans Gloria and Bob Belknap fell in love with France and this 18th-century manor, which they restored and turned into an elegant B&B. They accommodate guests in beautifully furnished rooms with country antiques, exposed oak beams, stone walls, and tile floors. Accommodations are named after various legends, from George Sand and Colette to Joséphine and Mme du Barry. A 17th-century structure with old oak beams and exposed stone walls also houses guests; with a fully equipped kitchen, it's ideal for families. A glass conservatory overlooks a manicured garden. Bathrooms, lined with locally made tiles, are the finest in Amboise; they have period mirrors and washstands and heavy German fixtures with tub/shower combinations.

13 rue Rabelais, Amboise 37400. ☎ **02-47-30-41-27.** Fax 02-47-30-41-27. www.le-vieux-manoir.com. 6 units, 1 2-bedroom cottage. 155€–190€ ($225–$276) double; 235€–285€ ($341–$413) cottage for 4. Rates include breakfast. MC, V. **Amenities:** Nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV.

WHERE TO DINE

The finest dining choice is **Le Choiseul** (see "Where to Stay," above).

Brasserie de l'Hôtel de Ville *Kids* FRENCH In the town's historic core, a short walk from the château, this bustling Paris-style brasserie has enjoyed a solid reputation since the early 1990s. It attracts local office workers and art lovers visiting the historic sites during the day, and boisterous groups of friends at night. Expect a noisy environment focused on rows of banquettes, hassled waiters, and steaming platters that emerge relatively quickly from the overworked kitchen. Menu items include a full range of old-fashioned cuisine that many locals remember from their childhoods. Examples include such mainstream staples as sole meunière, grilled beefsteak with french fries, *pot-au-feu,* calves' liver, and dishes from France's southwest, including a savory version of cassoulet.

3 rue François 1er. ☎ **02-47-57-26-30.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 8€–16€ ($12–$23); fixed-price menu 12€–24€ ($17–$35); children's menu 7€ ($10). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 10am–3pm and 7–9:30pm.

BLOIS ★★

This town of 55,000 receives half a million visitors yearly. It rises on the right bank of the Loire, its skyline dominated by its château, where the duc de Guise was assassinated on December 23, 1588, on orders of his archrival, Henri III. Several French kings lived here, and the town has a rich architectural history.

The murder of the duc de Guise is only one of the events associated with the **Château de Blois** ★★★ (☎ **02-54-90-33-33;** www.ville-blois.fr), begun in the 13th century by the comtes de Blois. Blois reached the apex of its power in 1515, when François I moved to the château. For that reason, Blois is often called the "Versailles of the Renaissance," the second capital of France, and the "city of kings."

Blois was also a palace of banishment. Louis XIII got rid of his interfering mother, Marie de Médici, by sending her here, but the plump matron escaped by sliding into the moat down a mound of dirt left by the builders.

If you stand in the courtyard, you'll find that the château is like an illustrated storybook of French architecture. The Hall of the Estates-General is a 13th-century work; the Charles d'Orléans gallery was built by Louis XII from 1498 to 1501, as was the Louis XII wing. Mansart constructed the Gaston d'Orléans wing between 1635 and 1638. Most remarkable is the François I wing, a masterpiece of the French Renaissance, containing a spiral staircase with elaborately ornamented balustrades and the king's symbol, the salamander.

The château is open daily, April through October from 9am to 6pm; November through March from 9am to 12:30pm and 2 to 5:30pm. Admission is 7.50€ ($11) adults, 5€ ($7.30) students 12 to 25, 3€ ($4.40) children 6 to 17, free for children under 6. A *son et lumière* presentation takes place nightly May through September, beginning between 9:30 and 10:30pm. The show costs 7€ ($10) for adults, 3€ ($4.40) for children 7 to 15, and is free for children under 7.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE The Paris-Austerlitz line via Orléans runs six **trains** per day from Paris (trip time: 1 hr. plus transfer waiting time at Orléans), costing 18€ ($26) one-way; from Tours, 8 to 13 trains arrive per day (trip time: 1 hr., 20 min.) at a cost of 17€ ($25) one-way. For information and schedules, call ☎ **08-92-35-35-35.** The train station is at place de la Gare. From June to September, you can take a **bus** (☎ **02-54-78-15-66**) from the Blois train station to tour châteaux in the area, including Chambord, Chaumont, Chenonceau, and Amboise. If you're **driving** from Tours, take RN152 east to Blois. If you'd like to explore the area by **bike,** go to **LeBlond Claude,** 44 levée des Tuileries (☎ **02-54-74-30-13**), where rentals cost 12€ ($17) per day. You have to leave your passport, a credit card, a driver's license, or a deposit of 250€ ($363).

VISITOR INFORMATION The **Office de Tourisme** is at 23 place du Château (☎ **02-54-90-41-41;** www.loiredeschateaux.com).

WHERE TO STAY

Hôtel le Savoie This modern 1930s-era hotel is both inviting and livable, from its courteous staff to its guest rooms, which are small but quiet and cozy. Bathrooms are small but have sufficient shelf space; each has a shower. In the morning, a breakfast buffet is set up in the bright dining room.

6–8 rue du Docteur-Ducoux, Blois 41000. ☎ **02-54-74-32-21.** Fax 02-54-74-29-58. www.hotel-blois.com. 25 units. 48€–54€ ($70–$78) double. MC, V. **Amenities:** Bar; room service; babysitting; laundry service; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV, minibar.

Mercure Centre ★ This is one of the best-located hotels in Blois—three stories of reinforced concrete and big windows beside the quays of the Loire, a 5-minute walk from the château. Rooms never rise above the chain format and roadside-motel look, but they are roomy and soundproof.

28 quai St-Jean, Blois 41000. ☎ **02-54-56-66-66.** Fax 02-54-56-67-00. www.mercure.com. 96 units. 113€–120€ ($164–$174) double. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 7€ ($10). Bus: Quayside marked PISCINE. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; indoor pool; Jacuzzi; sauna; business services; room service; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, Wi-Fi.

WHERE TO DINE

Au Rendez-vous des Pêcheurs ★★ TOURAINE/SEAFOOD This restaurant occupies a 16th-century house and old grocery a short walk from the château. Chef Christophe Cosme enjoys a reputation for quality, generous portions, and creativity. He prepares two or three meat dishes, including roasted chicken with a medley of potatoes and mushrooms and comfit of garlic, and succulent line-caught whitefish in puff pastry. These appear alongside a longer roster of seafood dishes, such as poached filet of *sandre* (a freshwater fish; "zander" in English) served with fresh oysters, and freshwater eel in puff pastry with figs.

27 rue du Foix. ☎ **02-54-74-67-48.** Reservations required. Main courses 29€–39€ ($42–$57); fixed-price menu 29€–74€ ($42–$107). AE, MC, V. Tues–Sat 12:15–1:30pm; Mon–Sat 7:15–9:30pm. Closed 2 weeks in Jan and 3 weeks in Aug.

L'Orangerie du Château ★★★ Kids TOURAINE Next to the château, one of the castle's former outbuildings holds the grandest and best restaurant in the area. Chef Jean-Marc Molveaux presides over a floral-themed dining room. Faithful customers and the most discerning foodies visiting Blois delight in his filet mignon with truffles. You can also sample his lovely medley of shellfish and nuts in cream sauce, or perfectly roasted monkfish flavored with fresh thyme. Everything tastes better with a Sauvignon de Touraine. For dessert, our favorite is melted chocolate and pistachio with crème fraîche.

1 av. Jean-Laigret. ✆ **02-54-78-05-36.** Reservations required. Main courses 22€–34€ ($32–$49); fixed-price menu 35€–74€ ($51–$107); children's menu 15€ ($22). AE, MC, V. Thurs–Tues noon–1:45pm; Thurs–Sat and Mon–Tues 7:15–9:15pm. Closed mid-Feb to mid-Mar.

CHAMBORD

When François I said, "Come on up to my place," he meant the **Château de Chambord** ★★★, 41250 Bracieux (✆ **02-54-50-40-00;** www.chambord.org). Some 2,000 workers began to piece together "the pile" in 1519. What emerged after 20 years was the pinnacle of the French Renaissance, the largest château in the Loire Valley. It was ready for the visit of Charles V of Germany, who was welcomed by nymphets in transparent veils gently tossing wildflowers in his path. French monarchs like Henri II and Catherine de Médici, Louis XIV, and Henri III came and went from Chambord.

The château is set in a park of more than 5,200 hectares (13,000 acres), enclosed by a wall stretching some 32km (20 miles). Looking out a window in one of the 440 rooms, François is said to have carved these words on a pane with a diamond ring: "A woman is a creature of change; to trust her is to play the fool." Four huge towers dominate Chambord's facade. The keep has a spectacular terrace on which the ladies used to stand to watch for the return of their men from the hunt. Allow 1½ hours to visit the château.

The château is open daily April to September 9am to 6:15pm, October to March 9am to 5:15pm. Admission is 9.50€ ($14) for adults, 6.50€ ($9.50) for ages 18 to 25, and free for children under 18. At the tourist office, you can pick up tickets for the summer *son et lumière* presentation, *Jours et Siècles* (Days and Centuries). The price is 12€ ($17). Allow 1½ hours to visit the château.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE It's best to **drive** to Chambord. Take D951 northeast from Blois to Ménars, turning onto the rural road to Chambord. You can also rent a **bicycle** in Blois and ride the 18km (11 miles) to Chambord, or take a **tour** to Chambord from Blois in summer. From June 15 to September 2, **Transports du Loir et Cher** (✆ **02-54-58-55-44**) operates bus service to Chambord, leaving Blois at 9am and 1:30pm with return trips at 1 and 6pm.

VISITOR INFORMATION The **Office de Tourisme** on place St-Michel (✆ **02-54-33-39-16**) is open mid-June to October.

WHERE TO STAY & DINE

Hôtel du Grand-St-Michel Across from the château, and originally built as a kennel for the royal hounds, this inn is the only one of any substance in town. Try for a front room overlooking the château, which is dramatically floodlighted at night. Accommodations are plain but comfortable with provincial decor. Most visitors arrive for lunch, which in summer is served on a terrace. The marvelous collection of Loire wines is so good that it almost overshadows the regional cooking. High points from the menu include stew of wild boar (in late autumn and winter), breast of duckling in green-peppercorn sauce, and several local pâtés and terrines, including coarsely textured, flavorful *rillettes* of regional pork.

103 place St-Michel, Chambord 41250, near Bracieux. ✆ **02-54-20-31-31.** Fax 02-54-20-36-40. 40 units. 53€–110€ ($77–$160) double. MC, V. Free parking. Closed mid-Nov to mid-Dec. **Amenities:** Restaurant; tennis court. *In room:* TV.

CHEVERNY

The upper crust heads to the Sologne area for the hunt as if the 17th century had never ended. However, 21st-century realities—like formidable taxes—can't be entirely avoided, so the **Château de Cheverny** ★★★ (✆ **02-54-79-96-29;** www.chateau-cheverny.fr) must open some of its rooms to visitors.

Unlike most of the Loire châteaux, Cheverny is the residence of the descendants of the original owner, the vicomte de Sigalas. The family's lineage can be traced back to Henri Hurault, the son of the chancellor of Henri III and Henri IV, who built the original château here in 1634. Designed in classic Louis XIII style, it boasts square pavilions flanking the central pile.

The furnishings, tapestries, decorations, and objets d'art are impressive. A 17th-century artist, Jean Mosnier, decorated the fireplace with motifs from the legend of Adonis. In the Guards' Room is a collection of medieval armor. Most impressive is the stone stairway of carved fruit and flowers.

The château is open daily October to March 9:45am to 5pm; April to June and September 9:15am to 6:15pm; and July and August 9:15am to 6:45pm. Admission is 6.80€ ($9.90) for adults, 5€ ($7.30) for students, 3.40€ ($5) for children 7 to 14, and free for children under 7. Allow 2 hours to see Cheverny.

ESSENTIALS

Cheverny is 19km (12 miles) south of Blois, along D765. It's best reached by **car** or on a **bus tour** from Blois with **Transports du Loir et Cher** (✆ **02-54-58-55-55**). From the railway station at Blois, a bus departs for Cheverny once a day at noon, returning to Blois 4 hours later, according to an oft-changing schedule. Most visitors find it a lot easier to take their own car or a **taxi** from the railway station at Blois.

WHERE TO STAY & DINE

Les Trois Marchands TRADITIONAL FRENCH This coaching inn, more comfortable than St-Hubert (see below), has been handed down for many generations. Jean-Jacques Bricault owns the three-story building, which has awnings, a mansard roof, a glassed-in courtyard, and sidewalk tables under umbrellas. In the tavern-style main dining room, the menu may include foie gras, lobster salad, frogs' legs, fresh asparagus in mousseline sauce, game dishes, or fish cooked in a salt crust. The inn rents 24 well-furnished, comfortable rooms with TVs for 45€ to 55€ ($65–$80) for a double.

60 place de l'Eglise, Cour-Cheverny 41700. ✆ **02-54-79-96-44.** Fax 02-54-79-25-60. www.hoteldes3marchands.com. Dining room main courses 17€–40€ ($25–$58). AE, DC, MC, V. Tues–Sun noon–2:15pm and 7:30–9:15pm. Closed mid-Feb to mid-Mar.

St-Hubert TRADITIONAL FRENCH About 457m (1,500 ft.) from the château, this inn was built in the 1950s in the provincial style. The least expensive menu may include terrine of quail, pikeperch with beurre blanc, cheeses, and a fruit tart. The most expensive may offer lobster; an aiguillette of duckling prepared with grapes;

casserole of seafood with shellfish sauce; and, in season, thigh of roebuck in pepper sauce. The St-Hubert offers 20 conservatively decorated rooms with TVs for 50€ to 80€ ($73–$116) for a double.

122 rte. Nationale, Cour-Cheverny 41700. ✆ **02-54-79-96-60.** Fax 02-54-79-21-17. www.hotel-sthubert.com. Main courses 16€–22€ ($23–$32); fixed-price menu 29€–39€ ($42–$57). AE, MC, V. Daily 12:15–2pm and 7:30–9pm. Closed Sun night off season.

CHENONCEAUX

A Renaissance masterpiece, the **Château de Chenonceau** ★★★ (✆ **02-47-23-90-07;** www.chenonceau.com) is best known for the *dames de Chenonceau* who have occupied it. (Note that the village is spelled with a final *x,* but the château is not.) In 1547, Henri II gave Chenonceau to his mistress, Diane de Poitiers. For a time this remarkable woman was virtually queen of France, infuriating Henri's dour wife, Catherine de Médici. When Henri died, Catherine forced Diane to abandon her beloved home.

Many of the château's walls are covered with Gobelin tapestries, including one depicting a woman pouring water over the back of an angry dragon. The chapel contains a marble *Virgin and Child,* plus portraits of Catherine de Médici in her traditional black and white. There's even a portrait of stern Catherine in the former bedroom of her rival, Diane de Poitiers. In François I's Renaissance bedchamber, the most interesting portrait is that of Diane as the huntress Diana.

The history of Chenonceau is related in 15 tableaux in the **Musée de Cire** (wax museum), located in a Renaissance-era annex a few steps from the château. Open the same hours as the château, it charges a general admission fee of 3€ ($3.60). Diane de Poitiers, who, among other things, introduced the artichoke to France, is depicted in three tableaux. One portrays Catherine de Médici evicting her husband's mistress. Allow 2 hours to see the château.

Throughout most of the busy tourist season (mid-Mar to mid-Sept), the château is open daily from 9am to 7pm; September 16 to September 30, it's open daily from 9am to 6:30pm; rest of the year 9am to 5 or 6pm. Admission is 9.50€ ($14) for adults, and 7.50€ ($11) for students and children 7 to 15. A *son et lumière* show starts at 10:15pm daily in July and August; admission is 6€ ($8.70) and free for children under 7. Allow 2 hours to see this château.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE Four daily **trains** run from Tours to Chenonceaux (trip time: 30 min.), costing 5.70€ ($8.30) one-way. The train deposits you at the base of the château; from there, you can walk or take a taxi. If you're **driving,** from the center of Tours, follow the directions east until you reach the N76, which will take you to the signposted turnoff for Chenonceaux.

VISITOR INFORMATION The **Syndicat d'Initiative** (tourist office), 1 rue du Dr. Bretonneau (✆ **02-47-23-94-45**), is open year-round.

WHERE TO STAY & DINE

Auberge du Bon-Laboureur ★★ This inn, within walking distance of the château, is your best bet for a comfortable night's sleep and some of the best cuisine in the Loire Valley. Founded in 1786, the hotel maintains the flavor of that era, thanks to thick walls, solid masonry, and a scattering of antiques. The author Henry James stopped here in 1882, and the inn won his praise. Most guest rooms are small, especially on the upper floors; each comes with a private bathroom with shower or tub.

The rear garden has a guesthouse and formally planted roses. The place is noted for its restaurant. In fair weather, tables are set up in the courtyard, amid trees and flowering shrubs.

6 rue du Dr. Bretonneau, Chenonceaux, Bléré 37150. ✆ **02-47-23-90-02.** Fax 02-47-23-82-01. www.amboise.com/laboureur. 25 units. 115€–155€ ($167–$225) double; 175€–230€ ($254–$334) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Closed mid-Nov to mid-Feb. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; outdoor pool; room service; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer, safe.

La Roseraie ★ *Value* La Roseraie is the most charming hotel in Chenonceaux, with individually decorated rooms and well-kept gardens. Each unit contains a small bathroom with shower. In the 1940s, its guests included Winston Churchill, Eleanor Roosevelt, and Harry Truman. The inn is operated by the exceptionally charming Laurent and Sophie Fiorito, who have banned smoking from their excellent dining room.

7 rue du Dr. Bretonneau, Chenonceaux, Bléré 37150. ✆ **02-47-23-90-09.** Fax 02-47-23-91-59. www.charmingroseraie.com. 17 units. 52€–95€ ($75–$138) double; 72€–180€ ($104–$261) quad; 180€ ($261) apt. AE, DC, MC, V. Closed mid-Nov to mid-Mar. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; outdoor pool; laundry service; dry cleaning. *In room:* TV.

CHINON ★★

In the film *Joan of Arc,* Ingrid Bergman sought out the dauphin as he tried to conceal himself among his courtiers—an action whose real-life equivalent took place at the Château de Chinon. Charles VII, mockingly known as the king of Bourges, centered his government at Chinon from 1429 to 1450. In 1429, with the English besieging Orléans, the Maid of Orléans, that "messenger from God," prevailed on the weak dauphin to give her an army. The rest is history. The seat of French power stayed at Chinon until the Hundred Years' War ended.

Chinon retains a medieval atmosphere. It consists of winding streets and turreted houses, many built in the 15th and 16th centuries. For the best view, drive across the river, turning right onto quai Danton. From that vantage point, you'll have the best perspective, seeing the castle in relation to the village and the river. The most typical street is **rue Voltaire,** lined with 15th- and 16th-century town houses. This is one of the most medieval-looking streets in the entire Loire Valley. At no. 44, Richard the Lion-Hearted died on April 6, 1199, after being wounded while besieging Chalus in Limousin. In the heart of Chinon, the **Grand Carroi** lies at the intersection of an ancient Roman road that was later joined by a medieval road. The village of Chinon evolved from this crossroad.

The most famous son of Chinon, François Rabelais, the earthy and often bawdy Renaissance writer, lived on the rue de la Lamproie; today a plaque marks the spot where his father practiced law and maintained a prosperous home and office. The cottage 5.5km (3½ miles) west of Chinon where he was born is the site of the **Musée de la Devinière** (✆ **02-47-95-91-18**). It's open daily April to June and September from 10am to 12:30pm and 2 to 6pm; July and Aug 10am to 7pm; October to March only Wednesday to Sunday from 10am to 12:30pm and 2 to 5pm. Admission is 4.50€ ($6.60) adults, 3€ ($4.40) students, 2.50€ ($3.70) children 7 to 18, free for children under 7. To reach it from Chinon, follow the road signs pointing to Saumur and the D117.

Château de Chinon ★★ (✆ **02-47-93-13-45**) consists of three separate strongholds, once badly ruined. Two of the buildings, the Château du Milieu and the Château du Coudray, have been restored but still lack roofs. Some of the grim walls from other edifices remain, though many of the buildings—including the Great Hall where Joan of Arc sought out the dauphin—have been torn down. The restored

Château du Milieu dates from the 11th to the 15th century; it contains the keep and the clock tower, which houses the Musée Jeanne d'Arc. The Château du Coudray contains the Tour du Coudray, where Joan of Arc once stayed. In the 14th century the Knights Templar were imprisoned here before meeting violent deaths. The château is open daily, April through September from 9am to 7pm; October through March from 9:30am to 5pm. Admission 6€ ($8.70) adults, 4.50€ ($6.60) students and children 7 to 18, free for children under 7.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE The SNCF runs about 10 **trains** and four **buses** every day to Chinon from Tours (trip time: about 1 hr.). Call ✆ **36-35** or **08-92-35-35-35** for information and schedules. Both buses and trains arrive at the train station, which lies at the edge of the very small town. If you're **driving** from Tours, take D759 southwest through Azay-le-Rideau to Chinon.

VISITOR INFORMATION The **Office de Tourisme** is at place Hofheim (✆ **02-47-93-17-85;** www.chinon.com).

WHERE TO STAY

Hostellerie Gargantua ★ This 15th-century mansion has a terrace with a château view. The grand building was once a courthouse where the father of François Rabelais worked as a lawyer in the 15th century. Art historians admire the building's early Renaissance staircase and its chiseled-stone details. The traditional guest rooms have been renovated and are comfortably furnished and well kept. Half of the old-fashioned bathrooms contain tubs. Try to stop here for a meal, served in a medieval hall. You can sample Loire *sandre* (delicate white freshwater fish) prepared with Chinon wine, or duckling with dried pears and smoked lard, followed by a medley of seasonal red fruits in puff pastry.

73 rue Voltaire, Chinon 37500. ✆ **02-47-93-04-71.** Fax 02-47-93-08-02. www.hotel-gargantua.com. 7 units. 52€–78€ ($75–$113) double. AE, DC, MC, V. Closed mid-Nov to mid-Dec. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; room service; babysitting; laundry service. *In room:* TV, Wi-Fi.

WHERE TO DINE

Au Plaisir Gourmand ★★ TRADITIONAL FRENCH This is the premier restaurant in the area. Owner Jean-Claude Rigollet used to direct the chefs at the fabled Les Templiers in Les Bézards. The 18th-century building contains an intimate dining room. Menu items are likely to include roasted duck with foie gras sauce, oxtail in Chinon red-wine sauce, and sautéed crayfish with a spicy salad.

2 rue Parmentier. ✆ **02-47-93-20-48.** Reservations required. Main courses 15€–29€ ($22–$42); tasting menu 28€–39€ ($41–$57). AE, V. Wed–Sun noon–1:30pm; Tues–Sat 7:30–9pm. Closed mid-Feb to mid-Mar.

ANGERS ★★★

Once the capital of Anjou, Angers straddles the Maine River. Although it suffered extensive damage in World War II, it has been considerably restored, blending provincial charm with the suggestion of sophistication. The town is often used as a base for exploring the château district to the west.

The moated 9th-century **Château d'Angers** ★★★ (✆ **02-41-86-48-77**) was once the home of the comtes d'Anjou. After the castle was destroyed, St. Louis reconstructed it. From 1230 to 1238 the outer walls and 17 massive towers were built, creating a fortress to withstand invaders. The château was favored by "Good" King René;

until he was forced to surrender Anjou to Louis XI, a brilliant court life flourished. Louis XIV turned the château into a prison. During World War II, the Nazis used it as a munitions depot. Allied planes bombed it in 1944.

The castle displays the **Apocalypse Tapestries** ★★★, masterpieces of medieval art, created by master weaver Nicolas Bataille. (These tapestries weren't always so highly regarded; they once served as a canopy to protect orange trees from unfavorable weather, and at another time to cover the damaged walls of a church.) The series illustrates the Book of St. John in 77 pieces that stretch 100m (328 ft.). One scene is called *La Grande prostituée,* and another shows Babylon invaded by demons.

You can tour the fortress, including the courtyard of the nobles, prison cells, ramparts, windmill tower, 15th-century chapel, and royal apartments. The château and its tapestries can be visited daily from May through August 9:30am to 6:30pm, September to April 10am to 5:30pm. Admission is 7.50€ ($11) adults, 4.80€ ($7) seniors and students 18–25, free for children under 18. Throughout most of the year, guided tours depart daily at 10am, 11:30am, 1:15pm, 2:30pm, and 3:30pm, but between September and April, departures are usually (depending on business) at 10:15am and 2:15pm. Each tour lasts 90 minutes, and it can be conducted in four different languages—French, English, German, and Italian.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE Fifteen **trains** per day make the 1- to 2-hour trip from Paris's Gare de Montparnasse; the cost is 45€ to 63€ ($65–$91) one-way. From Tours, 10 trains per day make the 1-hour trip; a one-way ticket is 20€ ($29). The Angers train station, at place de la Gare, is a convenient walk from the château. For train information, call ✆ **08-92-35-35-35.** From Saumur, there are three **bus** connections a day from Monday to Saturday (1½ hr.). Buses arrive at place de la République. If you're **driving** from Tours, take N152 southwest to Saumur, turning west on D952.

VISITOR INFORMATION The **Office de Tourisme,** 7 place du Président-Kennedy (✆ **02-41-23-50-00;** www.angers-tourisme.com), is opposite the entrance to the château.

WHERE TO STAY

Hôtel d'Anjou Beside a park, this hotel is the best choice for overnighting in the area. Although comparable in price to L'Hôtel de France (see below), it has more upscale appointments and amenities, along with a better restaurant (see "Where to Dine," below). The guest rooms closer to the ground have higher ceilings and are more spacious.

1 bd. Foch, Angers 49100. ✆ **800/528-1234** in the U.S. and Canada, or 02-41-21-12-11. Fax 02-41-87-22-21. www.hoteldanjou.fr. 53 units. 115€–172€ ($167–$249) double; extra bed 30€ ($44). AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 8€ ($12). **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; laundry service; dry cleaning. *In room:* TV, minibar, safe, Wi-Fi.

L'Hôtel de France This 19th-century hotel, one of the most respected in town, has been run by the Bouyers since 1893. It's the best choice near the railway station. Rooms are soundproof; each is comfortably furnished and well maintained. Bathrooms are very small and hold tubs.

8 place de la Gare, Angers 49100. ✆ **02-41-88-49-42.** Fax 02-41-86-76-70. www.destination-anjou.com/hoteldefrance. 55 units. 97€–136€ ($141–$197) double. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 7€ ($10). **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; room service; laundry service; dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

WHERE TO DINE

Le Salamandre ★ CLASSIC FRENCH Any educated French person can tell you that the salamander was the symbol of King François I, and in this formal and elegant restaurant you'll see portraits of, and references to, that strategist everywhere. Beneath massive ceiling beams, beside a large wooden fireplace, you'll enjoy the most impeccable service and the best food in town. Shining examples include filet of red snapper in lime-flavored cream sauce; scallops in mushroom cream sauce; and squid stuffed with crayfish and served with shellfish-flavored cream sauce.

In the Hotel d'Anjou, 1 bd. Foch. ✆ **02-41-88-99-55.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 35€–68€ ($51–$99); fixed-price menu 22€ ($32) lunch, 27€–36€ ($39–$52) dinner. AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat noon–2pm and 7–9:30pm.

3 Provence & the Côte d'Azur

Provence has been called a bridge between the past and the present, which blend in a quiet, often melancholy way. Peter Mayle's *A Year in Provence* and its sequels have played a large role in the popularity of this sunny corner of France.

The Greeks and Romans filled the landscape with cities boasting baths, theaters, and arches. Romanesque fortresses and Gothic cathedrals followed. In the 19th century, the light and landscapes attracted painters like Cézanne and van Gogh.

Provence has its own language and customs. The region is bounded on the north by the Dauphine, the west by the Rhône, the east by the Alps, and the south by the Mediterranean. We cover the northern area of this region, what's traditionally thought of as Provence, and then head to the southern part, the Côte d'Azur, or French Riviera.

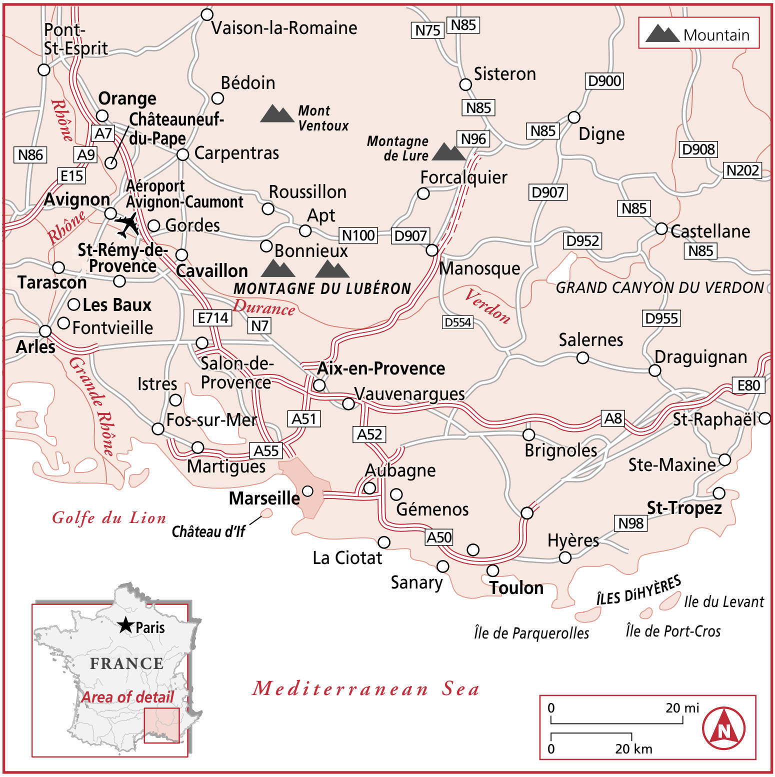
The Riviera has been called the world's most exciting stretch of beach and "a sunny place for shady people." Each resort—be it Beaulieu by the sea or eagle's-nest Eze—has a unique flavor and special merits. Glitterati and eccentrics have always been drawn to this narrow strip of fabled real estate. A trail of modern artists, attracted to the brilliant light, have left a rich heritage: Matisse in his chapel at Vence, Cocteau at Menton and Villefranche, Picasso at Antibes and seemingly everywhere else, Léger at Biot, Renoir at Cagnes, and Bonnard at Le Cannet. The best art collection of all is at the Maeght Foundation in St-Paul-de-Vence.

The Riviera's high season used to be winter and spring. With changing tastes, July and August have become the most crowded months, and reservations are imperative. The average summer temperature is 75°F (24°C); the average winter temperature, 49°F (9°C).

The Corniches of the Riviera, featured in countless films, stretch from Nice to Menton. The Alps drop into the Mediterranean, and roads were carved along the way. The lower road, about 32km (20 miles) long, is the **Corniche Inférieure.** Along this road are Villefranche, Cap-Ferrat, Beaulieu, and Cap-Martin. Built between World War I and the start of World War II, the **Moyenne Corniche (Middle Road),** 30km (19 miles) long, also runs from Nice to Menton, winding in and out of tunnels and through mountains. The highlight is at Eze. Napoleon ordered the construction of the **Grande Corniche**—the most panoramic—in 1806. La Turbie and Le Vistaero are the principal towns along the 32km (20-mile) stretch, which reaches more than 488m (1,600 ft.) high at Col d'Eze.

In general, **tourist offices** in Provence are open from April to September, Monday through Friday from 9am to 1pm and 2 to 6pm, and Saturday and Sunday from 9am to 1pm and 2 to 5pm (closed Sun the rest of the year).

For more coverage of the region, see *Frommer's Provence & the Riviera.*


Mountain
Vaison-la-Romaine
Pont-St-Esprit
N75
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Bédoin
Orange
Mont Ventoux
Châteauneuf-du-Pape
Rhône
A7
A9
N86
Carpentras
Montagne de Lure
N96
N85
Digne
D908
N202
E15
Aéroport Avignon-Caumont
Avignon
Roussillon
Forcalquier
D907
Gordes
Apt
N100
D907
N85
Castellane
D952
Rhône
St-Rémy-de-Provence
Bonnieux
Manosque
N85
Tarascon
Cavaillon
MONTAGNE DU LUBÉRON
GRAND CANYON DU VERDON
Les Baux
Durance
Verdon
Fontvieille
E714
N7
D554
D955
Arles
Salernes
Salon-de-Provence
Aix-en-Provence
Draguignan
Grande Rhône
Istres
Vauvenargues
E80
Fos-sur-Mer
A51
A8
St-Raphaël
A52
Brignoles
A55
Martigues
Aubagne
Ste-Maxine
Marseille
Gémenos
St-Tropez
Golfe du Lion
Château d'If
N98
A50
Hyères
La Ciotat
Sanary
Toulon
ÎLES D'HYÈRES
Ile du Levant
Île de Parquerolles
Île de Port-Cros
Paris
FRANCE
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AVIGNON ★★★

In the 14th century, Avignon was the capital of Christendom. The pope lived here during what the Romans called the Babylonian Captivity. The legacy left by that court makes Avignon one of the most beautiful of Europe's medieval cities.

Today, this walled city of some 100,000 residents is increasingly known as a cultural center. Artists and painters have been moving here; experimental theaters, galleries, and cinemas have brought diversity to the inner city.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE The fastest and easiest way to get here is to **fly** from Paris's Orly Airport to **Aéroport Avignon-Caumont** (✆ **04-90-81-51-51**), 8km (5 miles) southeast of Avignon (trip time: 1 hr.). Taxis from the airport to the center cost 21€ ($30). From Paris, TGV **trains** from Gare de Lyon take 3 hours and 30 minutes. The one-way fare is 94€ ($136). Trains arrive frequently from Marseille (70 min.; 23€/$33); and from Arles (20 min.; 6€/$8.70). For train information, call ✆ **36-35** or visit www.voyages-sncf.com.

If you're **driving** from Paris, take A6 south to Lyon, and then A7 south to Avignon. If you'd like to explore the area by **bike,** go to **Provence Bike,** 52 bd. St-Roch (✆ **04-90-27-92-61;** www.provence-bike.com), which rents all sorts of bikes, including 10-speed road bikes and mountain bikes, for around 12€ to 25€ ($17–$36) per day. A deposit of 150€ to 450€ ($218–$653; cash or credit card) is required.

VISITOR INFORMATION The **Office de Tourisme** is at 41 cours Jean-Jaurès (✆ **04-32-74-32-74;** fax 04-90-82-95-03; www.ot-avignon.fr).

WHERE TO STAY

Hôtel Clarion Cloître St-Louis ★ This hotel is in a former Jesuit school built in the 1580s. Much of the original premises remain, including the baroque facade, the wraparound arcades, and the soaring ceiling vaults. Guest rooms are rather dull as a result of renovations. Rooms range from medium to spacious, and some have sliding glass doors overlooking the patio. Each unit has modern decor without a lot of extras; all but three have a combination tub/shower.

20 rue du Portail Boquier, Avignon 84000. ✆ **800/CLARION** in the U.S., or 04-90-27-55-55. Fax 04-90-82-24-01. www.cloitre-saint-louis.com. 80 units. 100€–240€ ($145–$348) double; 220€–360€ ($319–$522) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 10€–15€ ($15–$22). **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; outdoor pool; room service; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

La Mirande ★★★ In the heart of Avignon (behind the Palais des Papes), this 700-year-old town house is one of France's grand little luxuries. In 1987, Achim and Hannelore Stein transformed this place into a citadel of opulence. The hotel treats you to 2 centuries of decorative art: from the 1700s Salon Chinois to the Salon Rouge, with its striped walls in Rothschild red. Room no. 20 is the most sought-after—its lavish premises open onto the garden. All the rooms are stunning, with exquisite decor, hand-printed fabrics on the walls, antiques, bedside controls, and huge bathtubs. The restaurant, among the finest in Avignon, deserves its one Michelin star.

4 place de la Mirande, Avignon 84000. ✆ **04-90-85-93-93.** Fax 04-90-86-26-85. www.la-mirande.fr. 20 units. 295€–520€ ($428–$754) double; 620€–820€ ($899–$1,189) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 22€ ($32). **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; room service; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

WHERE TO DINE

Christian Etienne ★★★ PROVENÇAL The stone house containing this restaurant was built in 1180, around the same time as the Palais des Papes (next door). Owner Christian Etienne continues to reach new culinary heights. His dining room contains period frescoes honoring the marriage of Anne de Bretagne to the French king in 1491. Several of the fixed-price menus feature themes: Two present seasonal tomatoes, mushrooms, or vegetables; one offers preparations of lobster; and the priciest *(menu confiance)* relies on the chef's imagination. A la carte specialties include filet of perch with Châteauneuf-du-Pape, filet of venison with foie gras, and a dessert of fennel sorbet with saffron-flavored English cream sauce. The vegetable menus aren't completely vegetarian; they're flavored with meat, fish, or sometimes meat drippings.

10 rue Mons. ✆ **04-90-86-16-50.** Reservations required. Main courses 28€–40€ ($34–$48); fixed-price lunch 30€–105€ ($36–$126); fixed-price dinner 55€–105€ ($66–$126). AE, DC, MC, V. Tues–Sat noon–1:30pm and 8–9:30pm. Closed 1st 2 weeks in Aug and Dec 20–Jan 6.

La Fourchette *Value* FRENCH This bistro offers creative cooking at a moderate price, but it shuts down on the weekends. It has two airy dining rooms with large bay windows that flood the inside with light. You may begin with fresh sardines flavored with citrus, ravioli filled with haddock, or parfait of chicken livers with spinach flan and confit of onions. For a main course, we recommend monkfish stew with endive, or daube of beef with gratin of macaroni.

7 rue Racine. ✆ **04-90-85-20-93.** Fixed-price lunch 25€–31€ ($36–$45); fixed-price dinner 31€ ($45). MC, V. Mon–Fri 12:15–1:45pm and 7:15–9:45pm. Closed 3 weeks in Aug. Bus: 11.

EXPLORING THE TOWN

Even more famous than the papal residency is the ditty *"Sur le pont d'Avignon, l'on y danse, l'on y danse,"* echoing through every French nursery and around the world. **Pont St-Bénézet** ★★ was far too narrow for the *danse* of the rhyme, inspired, according to legend, by a vision a shepherd named Bénézet had while tending his flock. Spanning the Rhône and connecting Avignon with Villeneuve-lèz-Avignon, the bridge is now a fragmented ruin. Built between 1177 and 1185, it suffered various disasters; in 1669 half of it toppled into the river. On one of the piers is the two-story **Chapelle St-Nicolas**—one story in Romanesque style, the other in Gothic. The remains of the bridge are open daily November to March 9:30am to 5:45pm; April and October 9am to 7pm; July 9am to 8pm; and August 9am to 9pm, and September 9am to 8pm. Admission is 3.50€ ($5.10) for adults, 3€ ($4.40) for seniors and students, and free for children under 8. Once you pay to walk on the bridge, the small chapel on the bridge can be visited as part of the overall admission fee.

Dominating Avignon from a hill is the **Palais des Papes** ★★★, place du Palais-des-Papes (✆ **04-90-27-50-00**). The guided tour usually lasts 50 minutes and can be monotonous, because most of the rooms have been stripped of their finery. The exception is the **Chapelle St-Jean,** known for its frescoes of scenes from the lives of John the Baptist and John the Evangelist, attributed to the school of Matteo Giovanetti, painted between 1345 and 1348. The **Grand Tinel,** or banquet hall, is about 41m (135 ft.) long and 9m (30 ft.) wide; the pope's table stood on the south side. The pope's bedroom is on the first floor of the Tour des Anges. It's open daily, November through March from 9:30am to 5:45pm; April through June and August through October from 9am to 7pm; July from 9am to 8pm. Admission (including tour with guide or recording) is 9.50€ ($14) adults, 7.50€ ($11) seniors and students, free for children under 8.

Near the palace is the 12th-century **Cathédrale Notre-Dame des Doms,** place du Palais (✆ **04-90-86-81-01**), containing the Flamboyant Gothic tomb of some of the apostate popes. The cathedral's hours vary, but generally it's open daily from 9am to noon and 2 to 6pm; admission is free. From the cathedral, enter the **promenade du Rocher-des-Doms** to stroll through its garden and enjoy the view to Villeneuve-lèz-Avignon.

ST-REMY-DE-PROVENCE ★

Nostradamus, the physician, astrologer, and author of over 600 obscure verses, was born here in 1503. In 1922, Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas found St-Rémy after "wandering around everywhere a bit," as Stein wrote to Cocteau. But St-Rémy is mainly associated with van Gogh, who committed himself to an asylum here in 1889 after cutting off his left ear. Between moods of despair, he painted such works as *Olive Trees* and *Cypresses* here. The town lies 26km (16 miles) northeast of Arles and 13km (8 miles) north of Les Baux.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE Local **buses** from Avignon (four to nine per day) take 40 minutes and cost around 5€ ($7.30) one-way. In St-Rémy, buses pull into the place de la

République, in the town center. For bus information, call ✆ **04-90-82-07-35.** If you're **driving,** head south from Avignon along D571.

VISITOR INFORMATION The **Office de Tourisme** is on place Jean-Jaurès (✆ **04-90-92-05-22;** fax 04-90-92-38-52; www.saintremy-de-provence.com).

WHERE TO STAY

Hostellerie du Vallon de Valrugues ★★★ Surrounded by a park, this hotel has the best accommodations and restaurant in town. Constructed in the 1970s, it resembles a fantasy version of an ancient Roman villa. Owner Jean-Michel Gallon offers beautiful rooms and suites. They have marble bathrooms, all with tub/showers. The property has a putting green, and guests have access to horseback riding. The restaurant's terrace is as appealing as its cuisine, which is winning praise for innovative light dishes, such as John Dory with truffles, and frozen nougat with comfit of fruits. Fixed-price menus are 58€ to 85€ ($84–$123); a children's menu is 20€ ($29).

Chemin Canto-Cigalo, St-Rémy-de-Provence 13210. ✆ **04-90-92-04-40**. Fax 04-90-92-44-01. www.vallondevalrugues.com. 52 units. 190€–310€ ($276–$450) double; 310€–1,310€ ($450–$1,900) suite. AE, MC, V. Closed 3 weeks in Feb. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; outdoor pool; 2 tennis courts; gym; sauna; room service; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

WHERE TO DINE

La Maison Jaune ★★ FRENCH/PROVENÇAL One of the most enduringly popular restaurants in St-Rémy is in the former residence of an 18th-century merchant. In a pair of dining rooms occupying two floors, you'll appreciate cuisine prepared and served with flair by François and Catherine Perraud. In nice weather, additional seats are on a terrace overlooking the Hôtel de Sade. Menu items include pigeon roasted in wine from Les Baux; grilled sardines served with candied lemon and raw fennel; artichoke hearts marinated in white wine and served with tomatoes; and a succulent version of roasted rack of lamb served with tapenade of black olives and anchovies.

15 rue Carnot. ✆ **04-90-92-56-14.** Reservations required. Fixed-price menu 35€–64€ ($51–$93). MC, V. Tues–Sun noon–1:30pm; Tues–Sat 7–9:30pm. Closed Jan–Feb.

EXPLORING ST-REMY & ENVIRONS

One interesting activity is visiting the cloisters of the asylum van Gogh made famous in his paintings at the 12th-century **Monastère de St-Paul-de-Mausole** (✆ **04-90-92-77-00**). Now a psychiatric hospital for women, the former monastery is east of D5, a short drive north of Glanum (see below). You can't visit the cell in which van Gogh was confined, but it's still worth a visit to explore the Romanesque chapel and cloisters with circular arches and columns. On your way to the church, you'll see a bust of van Gogh. The cloisters are open daily April through October from 9:30am to 6:45pm, November through March 10:15am to 5pm. Admission is 4€ ($6.60) adults, 3€ ($4.40) students and children 12 to 16, free for children under 12.

Just south of St-Rémy on D5 is **Ruines de Glanum** ★, avenue Vincent-van-Gogh (✆ **04-90-92-23-79**), a Gallo-Roman city. Its monuments include an Arc Municipal (a triumphal arch dating from the time of Julius Caesar) and a cenotaph called the Mausolée des Jules. Garlanded with sculptured fruits and flowers, the arch dates from 20 B.C. and is the oldest in Provence. The mausoleum was raised to honor the grandsons of Augustus and is the only extant monument of its type. In the area are entire streets and foundations of private residences from the 1st-century town. Some remains are from a Gallo-Greek town dating from the 2nd century B.C. The excavations are open daily April to August from 10am to 6:30pm; September to March Tuesday to Sunday from 10:30am to 5pm. Admission is 6.50€ ($9.50) adults, 4.50€ ($6.60) students and ages 18 to 25, free for children under 18. From the town center, follow the signs to Les Antiques.

LES BAUX ★★★

What Cardinal Richelieu called "a nesting place for eagles" lies 19km (12 miles) north of Arles and 81km (50 miles) north of Marseille and the Mediterranean. Once it was the citadel of iron-fisted seigneurs; today, in its lonely position on a windswept plateau overlooking the southern Alpilles, Les Baux is a ghost of its former self. Still, there is no more dramatically situated town in Provence than this one, nestled in a valley surrounded by mysterious, shadowy rock formations.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE Les Baux is best reached by car; there is no rail service. From Arles, take the express highway N570 northeast until you reach the turnoff for a secondary road (D17), which will lead you northeast to Fontvieille. From here, just follow the signs east into Les Baux. By **train,** most passengers get off at Arles. Bus service has been discontinued. Taxis in Arles (☎ **06-80-27-60-92**) will take you to Les Baux for around 30€ ($44); be sure to agree upon the fare in advance.

VISITOR INFORMATION The **Office de Tourisme** (☎ **04-90-54-34-39;** fax 04-90-54-51-15; www.lesbauxdeprovence.com) is on Maison du Roy, near the northern entrance to the old city.

WHERE TO STAY & DINE

Oustau de Baumanière ★★★ This Relais & Châteaux member is one of southern France's legendary hotels. Raymond Thuilier bought the farmhouse in 1945, and by the 1950s, it was a rendezvous for the glitterati. Today, managed by its founder's grandson, it's not as glitzy, but the three stone houses, draped in flowering vines, are still charming. The plush rooms evoke the 16th and 17th centuries. All units contain large sitting areas and spacious bathrooms, and no two are alike. If there's no vacancy in the main building, the hotel will assign you to one of the annexes. In this case, request Le Manor. In the stone-vaulted dining room, the chef serves specialties like ravioli of truffles with leeks and *rossini* (stuffed with foie gras) of veal with fresh truffles. The award-winning *gigot d'agneau* (lamb) en croûte has become this place's trademark. A fixed-price menu costs 175€ ($254).

Les Baux, Maussane-les-Alpilles 13520. ☎ **04-90-54-33-07.** Fax 04-90-54-40-46. www.oustaudebaumaniere.com. 30 units. 250€–325€ ($363–$471) double; 420€–530€ ($609–$769) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Closed Jan 4–Feb 5. Restaurant closed Wed all day and Thurs at lunch Oct–Mar. **Amenities:** Restaurant; outdoor pool; room service; babysitting; laundry service; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, iron, safe.

EXPLORING LES BAUX

Some one million visitors a year flock here to wander the feudal ruins, inspect the foundation of a demolished castle, and explore the facades of restored Renaissance homes. The **Château des Baux** (☎ **04-90-54-55-56**) is carved out of the rocky mountain peak; the site of the former castle covers an area at least five times that of Les Baux itself. At the castle you can enjoy the panorama from the **Sarazen Tower (Tour Sarrazin).** Admission to the castle, including the museum and access to the ruins, is 7.50€ ($11) for adults, 5€ ($7.30) for students, free for children 17 and under. The site is open in

July and August daily 9am to 7:30pm; March to June and in September and October daily 9am to 6:30pm; November to February daily 9:30am to 5pm.

ARLES ★★★

Arles, 35km (22 miles) southwest of Avignon and 89km (55 miles) northwest of Marseille, has been called "the soul of Provence." This town on the Rhône attracts art lovers, archaeologists, and historians alike. Van Gogh left Paris for Arles in 1888 and painted some of his most celebrated works here—*Starry Night, The Bridge at Arles, Sunflowers,* and *L'Arlésienne,* among others. Many of these luminous scenes remain to delight visitors today.

Arles isn't quite as charming as Aix-en-Provence, but it has first-rate museums, excellent restaurants, and summer festivals. Though not as lovely as it was when van Gogh was in residence, Arles has enough antique Provençal flavor to keep its appeal alive.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE There are hourly rail connections between Arles and Avignon (20 min.; 6€–10€/$8.70–$15), Marseille (50 min.; 12€/$17), and Nîmes (20 min.; 6.90€/$10). For rail schedules and information, call ✆ **36-35.** There are about four **buses** per day from Aix-en-Provence (trip time: 1 hr., 45 min.). For bus information, call ✆ **08-10-00-08-16.** If **driving,** head south along D570 from Avignon.

VISITOR INFORMATION The **Office de Tourisme** is on esplanade Charles-de-Gaulle (✆ **04-90-18-41-20;** fax 04-90-18-41-29; www.arles.org).

WHERE TO STAY& DINE

Hôtel Jules César ★★★ This 17th-century Carmelite convent is now a country hotel with the best restaurant in town. Although it's in a noisy neighborhood, most rooms face the cloister. You'll wake to the scent of roses and the sounds of birds singing. Throughout, you'll find a blend of antique neoclassical architecture and modern amenities. The decor is luxurious, with antique Provençal furnishings. The interior rooms are the most tranquil and also the darkest, though enlivened by bright fabrics. Most of the downstairs units are spacious, and although the upstairs rooms are small, they have a certain old-world charm. The rooms in the modern extensions are comfortable but lack character. The excellent **Restaurant Lou Marquès** serves creative twists on Provençal specialties. Main courses run 28€ to 45€ ($34–$54), but fixed-price lunches (21€–28€/$25–$34) and dinners (40€–80€/$48–$96) are available.

9 bd. des Lices, Arles Cedex 13631. ✆ **04-90-52-52-52.** Fax 04-90-52-52-53. www.hotel-julescesar.fr. 58 units. 160€–250€ ($232–$363) double; 300€–385€ ($435–$558) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 13€ ($19). Closed Nov 10–Dec 24. **Amenities:** Restaurant (see "Where to Dine," below); bar; room service; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

EXPLORING ARLES

Arles is full of Roman monuments. The vicinity of the old Roman forum is occupied by **place du Forum,** shaded by plane trees. The Café de Nuit, immortalized by van Gogh, once stood on this square. Two Corinthian columns and pediment fragments from a temple are visible at the corner of the Hôtel Nord-Pinus. South of here is **place de la République** (also known as the place de l'Hôtel de Ville), the principal plaza, dominated by a 15m (49-ft.) blue porphyry obelisk. On the north is the impressive Hôtel-de-Ville (town hall) from 1673, built to Mansart's plans and surmounted by a Renaissance belfry.

On the east side of place de la République is the **Eglise St-Trophime** ★ (✆ **04-90-49-33-53**), noted for its 12th-century portal, one of the finest achievements of southern Romanesque style in all of France. In the pediment, Christ is surrounded by the symbols of the Evangelists. The cloister, designed in both the Gothic and Romanesque styles, is noted for its medieval carvings. Admission to the church is free; for the cloister, it's 3.50€ ($5.10) adults, 2.60€ ($3.80) students and ages 12 to 18, free for children 11 and under. The church is open daily from 8:30am to 6:30pm; the cloister daily from May through September 9am to 6:30pm, with shorter hours in the off season.

The city's two great classical monuments are the **Théâtre Antique** ★★, rue du Cloître (✆ **04-90-49-35-97**), and the Amphitheater (see below). The Roman theater begun by Augustus in the 1st century was mostly destroyed, and only two Corinthian columns remain. Now rebuilt, the theater is the setting for an annual drama festival in July. The theater was where the Venus of Arles was discovered in 1651. Take rue de la Calade from city hall. The theater is open May to September daily 9am to 6pm; March, April, and October daily 9 to 11:30am and 2 to 5:30pm; November to February daily 10 to 11:30am and 2 to 4:30pm. Admission is 3€ ($4.40) for adults, 2.20€ ($3.20) for students and children 12 to 18, and free for children under 12. Nearby is the **Amphitheater (Les Arènes)** ★★, rond-pont des Arènes (✆ **04-90-49-36-86**), also built in the 1st century. Sometimes called Le Cirque Romain, it seats almost 25,000 and still hosts bullfights in summer. Visit at your own risk: The stone steps are uneven, and much of the masonry is worn. For a good view, you can climb the three towers that remain from medieval times, when the amphitheater was turned into a fortress. Hours are May to September daily 9am to 6pm; March, April, and October daily 9am to 5:30pm; November to February daily 10am to 4:30pm. Admission costs 5.50€ ($8) for adults, 4€ ($5.80) for students and children under 19.

Perhaps the most memorable sight in Arles is **Les Alyscamps** ★, rue Pierre-Renaudel (✆ **04-90-49-36-87**), once a necropolis established by the Romans, converted into a Christian burial ground in the 4th century. It became a setting for legends in epic medieval poetry and was mentioned in Dante's *Inferno.* Today, it's lined with poplars and surviving sarcophagi: a cool oasis in hot weather. Hours are the same as for the Théâtre Antique (see above). Admission is 3.50€ ($5.10) adults, 2.60€ ($3.80) children 12 to 18, free for children under 12.

AIX-EN-PROVENCE ★★

Founded in 122 B.C. by Roman general Caius Sextius Calvinus, who named it Aquae Sextiae after himself, Aix evolved from a Roman military outpost to a provincial administrative capital, the seat of an archbishop, and the official residence of the medieval comtes de Provence.

The celebrated son of this faded university town is Paul Cézanne. Montagne Ste-Victoire looms over the town today as it did in Cézanne's time, though a string of high-rises has cropped up. Aix is 81km (50 miles) southeast of Avignon and 32km (20 miles) north of Marseille.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE The city is easily accessible. Twenty-seven **trains** arrive daily from Marseille; the trip takes 45 minutes and costs 8€ ($12) one-way. Twenty-five trains arrive from Nice; the trip takes 3 to 4 hours and costs 33€ ($48) one-way. There are also 25 trains per day from Cannes (3½ hr.), costing 30€ ($44) one-way. High-speed TGV trains arrive at Vitroll, 5.5km (3⅓ miles) west of Aix. Bus links to the center of Aix cost 4.10€ ($6) one-way. For more information, call ✆ **36-35.** **Buses** from Marseille arrive every 10 minutes; from Avignon, five times a day; and twice a day from Nice. For more information, call ✆ **08-91-02-40-25.** If you're **driving** to Aix from Avignon or other points north, take A7 south to RN7 and follow it into town. From Marseille or other points south, take A51 north into town.

VISITOR INFORMATION The **Office de Tourisme** is at 2 place du Général-de-Gaulle (✆ **04-42-16-11-61;** fax 04-42-16-11-62; www.aixenprovencetourism.com).

WHERE TO STAY

Hôtel Cardinal *Value* Not everything is state-of-the-art here, but for many travelers, the Cardinal is the best value in Aix. Lying on the other side of the cours in the Mazarin quarter, it is distinguished by a lingering air of fragility and nostalgia. Guests stay in simply furnished rooms either in the main building or in the high-ceilinged 18th-century annex up the street. This building holds most of the suites, each of which has a kitchenette. Bathrooms tend to be small but have good showers.

24 rue Cardinale, Aix-en-Provence 13100. ✆ **04-42-38-32-30.** Fax 04-42-26-39-05. 29 units. 132€–154€ ($191–$223) suite. MC, V. **Amenities:** Room service; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV, hair dryer.

La Villa Gallici ★★★ This elegant, relentlessly chic inn is the most stylish hotel in town. The rooms, richly infused with local decorative traditions, are subtle and charming. Some units boast a private terrace or garden. The villa sits in a large enclosed garden in the heart of Aix, close to one of the best restaurants, **Le Clos de la Violette** (see "Where to Dine," below). It's a 5-minute walk to the town center.

Av. de la Violette (impasse des Grands Pins), Aix-en-Provence 13100. ✆ **04-42-23-29-23.** Fax 04-42-96-30-45. www.villagallici.com. 22 units. 220€–650€ ($319–$943) double; 420€–800€ ($609–$1,160) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; outdoor pool; room service; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

WHERE TO DINE

Le Bistro Latin ★★ *Value* PROVENÇAL This is the best little bistro in Aix-en-Provence for the price. We've enjoyed the classic cuisine on all our visits. Guests dine in two intimate rooms: a street-level space, and a cellar decorated in Greco-Latin style. The staff is young and enthusiastic, taking special pride in their fixed-price menus. Try chartreuse of mussels, a meat dish with spinach-and-saffron cream sauce, scampi risotto, or crepe rack of lamb in an herbed crust.

18 rue de la Couronne. ✆ **04-42-38-22-88.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 14€–18€ ($20–$26); fixed-price lunch 16€ ($23); fixed-price dinner 16€–35€ ($23–$51). MC, V. Tues–Sat noon–2pm; Mon–Sat 7–10:30pm.

Moments Aix through the Eyes of Cézanne

The best experience in Aix is a walk along the *route de Cézanne* (D17), which winds eastward through the countryside toward Ste-Victoire. From the east end of cours Mirabeau, take rue du Maréchal-Joffre across boulevard Carnot to boulevard des Poilus, which becomes avenue des Ecoles-Militaires and finally D17. The stretch between Aix and the hamlet of Le Tholonet is full of twists and turns where Cézanne often set up his easel to paint. The entire route is a lovely 5.5km (3⅓-mile) stroll. Le Tholonet has a cafe or two where you can refresh yourself while waiting for one of the frequent buses back to Aix.

Le Clos de la Violette ★★★ MODERN FRENCH This innovative restaurant is a few steps from La Villa Gallici (see "Where to Stay," above), in an elegant neighborhood that most visitors reach by taxi. The Provençal villa has an octagonal reception area and several dining rooms. Menu items are stylish and seasonal, and include a medley of dishes highlighting the flavors of Provence. Examples include mousseline of potatoes with sea urchins and fish roe; braised sea wolf with crisp fried shallots and spicy Spanish sausages; and rack of suckling lamb stuffed with carrots and chickpeas. An absolutely superb dessert is a "celebration" of Provençal figs—an artfully arranged platter containing a galette of figs, a tart of figs, a parfait of figs, and a sorbet of figs.

10 av. de la Violette. ✆ **04-42-23-30-71.** www.closdelaviolette.fr. Reservations required. Main courses 45€–48€ ($65–$70); fixed-price lunch 50€ ($73); tasting menu 130€ ($189). AE, MC, V. Tues and Thurs–Sat noon–1:30pm and Mon–Sat 7:30–9:30pm. Closed Aug 1–20.

EXPLORING THE CITY

The main street, **cours Mirabeau** ★★, is one of the most beautiful in Europe. Plane trees act like umbrellas, shading the street from the sun and filtering the light into shadows that play on the rococo fountains. On one side are shops and sidewalk cafes, on the other embellished sandstone *hôtels particuliers* (mansions) from the 17th and 18th centuries. The street, which honors Mirabeau, the revolutionary and statesman, begins at the 1860 fountain on place de la Libération.

Outside town, at 9 av. Paul-Cézanne, is the **Atelier de Cézanne** (✆ **04-42-21-06-53**), the studio of the painter who was the major forerunner of Cubism. Surrounded by a wall, the house was restored by American admirers. Repaired again in 1970, it remains much as Cézanne left it in 1906. Open April to June and Sept daily from 10am to noon and 2:30 to 6pm; July and August daily 10am to 6pm; October to March daily 10am to noon and 2 to 5pm. Admission is 5.50€ ($8) adults, 2€ ($2.90) students and children under 13.

ST-TROPEZ ★★

Sun-kissed lasciviousness is rampant in this carnival town, 76km (47 miles) southwest of Cannes, but "we can be classy, too," one native insisted. Creative people in the arts and ordinary folk create a compelling mixture.

Colette lived here for many years. Diarist Anaïs Nin posed on the beach in 1939 in a Dorothy Lamour–style bathing suit. Earlier, St-Tropez was known to Maupassant, Matisse, and Bonnard. Today, artists, composers, novelists, and the film colony come to St-Tropez in summer. Trailing them is a line of humanity unmatched anywhere else on the Riviera for sheer flamboyance.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE The nearest rail station is in St-Raphaël, a neighboring resort. At St-Raphaël's Vieux Port, **boats** leave the Gare Maritime de St-Raphaël, rue Pierre-Auble (✆ **04-94-95-17-46**), for St-Tropez (trip time: 50 min.) four or five times a day from April to October. The one-way fare is 12€ ($17). Year-round, 10 to 15 Sodetrav **buses** per day leave from the Gare Routière in St-Raphaël (✆ **04-94-97-88-51**) for St-Tropez. The trip takes 1½ to 2½ hours, depending on the bus and the traffic, which during midsummer is usually horrendous. A one-way ticket costs 11€ ($16). Buses run directly to St-Tropez from Toulon and Hyères and from the nearest airport, at Toulon-Hyères, 56km (35 miles) away.

If you **drive,** note that parking in St-Tropez is very difficult. You can park in the **Parking des Lices** (✆ **04-94-97-34-46**), beneath place des Lices; enter on avenue Paul-Roussel for costs 1.10€ ($1.60) per hour. Many visitors prefer it, because it's more secure than any other lot. If you don't use it, you'll have to squeeze your car into tiny parking spaces wherever you find them. To get here from **Cannes,** drive southwest along the coastal highway (RD98), turning east when you see the signs to St-Tropez.

VISITOR INFORMATION The **Office de Tourisme** is on quai Jean-Jaurès (✆ **04-94-97-45-21;** fax 04-94-97-82-66; www.ot-saint-tropez.com).

WHERE TO STAY

Hôtel Byblos ★★★ The builder said he created "an anti-hotel, a place like home." That's true if your home resembles a palace in Beirut with salons decorated with Phoenician gold statues from 3000 B.C. On a hill above the harbor, this complex boasts intimate patios and courtyards and retreats filled with antiques and objects like polychrome carved woodwork, marquetry floors, and a Persian-rug ceiling. Every room is unique and might feature a fireplace on a raised hearth or a bed recessed on a dais. The rooms range from medium to spacious, often with high ceilings and antiques or reproductions and each with an elegant bed. Le Hameau contains 10 duplex suites built around a small courtyard with an outdoor spa. Some rooms have balconies overlooking an inner courtyard; others open onto a terrace. **Spoon Byblos** (see "Where to Dine," below) is highly recommended. Later, check out its nightclub, **Caves du Roy.**

Av. Paul Signac, St-Tropez 83990. ✆ **04-94-56-68-00.** Fax 04-94-56-68-01. www.byblos.com. 97 units, 10 junior suites. 410€–850€ ($595–$1,233) double; 800€–2,400€ ($1,160–$3,480) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Closed mid-Oct to mid-Apr. Parking 30€ ($44). **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; 2 bars; nightclub; outdoor pool; gym; spa; sauna; salon; room service; massage; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Hôtel La Ponche ★★ The same family has run this homey hotel overlooking the port for more than half a century. It's filled with the original airy paintings of Jacques Cordier, which add to the atmosphere. The redecorated midsize-to-large rooms are well equipped and open onto sea views. Beds are elegantly appointed with linen and quality mattresses.

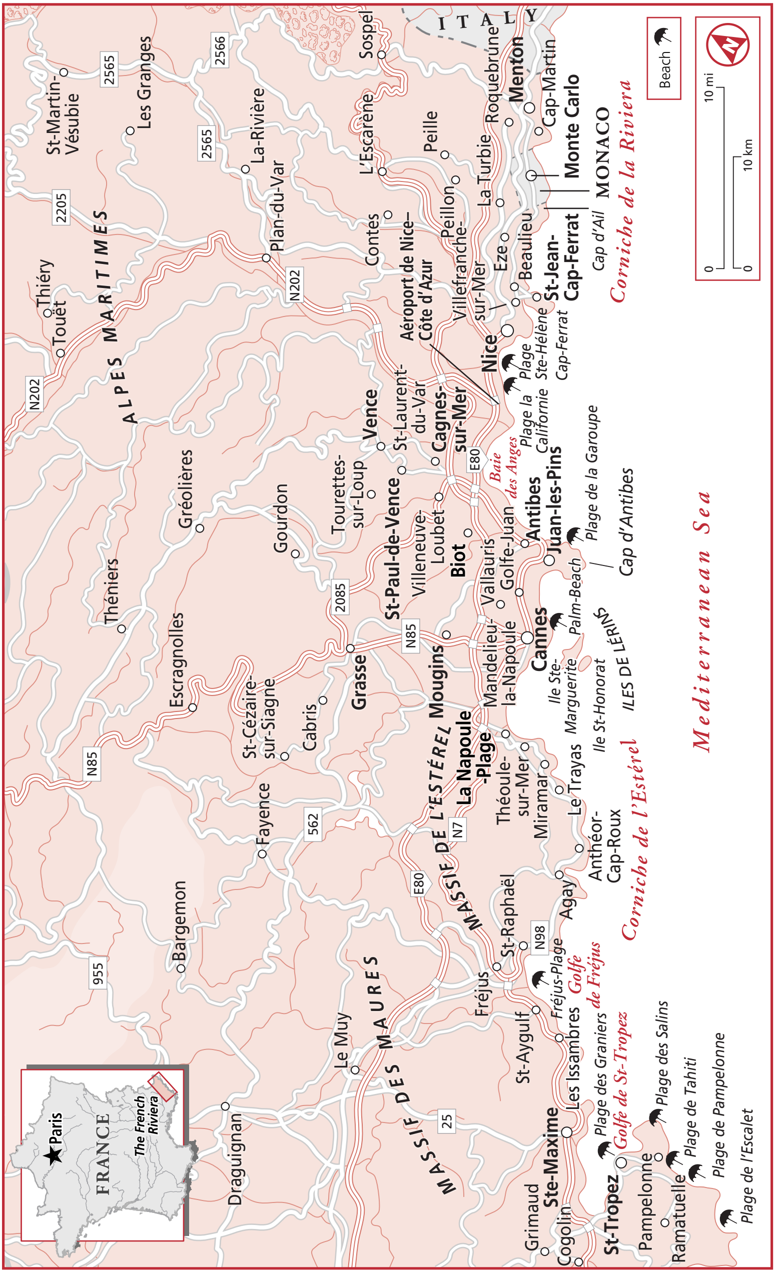
Port des Pécheurs, St-Tropez 83990. ✆ **04-94-97-02-53.** Fax 04-94-97-78-61. www.laponche.com. 18 units. 150€–450€ ($218–$653) double; 225€–550€ ($326–$798) suite. AE, MC, V. Parking 22€ ($32). Closed Nov to mid-Feb. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; room service; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

WHERE TO DINE

Leï Mouscardins ★★★ FRENCH/PROVENÇAL This restaurant has won awards for culinary perfection. The dining room is in formal Provençal style with an adjoining sunroom under a canopy. We recommend *moules* (mussels) *marinières* for an appetizer. On the menu are a celebrated Côte d'Azur fish stew, *bourride Provençale,* and an unusual main-course specialty, crushed chestnuts garnished with morels, crayfish, and truffles. The fish dishes are excellent, particularly sauté of monkfish, wild mushrooms, and green beans. The dessert specialties are soufflés made with Grand Marnier or Cointreau.

1 rue Portalet. ✆ **04-94-97-29-00.** Reservations required. Main courses 35€–68€ ($51–$99); fixed-price lunch 60€ ($87); fixed-price dinner 65€–95€ ($94–$138). AE, DC, MC, V. June–Sept daily noon–2pm and 7:30–10pm; Oct–May Wed–Mon noon–2pm and 7:30–9:30pm. Closed Nov 5–Feb 8.

The French Riviera


ITALY
MONACO
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Cap-Martin
Menton
Roquebrune
La Turbie
Peille
Sospel
L'Escarène
Peillon
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Eze
Beaulieu
Cap d'Ail
St-Jean-Cap-Ferrat
Cap-Ferrat
Plage Ste-Hélène
Villefranche-sur-Mer
Nice
Aéroport de Nice–Côte d'Azur
Plage la Californie
Baie des Anges
St-Laurent-du-Var
Cagnes-sur-Mer
Vence
Tourettes-sur-Loup
St-Paul-de-Vence
Villeneuve-Loubet
Biot
Antibes
Juan-les-Pins
Plage de la Garoupe
Cap d'Antibes
Golfe-Juan
Vallauris
Palm-Beach
Cannes
Mandelieu-la-Napoule
Ile Ste-Marguerite
Ile St-Honorat
ILES DE LÉRINS
Mougins
Grasse
Cabris
St-Cézaire-sur-Siagne
Gourdon
Gréolières
Escragnolles
Théniers
Plan-du-Var
La-Rivière
Les Granges
St-Martin-Vésubie
Thiéry
Touët
ALPES MARITIMES
La Napoule-Plage
Théoule-sur-Mer
Miramar
Le Trayas
Anthéor-Cap-Roux
Agay
MASSIF DE L'ESTÉREL
Corniche de l'Estérel
Corniche de la Riviera
Mediterranean Sea
St-Raphaël
Fréjus
Fréjus-Plage
Golfe de Fréjus
Fayence
Bargemon
Le Muy
Draguignan
MASSIF DES MAURES
St-Aygulf
Les Issambres
Plage des Graniers
Golfe de St-Tropez
Ste-Maxime
Grimaud
Cogolin
St-Tropez
Pampelonne
Ramatuelle
Plage des Salins
Plage de Tahiti
Plage de Pampelonne
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FRANCE
Paris
The French Riviera

Spoon Byblos ★★ FRENCH/INTERNATIONAL This is one of the latest statements of Alain Ducasse, considered by some the world's greatest chef—or at least the most acclaimed. Originally launched in Paris, Spoon has traveled everywhere from London to the Riviera. Here it serves the cuisines of many cultures with produce mainly from the Mediterranean. It draws special inspiration from the food of Catalonia, Andalusia, and Morocco, and offers more than 300 wines from around the world. The restaurant opens onto a circular bar of blue-tinted glass and stainless steel. Dig into shrimp and squid consommé with a hint of jasmine and orange, or spicy king prawns on a skewer. Then try delectable lamb couscous or spit-roasted John Dory. You might top off a meal with the chef's favorite cheesecake.

In the Hôtel Byblos, av. Paul-Signac. ✆ **04-94-56-68-20.** Reservations required. Main courses 18€–45€ ($26–$65); fixed-price menu 68€ ($99). AE, DC, MC, V. July–Aug daily 8pm–12:30am; mid-Apr to June and Sept to mid-Oct daily 8–11pm. Closed mid-Oct to mid-Apr.

EXPLORING ST-TROPEZ & ENVIRONS

Near the harbor is the **Musée de l'Annonciade (Musée St-Tropez),** at place Grammont (✆ **04-94-97-04-01**), in the former chapel of the Annonciade. It boasts one of the Riviera's finest modern art collections. Many of the artists, including Paul Signac, depicted the port of St-Tropez. The collection includes such works as Van Dongen's *Women of the Balustrade* and paintings and sculpture by Bonnard, Matisse, Braque, Utrillo, Seurat, Derain, and Maillol. The museum is open from June to September, Wednesday through Monday 10am to noon and 3 to 7pm; October and December through May, Wednesday through Monday 10am to noon and 2 to 6pm; closed in November. Admission is 5.50€ ($8) adults, 3.50€ ($5.10) children under 12.

HITTING THE BEACH & OTHER OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

BEACHES St-Tropez has the Riviera's best beaches. The best for families are those closest to the town center, including the amusingly named **Bouillabaisse** and **Plage des Graniers.** More daring are the 9.5km (6-mile) sandy crescents at **Plage des Salins** and **Plage de Pampelonne,** beginning some 3km (1¾ miles) from the town center and best reached by bike if you're not driving. If you ever wanted to go topless, this is the place!

BOATING The highly recommended **Suncap Company,** 15 quai de Suffren (✆ **04-94-97-11-23**), rents boats 5.5 to 12m (18–39 ft.) long. Larger ones come with a captain at the helm. Prices begin at 1,200€ ($1,740) per day.

TENNIS Anyone who phones in advance can use the eight courts (artificial grass or "Quick," a form of concrete) at the **Tennis-Club de St-Tropez,** route des Plages, St-Claude (✆ **04-94-97-15-52**), about half a mile from the resort's center. Open year-round, the courts rent for 20€ ($29) per hour for green set, 25€ ($36) per hour for clay set, from 8am to 9pm.

ST-TROPEZ AFTER DARK

On the lobby level of the Hôtel Byblos, **Les Caves du Roy,** avenue Paul-Signac (✆ **04-94-97-16-02**), is the most self-consciously chic nightclub in St-Tropez. Entrance is free, but drink prices begin at a whopping 18€ ($26). It's open nightly from 11:30pm until dawn, May to late September. **Le Papagayo,** in the Résidence du Nouveau-Port, rue Gambetta (✆ **04-94-97-76-70**), is one of the largest nightclubs in town. The decor was inspired by the psychedelic 1960s. Entrance is 15€ to 18€

($22–$26) and includes the first drink. Next to Le Papagayo is **Le VIP Room,** in the Résidence du Port (✆ **04-94-97-14-70**), where patrons pay between 14€ and 15€ ($20–$22) per cocktail. Expect an active bar, a dance floor, and the kind of posturing that can be amusing or not depending on your point of view. **Le Pigeonnier,** 13 rue de la Ponche (✆ **04-94-97-84-26**), rocks, rolls, and welcomes a crowd that's mostly gay, male, and between the ages of 20 and 50. Most of the socializing revolves around the long, narrow bar, where men from all over Europe seem to enjoy chitchat. There's also a dance floor.

CANNES ★★★

When Coco Chanel came here and got a suntan, returning to Paris bronzed, she startled the milk-white society ladies. They quickly began copying her. Today the bronzed bodies—clad in nearly nonexistent swimsuits—that line the beaches of this chic resort continue to copy the late fashion designer.

Something is always happening at Cannes, except in November, traditionally a dead month. Popular with celebrities, Cannes is at its most frenzied in late May during the **International Film Festival** at the Palais des Festivals on promenade de la Croisette.

Cannes, sheltered by hills, lies 26km (16 miles) southwest of Nice. For many it consists of only one street, **promenade de la Croisette,** curving along the coast and split by islands of palms and flowers. Hotels, apartment houses, and boutiques line the seafront. Many of the bigger hotels claim parts of the beaches for guests' private use; there are also public areas.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **Trains** arrive frequently throughout the day. Cannes is 15 minutes by train from Antibes and 35 minutes from Nice. The TGV from Paris via Marseille reaches Cannes in about 6 breathless hours. For rail information and schedules, call ✆ **08-92-35-35-35.** The **Nice international airport** (✆ **08-20-42-33-33**) is a 20-minute drive northeast. **Buses** pick up passengers at the airport every 40 minutes during the day, delivering them to the Gare Routière, place de l'Hôtel de Ville (✆ **04-93-45-20-08**). Bus service from Antibes operates every half-hour. By **car** from Marseille, take A51 north to Aix-en-Provence, continuing along A8 east to Cannes. From Nice, follow A8 southwest to Cannes.

VISITOR INFORMATION The **Office de Tourisme** is at 1 bd. De La Croisette (✆ **04-93-39-24-53;** fax 04-92-99-84-23; www.cannes.fr).

WHERE TO STAY

Although some hotels in Cannes have e-mail addresses, a shared e-mail address reaches all hotels in the city: infos@cannes.hotel.com.

Hôtel le Fouquet's ★ *Finds* This intimate hotel draws discreet patrons, often from Paris, who'd never think of patronizing the grand hotels. Very "Riviera French" in design and decor, it's several blocks from the beach. Each of the cozy guest rooms is outfitted just a bit differently from its neighbor. Each has pastel colors and contemporary furniture. The owner is often on-site, making the hotel feel a bit like an intimate B&B.

2 rond-point Duboys-d'Angers, Cannes 06400. ✆ **04-92-59-25-00.** Fax 04-92-98-03-39. www.le-fouquets.com. 10 units. 140€–280€ ($203–$406) double. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 12€ ($17). Closed Nov 1–Apr 12. Bus: 1. **Amenities:** Room service; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Hôtel Splendid ★ *Value* Opened in 1871, and widely renovated in 2004, this is a favorite of scholars, politicians, actors, and musicians. The ornate white building with wrought-iron accents looks out onto the sea, the old port, and a park. The rooms boast antique furniture and paintings; about 15 have kitchenettes. Each comes with a good bed and a small but efficient bathroom. The more expensive rooms have sea views.

4–6 Rue Félix-Faure, Cannes 06400. ✆ **04-97-06-22-22.** Fax 04-93-99-55-02. www.splendid-hotel-cannes.fr. 62 units. 126€–264€ ($183–$383) double. Rates include breakfast. AE, MC, V. Parking 15€ ($22). **Amenities:** Room service; babysitting; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer, safe.

InterContinental Carlton Cannes ★★★ Cynics say that one of the most amusing sights in Cannes is the view from under the grand gate of the Carlton. Here you'll see vehicles of every description dropping off huge amounts of baggage and numbers of fashionable (and sometimes not-so-fashionable) guests. It's the epitome of luxury and has become such a part of the city's heartbeat that to ignore it would be to miss the resort's spirit. Built in 1912, the Carlton once attracted the most prominent members of Europe's *haut monde.* Today the hotel is more democratic, hosting conventions and motorcoach tour groups; however, in summer (especially during the film festival) the public rooms still fill with all the voyeuristic and exhibitionistic fervor that seems so much a part of the Riviera. Guest rooms are plush and a bit airier than you might expect. The most spacious rooms are in the west wing, and many upper-floor rooms open onto waterfront balconies. In 2004, the hotel converted what had been a casino into seven of its most luxurious suites. The large bathrooms are in the grand luxe style.

58 bd. de la Croisette, Cannes 06400. ✆ **04-93-06-40-06.** Fax 04-93-06-40-25. www.intercontinental.com. 338 units. 230€–1,080€ ($334–$1,566) double; from 615€ ($892) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 35€ ($51). **Amenities:** 3 summer restaurants; 1 winter restaurant; 2 bars; health club; sauna; business center; room service; laundry service; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms; limited-mobility rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

WHERE TO DINE

Côté Jardin ★ *Value* FRENCH/PROVENÇAL Set near the courthouse (Palais de Justice) in the heart of commercial Cannes, this restaurant attracts loyal locals because of its unpretentious ambience and its reasonably priced and generous portions. You're offered three choices for seating: on the street-level glassed-in veranda; at a table amid the flowering shrubs of the garden terrace; or upstairs within the cozy Provençal dining room. The best menu items include open-faced ravioli filled with minced beef jowls, filets of red mullet with butter-flavored parsley sauce, a range of grilled and roasted meats and fish, and a dessert of praline and pineapple tart with vanilla-flavored cream sauce.

12 av. St-Louis. ✆ **04-93-38-60-28.** Reservations required, especially in summer. Fixed-price menus 30€–55€ ($44–$80). AE, DC, MC, V. Tues–Sat noon–2pm and 7:30–10pm. Closed 1 week in early Jan.

La Palme d'Or ★★★ MODERN FRENCH Movie stars on the see-and-be-seen circuit head here during the film festival. It's a sophisticated rendezvous that also serves some of the Riviera's finest hotel cuisine. The light wood–paneled Art Deco marvel has bay windows, a winter garden theme, and terraces overlooking the pool, the sea, and La Croisette. Menu items change with the seasons but are likely to include warm foie gras with fondue of rhubarb; filets of fried red mullet with a beignet of potatoes, zucchini, and olive-cream sauce; and a medley of crayfish, clams, and squid marinated in peppered citrus sauce. A modernized version of a Niçoise staple includes three parts of a rabbit with rosemary sauce, fresh vegetables, and chickpea rosettes. The most appealing dessert is wild strawberries from Carros, with Grand Marnier–flavored sauce and "cream sauce of frozen milk." The service is worldly without being stiff.

In the Hôtel Martinez, 73 bd. de la Croisette. ✆ **04-92-98-74-14.** Reservations required. Main courses 52€–90€ ($75–$131); fixed-price lunch 61€–180€ ($88–$261); fixed-price dinner 79€–180€ ($115–$261). AE, DC, MC, V. Tues–Sat 12:30–2pm and 8–10pm. Closed Jan–Feb.

EXPLORING CANNES

Above the harbor, the old town of Cannes sits on Suquet Hill, where you'll see a 14th-century tower that the English dubbed the **Lord's Tower.**

The **Musée de la Castre** ★, in the Château de la Castre, Le Suquet (✆ **04-93-38-55-26**), contains paintings, sculpture, decorative arts, and a section on ethnography, which includes objects from all over, including Peruvian and Maya pottery. There's also a gallery devoted to relics of Mediterranean civilizations, from the Greeks to the Romans, from the Cypriots to the Egyptians. Five rooms are devoted to 19th-century paintings. The museum is open June to August Tuesday to Sunday 10am to 1pm and 3 to 7pm; April, May, and September Tuesday to Sunday 10am to 1pm and 2 to 6pm; and October to March Tuesday to Sunday 10am to 1pm and 2 to 5pm. Admission is 3€ ($4.40), but free the first Sunday of every month.

HITTING THE BEACH & OTHER OUTDOOR PURSUITS

BEACHES Looking for a free public beach? Head for **Plage du Midi,** just west of the Vieux Port (✆ **04-93-39-92-74**); or **Plage Gazagnaire,** just east of the Port Canto (no phone). Here you'll find greater numbers of families with children and lots of caravan-type vehicles parked nearby. Between these two public beaches are many private ones where you can gain entrance by paying a fee that includes a mattress and parasol.

BICYCLING & MOTOR SCOOTERING Despite the roaring traffic, the flat landscapes between Cannes and satellite resorts such as La Napoule are well suited for riding a bike or motor scooter. At **Cycles Daniel,** 2 rue du Pont Romain (✆ **04-93-99-90-30**), *vélos tout terrain* (mountain bikes) cost 15€ ($22) a day. Motorized bikes and scooters cost 36€ ($52) per day; renters must be at least 14 years old. For larger scooters, you must present a valid driver's license. Another purveyor of bikes is **Mistral Location,** 4 rue Georges Clemenceau (✆ **04-93-39-33-60**), which charges 14€ ($20) per day.

BOATING Several companies rent boats of any size, with or without a crew, for a day, a week, or a month. An outfit known for short-term rentals of small craft, including motorboats, sailboats, and canoes, is **Elco Marine,** 110 bd. du Midi (✆ **04-93-47-12-62**).

CANNES AFTER DARK

Cannes has a pair of world-class casinos. The better established is the **Casino Croisette,** in the Palais des Festivals, 1 jetée Albert-Edouard (✆ **04-92-98-78-00**). A well-respected fixture in town since the 1950s, it's a competitor of the newer **Palm Beach Casino,** place F-D. Roosevelt, Pointe de la Croisette (✆ **04-97-06-36-90**), on the southeast edge of La Croisette. Originally inaugurated in 1933 and rebuilt in 2002, it features three restaurants and Art Deco decor. It's glossier, newer, and a bit hungrier for business. Both casinos maintain slot machines that operate daily from 11am to 5am. Suites of rooms devoted to *les grands jeux* (blackjack, roulette, and chemin de fer) open nightly from 8pm to 5am. Both casinos require a passport or ID card for access to *les grands jeux.*

JUAN-LES-PINS ★★

This suburb of Antibes is a resort developed in the 1920s. In the 1930s Juan-les-Pins drew a chic winter crowd. Today it attracts young Europeans from many economic backgrounds, in pursuit of sex, sun, and sea, in that order.

Juan-les-Pins is often called the "Coney Island of the Riviera," but anyone who calls it that hasn't seen Coney Island in a long time. One writer said that Juan-les-Pins is "for the young and noisy." Even F. Scott Fitzgerald decried it as a "constant carnival." If he could see it now, he'd know he was a prophet.

The town has some of the best nightlife on the Riviera, and the action reaches its frenzied height during the **Festival International de Jazz,** which takes place in mid-July for 10 to 12 days. For more information on the festival, contact the tourist office. The pines sweep down to a good beach, crowded with summer sunbathers, most often in skimpy swimwear.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE Juan-les-Pins is connected by **rail** and bus to most other Mediterranean coastal resorts, especially Nice (trip time: 30 min.; one-way fare: 4€/$5.80). For rail information and schedules, call ✆ **08-92-35-35-35,** or visit www.voyages-sncf.com. **Buses** arrive from Nice and its airport at 40-minute intervals throughout the day. A bus leaves for Juan-les-Pins from Antibes at place Guynemer (✆ **04-93-34-37-60**) daily every 20 minutes and costs 1.45€ ($2.10) one-way (trip time: 10–15 min.). To **drive** to Juan-les-Pins from Nice, travel along N7 south; from Cannes, follow the signposted roads. Juan-les-Pins is just outside of Cannes.

VISITOR INFORMATION The **Office de Tourisme** is at 51 bd. Charles-Guillaumont (✆ **04-92-90-53-05;** fax 04-93-61-55-13; www.antibesjuanlespins.com).

WHERE TO STAY

Hôtel Cecil *Value* A stone's throw from the beach, this well-kept small hotel is one of the best bargains in Juan-les-Pins. It originated in 1929 when a 19th-century villa was enlarged with another story and transformed into a hotel. The traditionally furnished rooms are well worn yet well maintained, ranging from small to midsize, each with a compact bathroom. Owner-chef Michel Courtois provides a courteous welcome and good meals.

Rue Jonnard, Juan-les-Pins 06160. ✆ **04-93-61-05-12.** Fax 04-93-67-09-14. www.hotelcecilfrance.com. 21 units. Feb–Oct 55€–92€ ($80–$133) double. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 15€ ($22). Closed Nov 7–Jan 14. **Amenities:** Restaurant; room service; babysitting; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer.

Hôtel des Belles-Rives ★★★ This is one of the Riviera's fabled addresses. Once it was a holiday villa occupied by Zelda and F. Scott Fitzgerald. It has played host to the illustrious, like the duke and duchess of Windsor, Josephine Baker, and Edith Piaf. A 1930s aura lingers through recent renovations. Double-glazing and air-conditioning help a lot. As befits a hotel of this age, rooms come in a variety of shapes and sizes, from small to spacious; each has a luxurious bathroom with a combination tub/shower. The lower terraces hold garden dining rooms, an aquatic club with a snack bar and lounge, and a jetty. The beach is private. Dinners are served in the romantic **La Terrasse** with a panoramic bay view.

33 bd. Edouard Baudoin, Juan-les-Pins 06160. ✆ **04-93-61-02-79.** Fax 04-93-67-43-51. www.bellesrives.com. 44 units. 230€–530€ ($334–$769) double; 350€–750€ ($508–$1,088) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. Closed Jan–Mar 11. **Amenities:** 2 summer restaurants; 1 winter restaurant; 2 bars; courtesy car; room service; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

WHERE TO DINE

Le Bijou Plage Value FRENCH/PROVENÇAL This upscale brasserie has flourished beside the seafront promenade since 1923. The marine-style decor includes lots of varnished wood and bouquets of blue and white flowers in a mostly blue-and-white interior. Windows overlook a private beach that's much less crowded than the public beaches nearby. Menu items are sophisticated and less expensive than you'd expect. Examples are excellent bouillabaisse, grilled sardines, risotto with John Dory and truffled butter, steamed mussels with *sauce poulette* (frothy cream sauce with herbs and butter), grilled John Dory with a vinaigrette enriched by tapenade of olives and fresh basil, and a super-size *plateau des coquillages et fruits de mer* (shellfish and seafood). Don't confuse this informally elegant place with its beachfront terrace, open April 15 to September 15 daily noon to 4pm.

Bd. du Littoral. ✆ **04-93-61-39-07.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 19€–80€ ($28–$116); fixed-price menu 22€–51€ ($32–$74). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily noon–2:30pm and 7:30–10:30pm.

ANTIBES & CAP D'ANTIBES ★★

On the other side of the Baie des Anges (Bay of Angels), across from Nice, is the port of Antibes. The town has a quiet charm unique on the Côte d'Azur. Its harbor is filled with fishing boats and yachts, and in recent years it has emerged as a hot spot. The marketplaces are full of flowers. If you're in Antibes in the evening, you can watch fishers playing the popular Riviera game of boule.

Spiritually, Antibes is totally divorced from Cap d'Antibes, a peninsula studded with the villas of the superrich. In *Tender Is the Night,* Fitzgerald described it as a place where "old villas rotted like water lilies among the massed pines."

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **Trains** from Cannes arrive at the rail station, place Pierre-Semard, every 20 minutes (trip time: 15 min.); the one-way fare is 4.50€ ($6.60). Trains from Nice arrive at the rate of 25 per day (trip time: 18 min.); the one-way fare is around 4.75€ ($6.90). For rail information, call ✆ **36-35,** or visit www.voyages-sncf.com. The **bus** station, La Gare Routière, place Guynemer (✆ **04-93-34-37-60**), receives buses from throughout Provence. Partially subsidized by the government, bus fares between Nice and Antibes or Cannes and Antibes cost only 1€ ($1.50) one-way.

If you're **driving,** follow E1 east from Cannes and take the turnoff to the south for Antibes, which will lead to the historic core of the old city. From Nice, take E1 west until you come to the turnoff for Antibes. From the center of Antibes, follow the coastal road, boulevard Leclerc, south to Cap d'Antibes.

VISITOR INFORMATION The **Office de Tourisme** is at 11 place du Général-de-Gaulle (✆ **04-97-23-11-11;** fax 04-97-23-11-12; www.antibesjuanlespins.com).

WHERE TO STAY

Castel Garoupe Value We highly recommend this Mediterranean villa, which was built in 1968 on a private lane in the center of the cape. It offers tastefully furnished, spacious rooms with fine beds and compact bathrooms with showers and tubs. Many rooms have private balconies, and each has shuttered windows. Some units have air-conditioning, and some have TVs. There's a tranquil garden on the premises.

959 bd. de la Garoupe, Cap d'Antibes 06160. ✆ **04-93-61-36-51.** Fax 04-93-67-74-88. www.castel-garoupe.com. 28 units. 125€–164€ ($181–$238) double; 155€–276€ ($225–$400) studio apt with kitchenette. AE, MC, V. Closed Nov to mid-Mar. Bus: A2. **Amenities:** 2 bars; outdoor pool; exercise room; room service; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* Dataport, kitchenette, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Hôtel du Cap-Eden Roc ★★★ Legendary for the glamour of its setting and its clientele, this Second Empire hotel, opened in 1870, is surrounded by gardens. It's like a country estate, with spacious public rooms, marble fireplaces, and chandeliers. The guest rooms are among the most sumptuous on the Riviera, with deluxe beds and spacious bathrooms. Even though the guests snoozing by the pool—which was blasted out of the cliff side at enormous expense—might appear undraped during the day, evenings are upscale, with lots of emphasis on clothing and style. The famous Pavillon Eden Roc, near a rock garden apart from the hotel, has a panoramic sea view. Venetian chandeliers, Louis XV chairs, and elegant draperies add to the drama. Lunch is served on a terrace.

Bd. J.-F.-Kennedy, Cap d'Antibes 06600. ☎ **04-93-61-39-01.** Fax 04-93-67-13-83. www.edenroc-hotel.fr. 130 units. 450€–850€ ($653–$1,233) double; 950€–1,300€ ($1,378–$1,885) suite. No credit cards. Closed mid-Oct to Apr. Bus: A2. **Amenities:** Restaurant; 2 bars; outdoor pool; gym; sauna; secretarial services; room service; massage; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV (on request), hair dryer, safe.

WHERE TO DINE

La Taverne du Saffranier Value PROVENÇAL Earthy and irreverent, this brasserie in a century-old building serves a changing roster of savory local specialties. Portions are generous. Examples are a platter of *petits farcis* (stuffed vegetables); a small bouillabaisse for single diners; savory fish soup; and an assortment of grilled fish (including sardines) that's served only with a dash of fresh lemon.

Place du Saffranier. ☎ **04-93-34-80-50.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 16€–30€ ($23–$44); fixed-price lunch 15€ ($22). No credit cards. Feb–Mar Tues–Sun noon–2:30pm, Thurs–Sat 7–10:30pm; Apr–May and Oct–Dec Tues–Sun noon–2:30pm, Tues–Sat 7–10:30pm; June–Sept daily noon–2:30pm and 7–10:30pm. Closed Jan.

Restaurant de Bacon ★★★ SEAFOOD The Eden Roc restaurant at the Hôtel du Cap is more elegant, but Bacon serves the best seafood around. This restaurant on a rocky peninsula offers a panoramic coast view. Bouillabaisse aficionados claim that Bacon offers the best in France. In its deluxe version, saltwater crayfish float atop the savory brew; we prefer the simple version—a waiter adds the finishing touches at your table. If bouillabaisse isn't to your liking, try fish soup with garlicky *rouille* sauce, fish terrine, or something from a collection of fish unknown in North America. These include sar, pageot, and denti.

Bd. de Bacon. ☎ **04-93-61-50-02.** Reservations required. Main courses 25€–150€ ($36–$218). AE, DC, MC, V. Wed–Sun noon–2pm; Tues–Sun 8–10pm. Closed Oct to mid-Feb.

A MUSEUM WORTH VISITING

On the ramparts above the port is the Château Grimaldi, once the home of the princes of Antibes of the Grimaldi family, who ruled the city from 1385 to 1608. Today it houses the **Musée Picasso** ★★, place du Mariejol (☎ **04-92-90-54-20**), one of the world's great Picasso collections. Picasso came to town after the war and stayed in a small hotel at Golfe-Juan until the museum director at Antibes invited him to work and live at the museum. He spent 1946 painting here. When he departed, he gave the museum all the work he'd done: 24 paintings, 80 pieces of ceramics, 44 drawings, 32 lithographs, 11 oils on paper, 2 sculptures, and 5 tapestries. The gallery of contemporary art exhibits Léger, Miró, Ernst, and Calder, among others. Admission is 6.50€ ($9.50), 4€ ($5.80) children 12 to 18, free for children under 12. The museum is open June through September, Tuesday to Sunday 10am to 6pm (until 8pm July–Aug) and October to May, Tuesday to Sunday 10am to noon and 2 to 6pm.

ST-PAUL-DE-VENCE ★★

Of all the perched villages of the Riviera, St-Paul-de-Vence is the best known. It was popularized in the 1920s when many artists lived here, occupying the 16th-century houses flanking the cobblestone streets. Its ramparts (allow about 30 min. to circle them) overlook a setting of flowers and olive and orange trees. They haven't changed much since they were constructed from 1537 to 1547 by order of François I. From the north ramparts you can look out on Baou de St-Jeannet, a sphinx-shaped rock that was painted into the landscape of Poussin's *Polyphème.*

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE The nearest **rail** station is in Cagnes-sur-Mer. Some 20 **buses** per day leave from Nice's Gare Routière, dropping passengers off in St-Paul-de-Vence (one-way fare: 4.30€/$5.15), and then in Vence. For information, call the **Compagnie SAP** (✆ **04-93-58-37-60**). If you're **driving** from Nice, take the coastal A8 highway east, turn inland at Cagnes-sur-Mer, and follow signs north to St-Paul-de-Vence.

VISITOR INFORMATION The **Office de Tourisme** is at 2 rue Grande (✆ **04-93-32-86-95;** fax 04-93-32-60-27; www.saint-pauldevence.com).

EXPLORING ST-PAUL-DE-VENCE

The tourist office has created a 1-hour tour of the town's historic center. The price (8€/$11.60) includes admission to the Musée d'Histoire de St-Paul.

On a hill in pine-studded woods, **Fondation Maeght** ★★★ (✆ **04-93-32-81-63**) is like Shangri-La. Nature and the creations of men and women blend harmoniously in this unique achievement of the architect José Luis Sert. Its white concrete arcs give the impression of a giant pagoda.

A stark Calder rises on the lawn. In a courtyard, the bronze works of Giacometti form a surrealistic garden. Sculpture is displayed inside, but the museum is at its best in a natural setting of terraces and gardens. It's built on several levels, its many glass walls providing an indoor-outdoor vista. The foundation, a gift "to the people" from Aimé and Marguerite Maeght, also provides a showcase for new talent. Everywhere you look, you see 20th-century art: mosaics by Chagall and Braque, Miró ceramics in the "labyrinth," and Ubac and Braque stained glass in the chapel. Bonnard, Kandinsky, Léger, Matisse, Barbara Hepworth, and many other artists are well represented.

Fondation Maeght is open daily from July to October from 10am to 7pm, from November to June 10am to 12:30pm and 2:30 to 6pm. Admission is 12€ ($17) adults, 7.50€ ($11) students and ages 10 to 18, free for children under 10.

North of St-Paul-de-Vence, you can visit the sleepy old town of **Vence** ★, with its **Vieille Ville (Old Town).** If you're wearing comfortable shoes, the narrow, steep streets are worth exploring. The **cathedral** on place Godeau is unremarkable except for some 15th-century choir stalls. If it's the right day of the week, however, most visitors pass through the narrow gates of this once-fortified walled town on their way to the **Chapelle du Rosaire** ★★, av. Henri-Matisse (✆ **04-93-58-03-26**), created by Henri Matisse. Matisse was 77 when he set out to design this masterpiece, which he called "the culmination of a whole life dedicated to the search for truth." From the front you might find the chapel of the Dominican nuns of Monteils unremarkable—until you spot a 12m (40-ft.) crescent-adorned cross rising from a blue-tile roof. The light inside picks up the coloring in the simply rendered leaf forms and abstract patterns: sapphire blue, aquamarine, and lemon yellow. In black-and-white ceramics, St. Dominic is depicted in a few lines. The Stations of the Cross are also black-and-white tile, with Matisse's self-styled "tormented and passionate" figures. The chapel is open December 16 through November 14, Tuesday and Thursday 10 to 11:30am and 2 to 5:30pm; Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday from 2 to 5:30pm. Sunday Mass is held at 10am. Admission is 2.50€ ($3), free for children 11 and under; contributions to maintain the chapel are welcome.

NICE ★★★

Nice is the capital of the Riviera. It's also one of the country's most ancient cities, founded by the Greeks, who called it Nike (Victory). By the 19th century, the Victorian upper class and tsarist aristocrats flocked here. These days it's not as chichi and expensive, especially compared to Cannes. Of all the major resorts of France, Nice is the most affordable. It's also the best place to base yourself on the Riviera, especially if you're dependent on public transportation. From the Nice airport, the second largest in France, you can travel by train or bus along the entire coast. Because of its brilliant sunshine and relaxed living, Nice has attracted artists and writers, among them Matisse, Dumas, Nietzsche, Flaubert, Hugo, Sand, and Stendhal.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **Trains** arrive at Gare Nice-Ville, avenue Thiers (✆ **08-92-35-35-35;** www.voyages-sncf.com). From there you can take trains to Cannes, Monaco, and Antibes, with easy connections to anywhere else along the Mediterranean coast. There's a small tourist center at the train station, open Monday through Saturday from 8am to 7pm and Sunday from 9am to 6pm. If you face a long delay, you can eat at the cafeteria and even shower at the station.

Buses to and from Monaco, Cannes, St-Tropez, and other parts of France and Europe serve the main bus station, or **Gare Routière,** 5 bd. Jean-Jaurès (✆ **08-92-70-12-06**).

Transatlantic and intercontinental flights land at **Aéroport Nice–Côte d'Azur** (✆ **08-20-42-33-33**). From there, municipal bus no. 98 departs at 30-minute intervals for the Gare Routière (see above); the one-way fare is 4€ ($5.80). Bus nos. 23 and 99 go to Gare SNCF. A **taxi** from the airport into the city center will cost at least 30€ to 40€ ($44–$58) each way. Trip time is about 30 minutes.

VISITOR INFORMATION Nice maintains three tourist offices, the largest and most central of which is at 5 promenade des Anglais, near place Masséna (✆ **08-92-70-74-07;** fax 04-92-14-46-49; www.nicetourisme.com).

GETTING AROUND Most local buses serve the **Station Central SNCF,** 10 av. Félix-Faure (✆ **04-93-13-53-13;** www.voyages-sncf.com), a very short walk from the place Masséna. Municipal buses charge 1€ ($1.50) for a ride within Greater Nice. Bus nos. 2 and 12 make frequent trips to the beach.

No point within downtown Nice is more than about a 10-minute walk from the seafronting promenade, site of such well-known quays as the promenade des Anglais and the promenade des Etats-Unis. Buses nos. 2 and 12 run along its length, dropping passengers off at any of the beaches and concessions that front the edge of the sea.

The best place to rent bikes and mopeds is **Energy Scoot,** Promenade des Anglais (✆ **04-97-07-12-64**), just behind the place Grimaldi. Open Monday to Friday 9am to noon and 2 to 7pm, it charges 15€ ($22) per day for a bike or moped and requires a deposit of at least 55€ ($80), depending on the value of the machine you rent. Somewhat less appealing, but useful when Energy Scoot is closed, is **Nicea Rent,** 12 rue de Belgique (✆ **04-93-82-42-71**). It charges about the same rates, but the staff isn't always on the premises.

WHERE TO STAY

Hôtel de la Mer *Value* In the center of Old Nice, this place was built around 1910, transformed into a hotel in 1947, and renovated in 1993. Despite that, it manages to keep prices low. Ms. Feri Forouzan, the owner, welcomes you with personal charm. Most guest rooms are of good size, each with a small bathroom with shower. It's a 2-minute walk to the promenade des Anglais and the seafront. Breakfast is served in one of the public salons or in your room.

4 place Masséna, Nice 06000. ✆ **04-93-92-09-10.** Fax 04-93-85-00-64. hotel-mer@wanadoo.fr. 12 units. 55€–82€ ($80–$119) double. AE, MC, V. Parking 12€ ($17) in nearby lot. Bus: 3, 9, 10, or 12. **Amenities:** Room service; massage. *In room:* A/C, TV.

Hôtel Gounod ★ A winning choice in the city center, this hotel is a 5-minute walk from the sea. It was built around 1910 in a neighborhood where the street names honor composers. The Gounod boasts ornate balconies, a domed roof, and an elaborate canopy of wrought iron and glass. The attractive lobby and adjoining lounge are festive and stylish, with old prints, copper flowerpots, and antiques. The high-ceilinged guest rooms are quiet; most overlook the gardens of private homes. The tiled bathrooms are small but efficiently organized, mainly with shower units. Suites have safes. Guests have free unlimited use of the pool and Jacuzzi at the Hôtel Splendid, next door.

3 rue Gounod, Nice 06000. ✆ **04-93-16-42-00.** Fax 04-93-88-23-84. www.gounod-nice.com. 45 units. 130€–140€ ($189–$203) double; 240€ ($348) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 14€ ($20). Closed Nov 20–Dec 20. Bus: 8. **Amenities:** Bar; outdoor pool; gym; Jacuzzi; sauna; room service; massage; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer.

Hôtel Negresco ★★★ One of the Riviera's superglamorous hotels, this Victorian wedding-cake hotel is named after its founder, Henry Negresco, a Romanian who died franc-less in Paris in 1920. It was built on the seafront, in the French château style, with a mansard roof and domed tower. Its decorators scoured Europe to gather antiques, tapestries, and art. Some of the guest rooms are outfitted in homage to the personalities who stayed here: the Coco Chanel Room, for example. Suites and public areas are even grander; they include the Louis XIV salon, reminiscent of the Sun King, and the Napoleon III suite, where swagged walls, a leopard-skin carpet, and a half-crowned canopy create a sense of majesty. The most expensive rooms with balconies face the Mediterranean. The staff wears 18th-century costumes. The beach is private. Its restaurant, **Le Chantecler** (reviewed below), is one of the Riviera's best.

37 promenade des Anglais, Nice Cedex 06007. ✆ **04-93-16-64-00.** Fax 04-93-88-35-68. www.hotel-negresco-nice.com. 145 units. 356€–571€ ($516–$828) double; 766€–921€ ($1,111–$1,335) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; fitness center; secretarial services; room service; massage; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer.

La Pérouse ★ *Finds* Once a prison, La Pérouse is a unique Riviera hotel. Set on a cliff, it's built right in the gardens of an ancient château-fort. No hotel affords a better view over both the old city and the Baie des Anges. Many people stay here for the view alone. The hotel is like an old Provençal home, with low ceilings, white walls, and antiques. Most of the lovely rooms have loggias overlooking the bay. The spacious rooms are beautifully furnished, often with Provençal fabrics. The bathrooms are large and done in Boticino marble.

11 quai Rauba-Capéu, Nice 06300. ✆ **04-93-62-34-63.** Fax 04-93-62-59-41. www.hotel-la-perouse.com. 62 units. 225€–465€ ($326–$674) double; from 675€ ($979) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 24€ ($35). **Amenities:** Restaurant (mid-Apr to mid-Oct); bar; outdoor pool; exercise room; Jacuzzi; sauna; room service; babysitting; laundry service; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

WHERE TO DINE

La Merenda ★★ *Finds* NIÇOISE Because there's no phone, you have to go by this place twice: once to make a reservation and once to dine. It's worth the effort. Forsaking his chef's crown at Chantecler (see above), Dominique Le Stanc opened this tiny bistro serving sublime cuisine. Though he was born in Alsace, his heart and soul belong to the Mediterranean, the land of black truffles, wild morels, sea bass, and asparagus. His food is a lullaby of gastronomic unity, with texture, crunch, richness, and balance. Look for specials on a chalkboard. Perhaps you'll find stuffed cabbage, fried zucchini flowers, or oxtail flavored with fresh oranges. Lamb from the Sisteron is cooked until it practically falls from the bone. Raw artichokes are paired with a salad of mâche. Service is discreet and personable. We wish we could dine here every day.

4 rue Terrasse. No phone. Reservations required. Main courses 35€–48€ ($51–$70). No credit cards. Mon–Fri seatings at 7:15 and 9:15pm. Closed Feb 5–13 and Aug 1–15. Bus: 8.

La Zucca Magica ★ *Finds* VEGETARIAN/ITALIAN The chef at this popular harborside restaurant has been named best Italian chef in Nice. That this honor should go to a vegetarian restaurant was the most startling part of the news. Chef Marco certainly has a fine pedigree—he's a relative of Luciano Pavarotti. He serves refined, creative cuisine at reasonable prices, using recipes from Italy's Piedmont region and updating them with no meat or fish. You'll have to trust Marco, because everyone is served the same meal. You can count on savory cuisine using lots of herbs, Italian cheeses, beans, and pasta.

4 bis quai Papacino. ✆ **04-93-56-25-27.** Reservations recommended. Fixed-price lunch 17€ ($25); fixed-price dinner 29€ ($42). No credit cards. Tues–Sat 12:30–2pm and 7pm–midnight.

Le Chantecler ★★★ TRADITIONAL/MODERN FRENCH This is Nice's most prestigious and best restaurant. Panels removed from a château in Puilly-Fussé cover the walls, and a Regency-style salon serves before- and after-dinner drinks. Much-respected chef Alain Llorca revised the menu to include the most sophisticated and creative dishes in Nice. They change almost weekly but may include turbot filet served with purée of broad beans, sun-dried tomatoes, and asparagus; roasted suckling lamb served with beignets of fresh vegetables and ricotta-stuffed ravioli; and a melt-in-your-mouth fantasy of marbled hot chocolate drenched in almond-flavored cream sauce.

In the Hôtel Negresco, 37 promenade des Anglais. ✆ **04-93-16-64-00.** Reservations required. Main courses 38€–110€ ($55–$160). AE, MC, V. Wed–Sun 12:30–2pm and 8–10pm. Closed Jan–Feb 7. Bus: 8, 9, 10, or 11.

IN & AROUND NICE

The wide **promenade des Anglais** fronts the bay. Split by "islands" of palms and flowers, it stretches for about 6.5km (4 miles). Fronting the beach are rows of grand cafes, the Musée Masséna, villas, and hotels—some good, others decaying.

In the east, the promenade becomes **quai des Etats-Unis,** lined with some of the best restaurants in Nice, all specializing in bouillabaisse. Rising sharply on a rock is the site known as **Le Château,** where the ducs de Savoie built their castle, torn down in 1706. The hill has been turned into a garden of pines and exotic flowers. To reach the site, you can take an elevator; many people take the elevator up, and then walk down. The park is open daily from 8am to dusk.

The center of Nice is **place Masséna,** with pink buildings in the 17th-century Genoese style and the **Fontaine du Soleil (Fountain of the Sun)** by Janoit. Stretching from the main square to the promenade is the **Jardin Albert-1er,** with an open-air terrace and a Triton Fountain. Palms and exotic flowers make this the most relaxing oasis at the resort.

A PAIR OF MUSEUMS WORTH A LOOK

Musée des Beaux-Arts ★★ The collection is housed in the former residence of the Ukrainian Princess Kotchubey. There's a gallery devoted to the masters of the Second Empire and the Belle Epoque. The gallery of sculptures includes works by J. B. Carpeaux, Rude, and Rodin. Note the important collection by a dynasty of painters, the Dutch Vanloo family. One of its best-known members, Carle Vanloo, born in Nice in 1705, was Louis XV's premier *peintre.* A fine collection of 19th- and 20th-century art includes works by Ziem, Raffaelli, Boudin, Renoir, Monet, Guillaumin, and Sisley.

33 av. des Baumettes. ✆ **04-92-15-28-28.** Admission 4€ ($5.80) adults, 2.50€ ($3.70) students, free for children under 18. Tues–Sun 10am–6pm. Bus: 3, 9, 12, 22, 24, 38, 60, or 62.

Musée International d'Art Naïf Anatole-Jakovsky (Museum of Naïve Art) ★ This museum is in the Château Ste-Hélène in the Fabron district. The museum's namesake, for years one of the world's leading art critics, once owned the collection. His 600 drawings and canvases were turned over to the institution and made accessible to the public. Artists from more than two dozen countries are represented here—from primitive painting to 20th-century works.

Château St-Hélène, av. de Fabron. ✆ **04-93-71-78-33.** Admission 4€ ($5.80) adults, 2.50€ ($3.70) seniors and students, free for children under 19. Wed–Mon 10am–6pm. Bus: 9, 10, 12, or 23; 10-min. walk. Closed Dec 25, Jan 1, and May 1.

A MUSEUM IN NEARBY CIMIEZ ★★

Founded by the Romans, who called it Cemenelum, Cimiez, a hilltop suburb 5km (3 miles) north of Nice, was the capital of the Maritime Alps province. Take bus no. 15 or 17 from place Masséna.

Musée Matisse ★ This museum honors the artist, who died in Nice in 1954. Seeing his nude sketches today, you'll wonder how early critics could have denounced them as "the female animal in all her shame and horror." The museum has several permanent collections. These include *Nude in an Armchair with a Green Plant* (1937), *Nymph in the Forest* (1935–42), and a chronologically arranged series of paintings from 1890 to 1919. The most famous of these is *Portrait of Madame Matisse* (1905), usually displayed near a 1900 portrait of the artist's wife by Marquet. There's also an ensemble of drawings and designs *(Flowers and Fruits)* he prepared as practice sketches for the Matisse Chapel at Vence. The most famous works are *The Créole Dancer* (1951), *Blue Nude IV* (1952), and around 50 dance-related sketches he did between 1930 and 1931.

In the Villa des Arènes-de-Cimiez, 164 av. des Arènes-de-Cimiez. ✆ **04-93-81-08-08.** Admission 4€ ($5.80) adults, 2.50€ ($3.70) students, free for children under 18. Wed–Mon 10am–6pm. Closed Jan 1, May 1, and Dec 25.

HITTING THE LINKS & OTHER OUTDOOR PURSUITS

GOLF The oldest golf course on the Riviera is about 16km (10 miles) from Nice: **Golf Bastide du Roi** (also known as the Golf de Biot), route d'Antibes, Biot (✆ **04-93-65-08-48**). Open daily, this is a flat, not particularly challenging seafront course. (Golfers must cross a highway twice before completing the full 18 holes.) Tee times are 8am to 6pm; you can play until the sun sets. Reservations aren't necessary, though on weekends you should probably expect to wait. Greens fees are 50€ ($73).

SCUBA DIVING The best outfit is the **Centre International de Plongée (CIP) de Nice,** 2 ruelle des Moulins (✆ **04-93-55-59-50**), adjacent to the city's old port, between quai des Docks and boulevard Stalingrad. A *baptême* (dive for first-timers) costs 30€ ($44). A one-tank dive for experienced divers, equipment included, is 35€ ($51); appropriate diver's certification is required.

TENNIS The oldest tennis club in Nice is the **Nice Lawn Tennis Club,** Parc Impérial, 5 av. Suzanne-Lenglen (✆ **04-92-15-58-00**). It's open daily 9am to 8pm from mid-October to mid-April (closed winter) and charges 15€ to 25€ ($22–$36) per person for 2 hours of court time. The club has a cooperative staff, a loyal clientele, 13 outdoor clay courts, and 6 outdoor hard-surface courts. There are no indoor courts. Reserve the night before.

NICE AFTER DARK

Nice has some of the most active nightlife along the Riviera; pick up a copy of ***La Semaine de Spectacles,*** which outlines the week's diversions. The major cultural center is the **Opéra de Nice,** 4 rue St-François-de-Paule (✆ **04-92-17-40-40**). It presents a full repertoire, with emphasis on serious, often large-scale operas. The opera hall is also the major venue for concerts and recitals. Tickets are available a day or two prior to any performance. You can show up at the box office (Mon–Sat 10am–5:30pm; Sun 10am–6pm) or buy tickets in advance with a credit card by phoning ✆ **04-92-17-40-40.** Tickets run from 11€ ($16) for nosebleed (and we mean it) seats to 95€ ($138) for front-and-center seats on opening night.

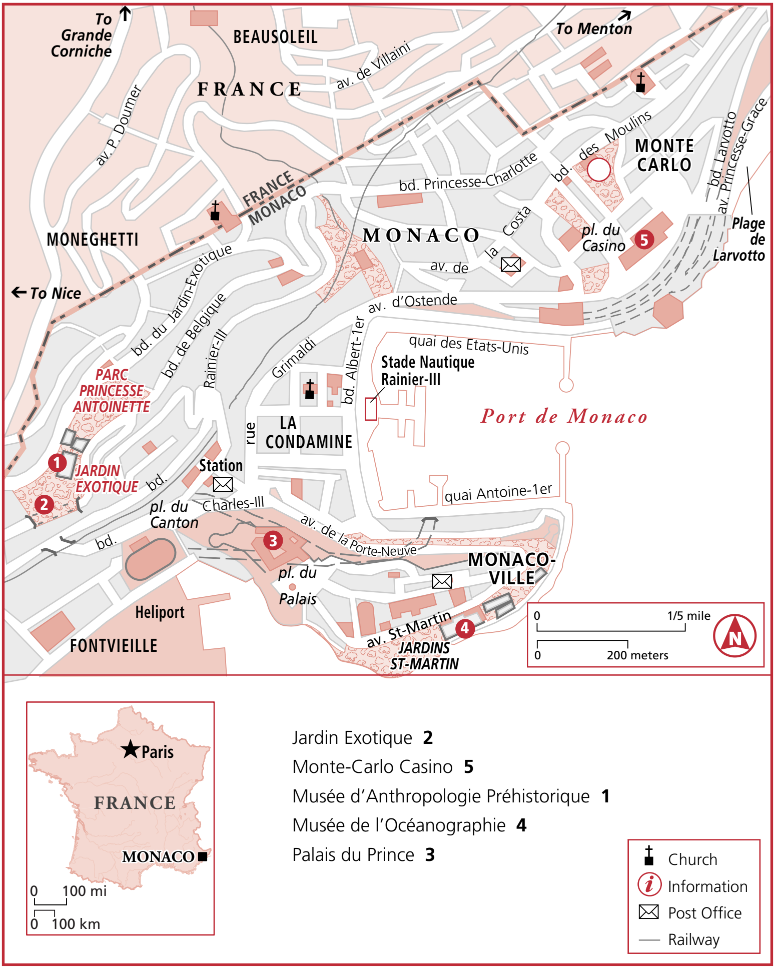
MONACO ★★★

Monaco—or rather its capital, Monte Carlo—has for a century been a symbol of glamour. The 1956 marriage of Prince Rainier III to American actress Grace Kelly enhanced its status. Although not always happy in her role, Princess Grace soon won the respect and adoration of her people. The Monégasques still mourn her death in a 1982 car accident.

Monaco became a property of the Grimaldi clan, a Genoese family, as early as 1297. With shifting loyalties, it has maintained something resembling independence ever since. In a fit of impatience, the French annexed it in 1793, but the ruling family recovered it in 1814, though the prince at the time couldn't bear to tear himself away from the pleasures of Paris for "dreary old Monaco."

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE Monaco has rail, bus, and highway connections from other coastal cities, especially Nice. **Trains** arrive every 30 minutes from Cannes, Nice, Menton, and Antibes. For more rail information, call ✆ **36-35,** or visit www.voyages-sncf.com. Monaco's underground railway station (Gare SNCF) is on place St. Devote. It's a long walk uphill from the train station to Monte Carlo. If you'd rather take a **taxi** but can't find one at the station, call ✆ **08-20-20-98-98.** There are no border formalities when entering Monaco from mainland France. Monaco is a lengthy **drive** from Paris. Take A6 south to Lyon. At Lyon, connect with A7 south to Aix-en-Provence and take A6 south directly to Monaco. If you're already on the Riviera, drive from Nice along N7 northeast. It's only 19km (12 miles), but with traffic, the drive can take 30 minutes.


To Grande Corniche
BEAUSOLEIL
FRANCE
av. de Villaini
To Menton
av. P. Doumer
bd. des Moulins
MONTE CARLO
bd. Larvotto
av. Princesse-Grace
bd. Princesse-Charlotte
FRANCE
MONACO
MONEGHETTI
MONACO
Costa
la
av. de
pl. du Casino
5
Plage de Larvotto
To Nice
bd. du Jardin-Exotique
bd. de Belgique
Rainier-III
Grimaldi
av. d'Ostende
bd. Albert-1er
quai des Etats-Unis
Stade Nautique Rainier-III
PARC PRINCESSE ANTOINETTE
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LA CONDAMINE
Port de Monaco
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JARDIN EXOTIQUE
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bd.
Station
pl. du Canton
Charles-III
quai Antoine-1er
bd.
av. de la Porte-Neuve
3
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pl. du Palais
Heliport
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Jardin Exotique 2
Monte-Carlo Casino 5
Musée d'Anthropologie Préhistorique 1
Musée de l'Océanographie 4
Palais du Prince 3
Church
Information
Post Office
Railway

VISITOR INFORMATION The **Direction du Tourisme et des Congrés** office is at 2A bd. des Moulins (✆ **92-16-61-16;** fax 92-16-61-16; www.visitmonaco.com). To call Monaco from France, dial **00** (the international access code), followed by Monaco's country code, **377,** and then the eight-digit local phone number.

WHERE TO STAY

Columbus Monaco Hotel ★★ *Value* In the Fontvieille sector of Monaco, this stylish, contemporary hotel faces Princess Grace's rose garden and the sea. Guest rooms are done in a style that evokes both Miami and London. Details include deluxe bed linens and Frette bathrobes. Each unit comes with a first-class tiled bathroom. The hotel is in a condo complex whose residents share the pool. A boat carries guests to a tranquil sandy beach nearby. The brasserie serves a fabulous antipasto buffet and savory pastas and pizzas; the lively bar, **Downstairs,** attracts a hip crowd, including Prince Albert.

23 av. des Papalins, Monaco 98000. ☎ **92-05-90-00.** Fax 92-05-23-86. www.columbushotels.com. 181 units. 285€–325€ ($413–$471) double; from 450€ ($653) suite. AE, MC, V. Parking 23€ ($30). **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; outdoor pool; fitness room; business center; salon/barber; room service; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, iron, safe.

Hôtel de Paris ★★★ On the resort's main plaza, opposite the casino, this is one of the world's most famous hotels. The facade has marble pillars, and the lounge has an Art Nouveau rose window at the peak of the dome. The decor includes marble pillars, statues, crystal chandeliers, Louis XVI chairs, and a wall-size mural. The guest rooms come in a variety of styles, with period or contemporary furnishings. Some are enormous. Elegant fabrics, rich carpeting, and classic accessories make this a favorite among the world's most discerning guests. Rooms facing the sea aren't as spacious as those in the rear.

Place du Casino, Monaco 98007. ☎ **92-16-30-00.** Fax 92-16-26-26. www.montecarloresort.com. 191 units. 410€–940€ ($595–$1,363) double; from 2,755€ ($3,995) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Valet parking 28€ ($41). **Amenities:** 3 restaurants (see "Where to Dine," below); bar; large indoor pool; fitness center; Thermes Marins spa offering thalassotherapy under medical supervision; 2 saunas; concierge; salon; room service; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Hôtel Mirabeau ★★ In the heart of Monte Carlo, the Mirabeau combines modern design with a refined atmosphere. Large mirrors, lighted closets, and sumptuous beds make staying here idyllic; many rooms have terraces with views over the Mediterranean. Although the newest rooms are as fine as those in the main building, many guests prefer older ones for their old-fashioned decor and street-front exposures. Bathrooms are well appointed.

1 av. Princesse-Grace, Monaco 98000. ☎ **92-16-65-65.** Fax 93-50-84-85. www.montecarloresort.com. 103 units. 350€–570€ ($508–$827) double; from 600€ ($870) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 24€ ($35). **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; outdoor pool; gym; sauna; room service; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, robes.

WHERE TO DINE

Le Louis XV ★★★ FRENCH/ITALIAN The Louis XV offers what one critic called "down-home Riviera cooking within a Fabergé egg." Star chef Alain Ducasse creates refined but not overly adorned cuisine, served by the finest staff in Monaco. Everything is light and attuned to the seasons, with an intelligent, modern interpretation of Provençal and northern Italian dishes. You'll find chargrilled breast of baby pigeon with sautéed duck liver, and everything from truffles and caviar to the best stewed salt cod on the coast.

In the Hôtel de Paris, place du Casino. ☎ **98-06-88-64.** Reservations recommended. Jacket and tie required for men. Main courses 60€–120€ ($87–$174); fixed-price lunch 125€ ($181); fixed-price dinner 180€–225€ ($261–$326). AE, MC, V. Thurs–Mon 12:15–1:45pm and 8–9:45pm; also June–Sept Wed 12:15–1:45pm. Closed Feb 12–Mar 27 and Nov 28–Dec 28.

Rampoldi ★ FRENCH/ITALIAN More than any other restaurant in Monte Carlo, Rampoldi is linked to the charming but somewhat dated interpretation of *La Dolce Vita.* Opened in the 1950s at the edge of the Casino Gardens and staffed with a mix of old and new, it's more Italian than French in spirit. It also serves some of the best cuisine in Monte Carlo. Menu items include an array of such pastas as tortelloni with cream and white-truffle sauce; sea bass roasted in a salt crust; ravioli stuffed with crayfish; and veal kidneys in Madeira sauce. Crêpes suzette makes a spectacular finish.

3 av. des Spélugues. ✆ **93-30-70-65.** Reservations required. Main courses 20€–45€ ($29–$65). AE, MC, V. Daily 12:15–2:30pm and 7:30–11pm.

EXPLORING MONACO

The second-smallest state in Europe (Vatican City is the tiniest), Monaco consists of four parts. The old town, **Monaco-Ville,** is on a promontory, "the Rock," 60m (200 ft.) high, and is the seat of the royal palace and the government building, as well as the home of the Oceanographic Museum. West of the bay, **La Condamine,** the 19th-century home of the Monégasques, is at the foot of the old town, forming its harbor and port sector. Up from the port (walking is steep in Monaco) is **Monte Carlo,** once the playground of European royalty and still the center for the wintering wealthy; it's the setting for the casino and its gardens and the deluxe hotels. The fourth part, **Fontvieille,** is a neat industrial suburb.

Monte-Carlo Beach, at the far frontier, is on French soil. It attracts a chic crowd, including movie stars.

The home of Monaco's royal family, the **Palais du Prince** ★, dominates the principality. On a tour of **Les Grands Appartements du Palais,** place du Palais (✆ **93-25-18-31**), you see the Throne Room and some of the art collection, including Brueghels and Holbeins, as well as Princess Grace's state portrait. The palace was built in the 13th century, and part of it is from the Renaissance. The ideal time to arrive is 11:55am, to watch the 10-minute changing of the guard. A combination ticket including admission to the **Musée du Palais du Prince (Souvenirs Napoléoniens et Collection d'Archives)** is 7€ ($10) adults, 3.50€ ($5.10) children 8 to 14, free for children under 8. The palace is open daily June to September from 9:30am to 6pm and in October from 10am to 5pm; closed to visitors from November to May. The museum keeps the same hours in high season and is also open on a reduced schedule in early November and from mid-December through May.

Jardin Exotique ★★, boulevard du Jardin-Exotique (✆ **93-15-29-80**), was built on the side of a rock and is known for its cactus collection. The gardens were begun by Prince Albert I, who was both a naturalist and a scientist. He spotted some succulents growing in the palace gardens and created the garden from them. You can also explore the grottoes here, as well as the **Musée d'Anthropologie Préhistorique** (✆ **93-15-29-80**), which is surrounded by the gardens. The view of the principality is splendid. Admission to the complex costs 7€ ($10) adults, 3.60€ ($5.20) children 6 to 18, free for children under 6. The gardens and museum are open daily from mid-May through mid-September from 9am to 7pm; mid-September through mid-May from 9am to 6pm. Closed November 15 to December 15.

Musée Océanographique de Monaco ★★, avenue St-Martin (✆ **93-15-36-00;** www.oceano.mc), was founded by Albert I, great-grandfather of the present prince. In the main rotunda is a statue of Albert dressed as a sea captain. Displayed are specimens he collected during 30 years of oceanographic expeditions. The aquarium, one of the finest in Europe, has more than 90 tanks, including Le Lagoon, a large holding tank for sharks. Hours are daily April through June and September from 9am to 7pm (July–Aug until 7:30pm); and October through March from 10am to 6pm. Admission is 13€ ($18) adults, 6€ ($8.70) children 6 to 18, free for children under 6.

TAKING A DIP & OTHER OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

BEACHES Just outside the border, on French soil, the **Monte-Carlo Beach Club** adjoins the Monte-Carlo Beach Hotel, 22 av. Princesse-Grace (✆ **04-93-28-66-66**).

The beach club has thrived for years; it's an integral part of Monaco's social life. Princess Grace used to come here in flowery swimsuits, greeting her friends and subjects with humor and style. You'll find two large pools (one for children), cabanas, a restaurant, a cafe, and a bar. As the temperature drops in late August, the beach closes for the winter. The admission charge of 50€ to 90€ ($73–$131), depending on the season, grants you access to the changing rooms, toilets, restaurants, and bar, and use of a mattress for sunbathing. A day's use of a cubicle, where you can lock up your street clothes, costs an extra 20€ to 27€ ($29–$39). A fee of 35€ to 90€ ($51–$131) will get you a day's use of a private cabana. Most socializing occurs around the pool's edges. As usual, topless is de rigueur, but bottomless isn't.

GOLF The prestigious **Monte Carlo Golf Club,** route N7, La Turbie (✆ **04-92-41-50-70;** open daily 8am–sunset), on French soil, is a par-72 course with scenic panoramas. Certain perks (including use of electric carts) are reserved for members. In order to play, nonmembers are asked to show proof of membership in another club and provide evidence of their handicap. Greens fees for 18 holes are 90€ ($131) Monday to Friday, 110€ ($160) Saturday and Sunday. Open daily 8am to sunset.

GAMBLING & OTHER AFTER-DARK DIVERSIONS

CASINOS **Sun Casino,** in the Monte Carlo Grand Hôtel, 12 av. des Spélugues (✆ **93-50-65-00**), is a huge room filled with one-armed bandits. It also features blackjack, craps, and American roulette. Additional slot machines are on the roof, with a wide view of the sea. Slot machines operate daily 11am to 4am, and gaming tables are open daily 5pm to 4am. Admission is free.

François Blanc developed the **Monte-Carlo Casino,** place du Casino (✆ **98-06-20-00**), into the most famous in the world, attracting the exiled aristocracy of Russia, Sarah Bernhardt, Mata Hari, King Farouk, and Aly Khan. The architect of Paris's Opéra Garnier, Charles Garnier, built the oldest part of the casino, and it remains an example of the 19th century's most opulent architecture. The building encompasses the casino and other areas for different kinds of entertainment, including a theater (Opéra de Monte-Carlo; see below) presenting opera and ballet. Baccarat, roulette, and chemin de fer are the most popular games, though you can play *le craps* and blackjack as well.

The casino's **Salle Américaine,** containing only slot machines, opens at 2pm Monday to Friday, noon on weekends. Doors for roulette and *trente et quarante* open at the same time. A section for roulette and chemin de fer opens at 3pm. Additional rooms open at 4pm with more roulette, craps, and blackjack. The gambling continues until very late or early, depending on the crowd. The casino classifies its "private rooms" as the more demure, nonelectronic areas without slots. To enter the casino, you must show a passport or other photo ID, and be at least 18. After 9pm, the staff will insist that men wear jackets and neckties for entrance to the private rooms.

Also on the premises is a **Cabaret,** in the Casino Gardens, where a well-rehearsed orchestra plays before the show. A performance featuring feathers, glitter, jazz dance, ballet, and Riviera-style seminudity begins at 10:30pm Wednesday to Saturday mid-September through June. For reservations, call ✆ **98-06-36-36.** Entrance to the cabaret costs 70€ ($102) and includes one drink and dinner.

The **Opéra de Monte-Carlo** is headquartered in the lavish, recently renovated Belle Epoque **Salle Garnier** of the casino. Tickets to the operas and other events scheduled inside range from 35€ to 120€ ($51–$174). Tickets to events within the Salle Garnier are available from a kiosk in the Atrium du Casino (✆ **98-06-28-28**), located within the casino; tickets can be purchased Tuesday through Saturday from 10am to 5:30pm.

8

Germany

by Darwin Porter & Danforth Prince

As Berlin has moved deep into the 21st century, rebuilding continues, especially in the dreary old "Cold War sector" East Berlin. Even so, Berlin has now solidly established itself as the capital of a unified Germany. What was once the city's biggest tourist attraction, the Berlin Wall, is now a bicycle path where Berliners push baby strollers. Restored baroque Munich, in the south, known as Germany's "secret capital," is the gateway to the Bavarian Alps and colorful alpine villages. For a taste of medieval Germany, explore the untouched towns of the Romantic Road and Ludwig II's fairy-tale castle of Neuschwanstein.

1 Berlin ★★★

When Heinrich Heine arrived in Berlin in 1819, he exclaimed, "Isn't the present splendid!" Were he to arrive today, he might make the same remark. Visitors who come by plane to Berlin see a splendid panorama. Few metropolitan areas are blessed with as many lakes, woodlands, and parks—these cover one-third of the city's area, and small farms with fields and meadows still exist in the city limits.

Berlin today is an almost completely modern city. Regrettably, Berlin is hardly the architectural gem that old-time visitors remember from the pre-Nazi era; it wasn't rebuilt with the same kind of care lavished on Munich and Cologne. But in spite of its decades-long "quadripartite status," it's a vibrant city, always receptive to new ideas, a major economic and cultural center, and a leader in development and research. Because of its excellent facilities, it is a favored site for trade fairs, congresses, and conventions.

Berlin today is shedding its dark history and reinventing itself as Europe's "capital of cool." Suddenly, it's hip to claim, "Ich bin ein Berliner." Nothing dramatizes the change more than the once dreary Potsdamer Platz, the so-called Times Square of Berlin. No longer a Cold War relic, it has blossomed into a showcase of modern architecture, dominated by the 25-story DaimlerChrysler building, whose viewing platform can be reached in only 20 seconds from the ground.

"No city on earth has gone through such a roller-coaster ride—from villain to victim, from horrors to heroics," said Richard Holbrooke, former U.S. ambassador to Germany. Today Berlin is the fourth-most-popular tourist destination in Europe, having surged past Madrid.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **By Plane** **Tegel Airport** is the city's busiest, serving most flights from the west.

Tempelhof Airport in Berlin, famous as the symbol of the Berlin Airlift, has closed. With its passing, one of the few examples of Nazi-era architecture fades. Its closing will make way for the expansion of the **Berlin-Schönefeld International Airport**, a former military base, which will be turned into the vastly enlarged **Berlin-Brandenburg International Airport**. Private bus shuttles among the three airports operate constantly so you can make connecting flights at different airports. Buses from each airport will also take you into the city center. For information on all three airports, call ✆ **0180/500-01-86** or visit www.berlin-airport.de.

By Train Frankfurt and Hamburg, among other cities, have good rail connections to Berlin. From Frankfurt to Berlin takes about 4 hours. Hamburg is now closer than ever, thanks to a high-speed InterCity Express train running between the two cities nonstop in 2 hours and 8 minutes. Eurailpass and GermanRail passes are valid. Most arrivals from western European and western German cities are at the **Bahnhof Zoologischer Garten** (✆ **030/250-025** for tourist information), the main train station, called "Bahnhof Zoo," in western Berlin. In the center of the city, close to the Kurfürstendamm, it's well connected for public transportation. Facilities include a tourist information counter dispensing free maps and tourist brochures, open daily from 10am to 7pm. The staff will make same-day hotel reservations for 4€ ($5.80).

Berlin has four other train stations, the **Berlin Hauptbahnhof, Berlin Lichtenberg Lehrterbahnhof,** and **Berlin Spandaubahnhof.** Call the railway information number at ✆ **0800/150-70-90** or visit http://bahn.hafas.de for information.

By Bus The operations center for several independent bus operators is headquartered within a central arrivals and departures point, the **ZOB Omnibusbahnhof am Funkturm,** Messedamm 6 (✆ **030/302-53-61**). Call for departure times and fare information for routes to and from other parts of Europe.

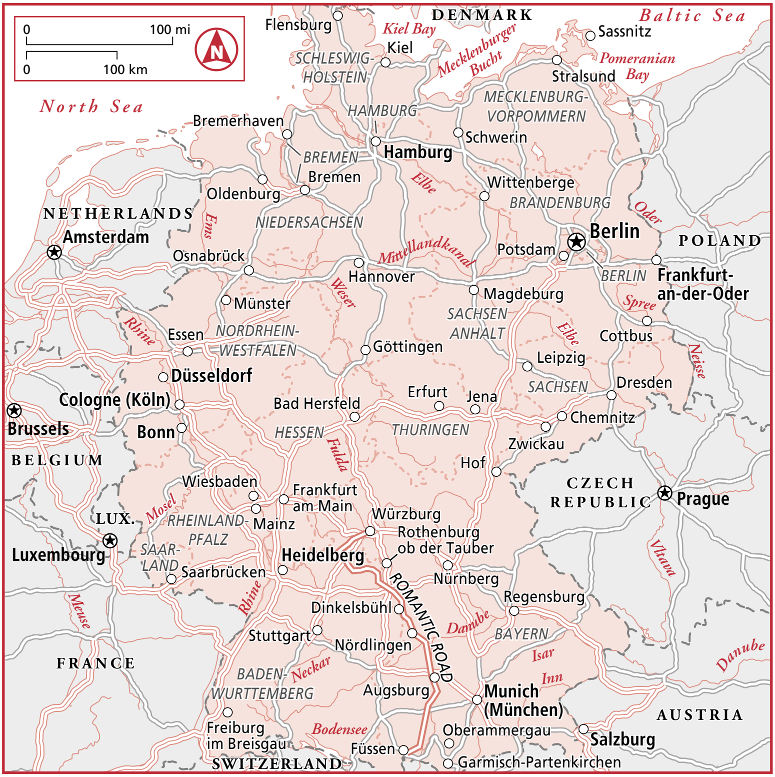
By Car From Frankfurt, take A-66 to Bad Herzfeld, and either go east on A-4 to pick up A-9 to Berlin, or continue on A-7 to Braunschweig and east on A-2 toward Berlin. North of Nürnberg, A-9 leads to Berlin. From Leipzig, take A-14 in the direction of Halle; at the intersection of A-9, head northeast into Berlin. From Dresden, head northeast on A-13 into Berlin. Expect heavy traffic delays on *Autobahnen,* especially on weekends and sunny days when everyone is out touring.

VISITOR INFORMATION **Tourist Office** For tourist information and hotel bookings, head for the **Berlin Tourist Information Center,** in the Europa-Center near the Memorial Church, entrance on the Budapesterstrasse side (✆ **030/25-00-24;** www.berlin-tourism.de), open Monday to Saturday from 10am to 7pm and Sunday from 10am to 6pm.

Websites Visit **www.berlin-info.de** for a virtual tour of Berlin's sights, but be aware that some of the links go to German-only pages. The site **www.hotelstravel.com/germany.html** not only provides detailed listings for hotels in Germany but also has links to related sites, like Ritz-Carlton and Relais & Châteaux, that offer lodging and general travel info.

CITY LAYOUT The center of activity in the western part of Berlin is the 3km-long (1¾-mile) **Kurfürstendamm,** called the Ku'damm by Berliners. Along this wide boulevard you'll find the best hotels, restaurants, theaters, cafes, nightclubs, shops, and department stores. The huge **Tiergarten,** the city's largest park, is crossed by Strasse des 17 Juni, which leads to the famed **Brandenburg Gate (Brandenburger Tor);** just north is the Reichstag. On the southwestern fringe of the Tiergarten is the **Zoologischer Garten (Berlin Zoo).** From the Ku'damm you can take Hardenbergstrasse,

Germany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MECKLENBURG-VORPOMMERN
HAMBURG
Bremerhaven
Schwerin
Hamburg
BREMEN
Bremen
Oldenburg
Elbe
Wittenberge
BRANDENBURG
NETHERLANDS
Ems
NIEDERSACHSEN
Oder
Berlin
Amsterdam
Mittellandkanal
Potsdam
POLAND
Osnabrück
Hannover
BERLIN
Frankfurt-an-der-Oder
Weser
Magdeburg
Münster
SACHSEN-ANHALT
Spree
Rhine
Essen
NORDRHEIN-WESTFALEN
Elbe
Cottbus
Göttingen
Neisse
Leipzig
Düsseldorf
SACHSEN
Dresden
Erfurt
Jena
Cologne (Köln)
Bad Hersfeld
Chemnitz
Brussels
Bonn
HESSEN
THURINGEN
Zwickau
Fulda
BELGIUM
Hof
Wiesbaden
CZECH REPUBLIC
Frankfurt am Main
Prague
LUX.
Mosel
RHEINLAND-PFALZ
Mainz
Würzburg
Rothenburg ob der Tauber
Vltava
Luxembourg
SAAR-LAND
Heidelberg
Saarbrücken
Nürnberg
ROMANTIC ROAD
Regensburg
Meuse
Rhine
Dinkelsbühl
Danube
Stuttgart
BAYERN
Nördlingen
Danube
Isar
FRANCE
BADEN-WURTTEMBERG
Neckar
Inn
Augsburg
Munich (München)
AUSTRIA
Freiburg im Breisgau
Bodensee
Oberammergau
Salzburg
Füssen
SWITZERLAND
Garmisch-Partenkirchen

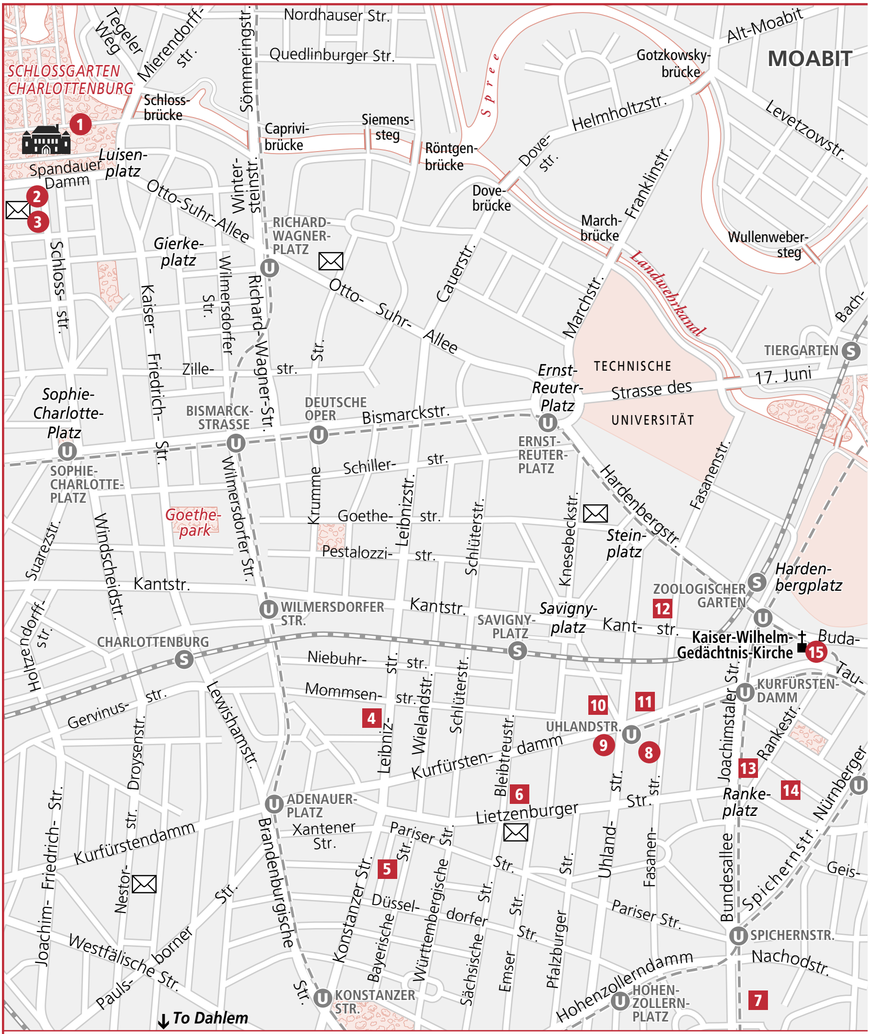
crossing Bismarckstrasse and traversing Otto-Suhr-Allee, which leads to **Schloss Charlottenburg,** one of your major sightseeing goals. The **Dahlem Museums** are on the southwestern fringe, often reached by going along Hohenzollerndamm.

The Brandenburg Gate is the start of Berlin's most celebrated street, **Unter den Linden,** the cultural heart of Berlin before World War II. The famous street runs from west to east, cutting a path through the city. It leads to **Museumsinsel (Museum Island),** where the most outstanding museums of eastern Berlin, including the Pergamon, are situated. As it courses along, Unter den Linden crosses another major Berlin artery, **Friedrichstrasse.** If you continue south along Friedrichstrasse, you'll reach the former location of **Checkpoint Charlie,** the famous border-crossing site of the Cold War days.

Unter den Linden continues east until it reaches **Alexanderplatz,** the center of eastern Berlin, with its Fernsehturm (TV tower). A short walk away is the restored **Nikolaiviertel (Nikolai Quarter),** a neighborhood of bars, restaurants, and shops that evoke life in the prewar days.

GETTING AROUND **By Public Transportation** The Berlin transport system consists of buses, trams, and U-Bahn and S-Bahn trains. The network is run by the **BVG** (✆ **030/1-94-49;** www.bvg.de), which operates an information booth outside the Bahnhof Zoo on Hardenbergplatz, open daily from 6am to 10pm. The staff will provide details about which U-Bahn (underground) or S-Bahn (elevated railway) line

Western Berlin



Tegeler Weg
Mierendorff-str.
Sömmeringstr.
Nordhauser Str.
Quedlinburger Str.
Spree
Alt-Moabit
Gotzkowsky-brücke
MOABIT
SCHLOSSGARTEN CHARLOTTENBURG
Schloss-brücke
Caprivi-brücke
Siemens-steg
Röntgen-brücke
Helmholtzstr.
Levetzowstr.
1
Spandauer Damm
Luisen-platz
Dove-str.
Dove-brücke
Franklinstr.
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Otto-Suhr-Allee
Winter-steinstr.
RICHARD-WAGNER-PLATZ
March-brücke
Wullenweber-steg
Gierke-platz
Schloss-str.
Kaiser-Friedrich-Str.
Wilmersdorfer Str.
Richard-Wagner-Str.
Otto-Suhr-Allee
Cauerstr.
Landwehrkanal
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Zille-str.
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Strasse des 17. Juni
Sophie-Charlotte-Platz
BISMARCK-STRASSE
DEUTSCHE OPER
Bismarckstr.
ERNST-REUTER-PLATZ
SOPHIE-CHARLOTTE-PLATZ
Schiller-str.
Krumme
Leibnizstr.
Hardenbergstr.
Fasanenstr.
Goethe-park
Goethe-str.
Schlüterstr.
Knesebeckstr.
Stein-platz
Suarezstr.
Windscheidstr.
Pestalozzi-str.
Kantstr.
Harden-bergplatz
ZOOLOGISCHER GARTEN
Holtzendorff-str.
WILMERSDORFER STR.
Kantstr.
SAVIGNY-PLATZ
Savigny-platz
Kant-str.
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CHARLOTTENBURG
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Gervinus-str.
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Rankestr.
Droysenstr.
Leibniz-str.
Kurfürsten-damm
Bleibtreustr.
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Joachim-Friedrich-Str.
ADENAUER-PLATZ
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Uhland-str.
Fasanen-str.
Ranke-platz
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Brandenburgische Str.
Pariser Str.
Lietzenburger Str.
Nestor-str.
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Württembergische
Sächsische Str.
Emser Str.
Pfalzburger Str.
Pariser Str.
Bundesallee
Spichernstr.
Geis-
SPICHERNSTR.
Westfälische Str.
Pauls-borner Str.
Bayerische
Hohenzollerndamm
Nachodstr.
HOHEN-ZOLLERN-PLATZ
7
KONSTANZER STR.
To Dahlem

ATTRACTIONS ●

Brandenburger Tor (Brandenburg Gate) **23**

Bröhan Museum **3**

Die Sammlung Berggruen: Picasso und Seine Zeit (The Berggruen Collection: Picasso and his Era) **2**

Gemäldegalerie (Picture Gallery) **21**

Jüdisches Museum Berlin **19**

Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church **15**

Käthe-Kollwitz Museum **8**

Kunstgewerbe Museum (Museum of Applied Arts) **22**

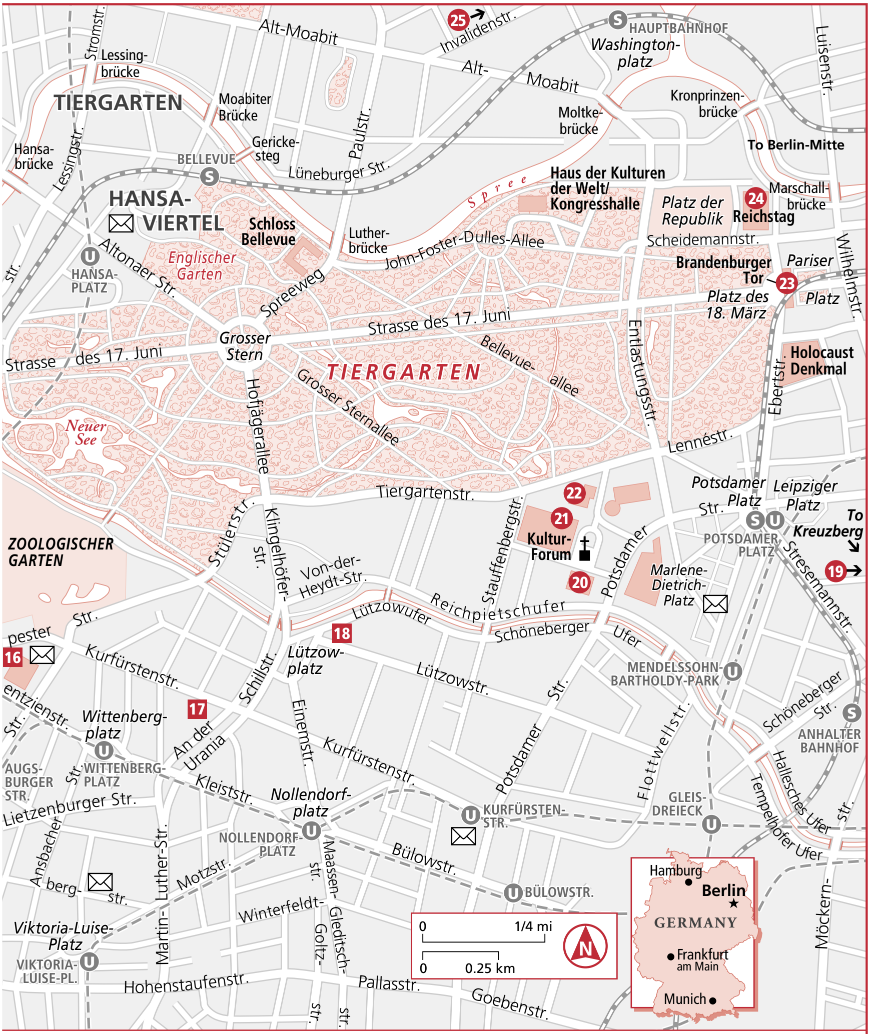
Museum für Gegenwart Hamburger Bahnhof **25**

Neue Nationalgalerie (New National Gallery) **20**

Reichstag **24**

Schloss Charlottenburg (Charlottenburg Palace) **1**

Story of Berlin **9**


TIERGARTEN
HANSA-VIERTEL
TIERGARTEN
Spree
HAUPTBAHNHOF
Washington-platz
To Berlin-Mitte
Alt-Moabit
Invalidenstr.
Luisenstr.
Lessing-brücke
Stromstr.
Moabiter Brücke
Gericke-steg
Hansa-brücke
Lessingstr.
BELLEVUE
Lüneburger Str.
Paulstr.
Moltke-brücke
Kronprinzen-brücke
Haus der Kulturen der Welt/ Kongresshalle
Platz der Republik
Reichstag
Marschall-brücke
Scheidemannstr.
Schloss Bellevue
Luther-brücke
John-Foster-Dulles-Allee
Brandenburger Tor
Pariser Platz
Wilhelmstr.
Platz des 18. März
HANSA-PLATZ
Altonaer Str.
Englischer Garten
Spreeweg
Strasse des 17. Juni
Grosser Stern
Bellevue-allee
Entlastungsstr.
Holocaust Denkmal
Ebertstr.
Grosser Sternallee
Hofjägerallee
Neuer See
Lennéstr.
Tiergartenstr.
Potsdamer Platz
Leipziger Platz
Potsdamer Str.
To Kreuzberg
ZOOLOGISCHER GARTEN
Stülerstr.
Klingelhöfer-str.
Von-der-Heydt-Str.
Stauffenbergstr.
Kultur-Forum
Potsdamer
POTSDAMER PLATZ
Stresemannstr.
Marlene-Dietrich-Platz
Reichpietschufer
Lützowufer
Schöneberger Ufer
Budapester Str.
Kurfürstenstr.
Lützow-platz
Lützowstr.
MENDELSSOHN-BARTHOLDY-PARK
Tauentzienstr.
Wittenberg-platz
Schillstr.
An der Urania
Einemstr.
Str.
Potsdamer
Flottwellstr.
Schöneberger Str.
ANHALTER BAHNHOF
Hallesches Ufer
Tempelhofer Ufer
AUGS-BURGER STR.
WITTENBERG-PLATZ
Kleiststr.
Nollendorf-platz
Kurfürstenstr.
GLEIS-DREIECK
Lietzenburger Str.
Ansbacher Str.
KURFÜRSTEN-STR.
NOLLENDORF-PLATZ
Maassen-str.
Bülowstr.
Nürnberger Str.
Motzstr.
Martin-Luther-Str.
BÜLOWSTR.
Möckern-str.
Hamburg
Berlin
GERMANY
Frankfurt am Main
Munich
Winterfeldt-str.
Goltz-str.
Gleditsch-str.
Viktoria-Luise-Platz
VIKTORIA-LUISE-PL.
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24
25

ACCOMMODATIONS ■

Art Nouveau **4**

Bleibtreu Hotel **6**

Brandenburger Hof Relais & Châteaux **14**

Grand Hotel Esplanade **18**

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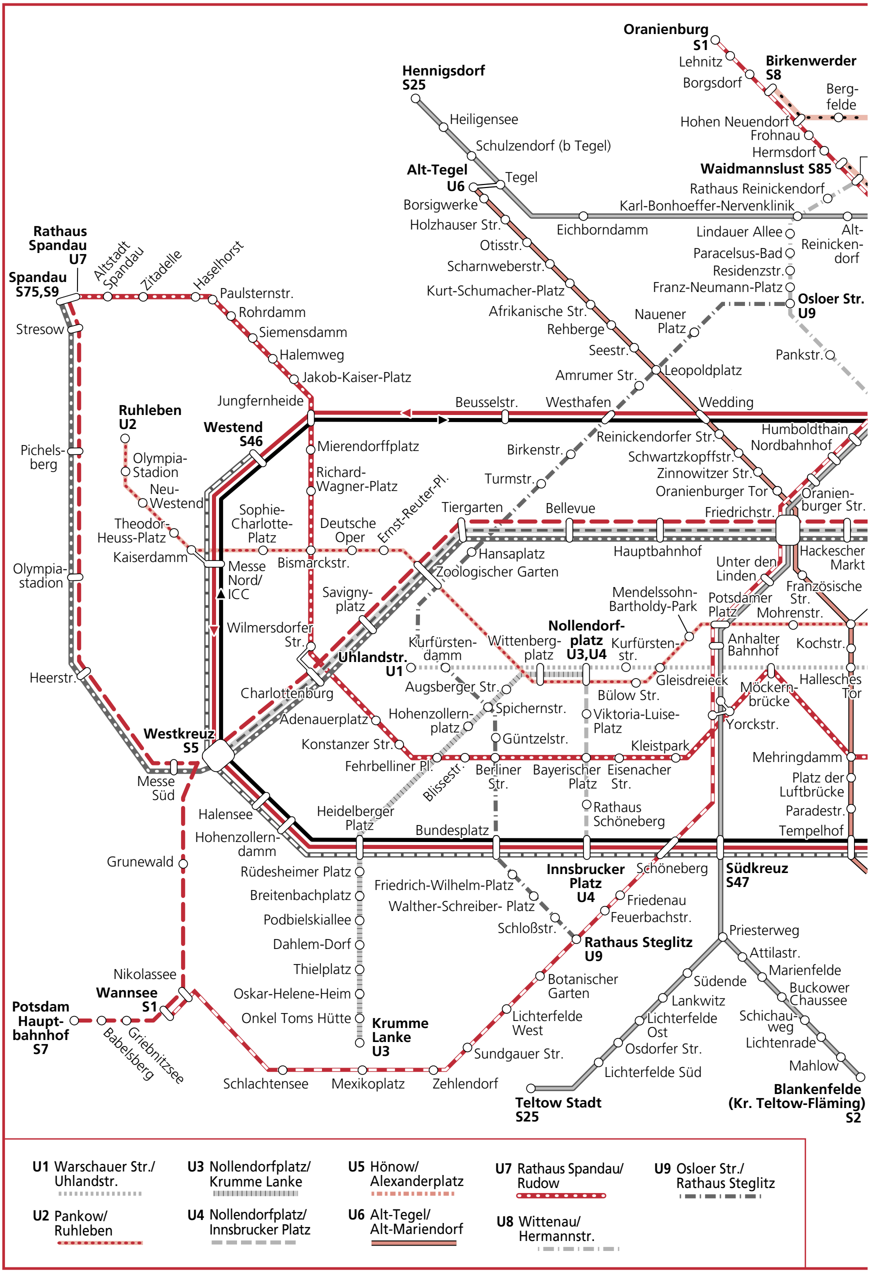
Sorat Art'otel **13**

✉ Post office

Ⓢ S-Bahn

Ⓤ U-Bahn

Berlin U-Bahn & S-Bahn


Oranienburg S1
Lehnitz
Borgsdorf
Birkenwerder S8
Berg-felde
Hohen Neuendorf
Frohnau
Hermsdorf
Waidmannslust S85
Rathaus Reinickendorf
Karl-Bonhoeffer-Nervenklinik
Alt-Reinicken-dorf
Lindauer Allee
Paracelsus-Bad
Residenzstr.
Franz-Neumann-Platz
Osloer Str. U9
Pankstr.
Hennigsdorf S25
Heiligensee
Schulzendorf (b Tegel)
Tegel
Alt-Tegel U6
Borsigwerke
Holzhauser Str.
Otisstr.
Scharnweberstr.
Kurt-Schumacher-Platz
Afrikanische Str.
Rehberge
Seestr.
Amrumer Str.
Eichborndamm
Nauener Platz
Leopoldplatz
Wedding
Westhafen
Beusselstr.
Jungfernheide
Humboldthain
Nordbahnhof
Reinickendorfer Str.
Schwartzkopffstr.
Zinnowitzer Str.
Oranienburger Tor
Oranien-burger Str.
Birkenstr.
Turmstr.
Rathaus Spandau U7
Spandau S75,S9
Altstadt Spandau
Zitadelle
Haselhorst
Paulsternstr.
Rohrdamm
Siemensdamm
Halemweg
Jakob-Kaiser-Platz
Stresow
Ruhleben U2
Olympia-Stadion
Neu-Westend
Westend S46
Mierendorffplatz
Richard-Wagner-Platz
Pichels-berg
Theodor-Heuss-Platz
Kaiserdamm
Sophie-Charlotte-Platz
Deutsche Oper
Ernst-Reuter-Pl.
Tiergarten
Bellevue
Friedrichstr.
Hackescher Markt
Hansaplatz
Hauptbahnhof
Zoologischer Garten
Unter den Linden
Olympia-stadion
Messe Nord/ ICC
Bismarckstr.
Savigny-platz
Mendelssohn-Bartholdy-Park
Potsdamer Platz
Französische Str.
Mohrenstr.
Wilmersdorfer Str.
Kurfürsten-damm
Wittenberg-platz
Nollendorf-platz U3,U4
Kurfürsten-str.
Anhalter Bahnhof
Kochstr.
Uhlandstr. U1
Gleisdreieck
Hallesches Tor
Heerstr.
Charlottenburg
Augsburger Str.
Bülow Str.
Möckern-brücke
Spichernstr.
Viktoria-Luise-Platz
Yorckstr.
Adenauerplatz
Hohenzollern-platz
Güntzelstr.
Westkreuz S5
Konstanzer Str.
Kleistpark
Mehringdamm
Fehrbelliner Pl.
Blissestr.
Berliner Str.
Bayerischer Platz
Eisenacher Str.
Platz der Luftbrücke
Messe Süd
Halensee
Heidelberger Platz
Rathaus Schöneberg
Paradestr.
Hohenzollern-damm
Bundesplatz
Tempelhof
Grunewald
Rüdesheimer Platz
Innsbrucker Platz U4
Schöneberg
Südkreuz S47
Breitenbachplatz
Friedrich-Wilhelm-Platz
Friedenau
Podbielskiallee
Walther-Schreiber- Platz
Feuerbachstr.
Dahlem-Dorf
Schloßstr.
Priesterweg
Rathaus Steglitz U9
Attilastr.
Thielplatz
Marienfelde
Nikolassee
Botanischer Garten
Südende
Buckower Chaussee
Wannsee S1
Oskar-Helene-Heim
Lankwitz
Potsdam Haupt-bahnhof S7
Onkel Toms Hütte
Lichterfelde West
Lichterfelde Ost
Schichau-weg
Babelsberg
Griebnitzsee
Krumme Lanke U3
Osdorfer Str.
Lichtenrade
Sundgauer Str.
Lichterfelde Süd
Mahlow
Schlachtensee
Mexikoplatz
Zehlendorf
Teltow Stadt S25
Blankenfelde (Kr. Teltow-Fläming) S2

U1 Warschauer Str./ Uhlandstr.

U2 Pankow/ Ruhleben

U3 Nollendorfplatz/ Krumme Lanke

U4 Nollendorfplatz/ Innsbrucker Platz

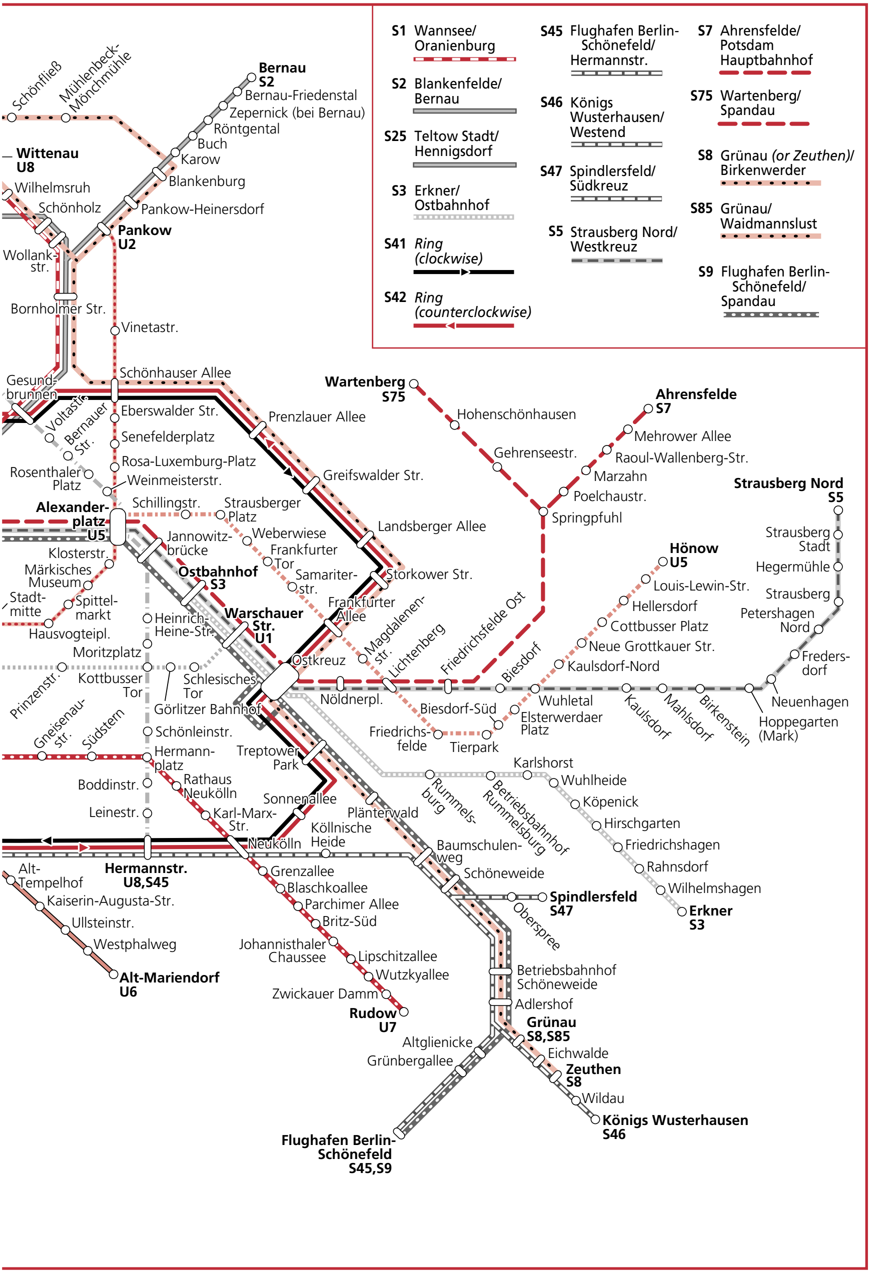
U5 Hönow/ Alexanderplatz

U6 Alt-Tegel/ Alt-Mariendorf

U7 Rathaus Spandau/ Rudow

U8 Wittenau/ Hermannstr.

U9 Osloer Str./ Rathaus Steglitz


S1 Wannsee/ Oranienburg
S2 Blankenfelde/ Bernau
S25 Teltow Stadt/ Hennigsdorf
S3 Erkner/ Ostbahnhof
S41 *Ring (clockwise)*
S42 *Ring (counterclockwise)*
S45 Flughafen Berlin-Schönefeld/ Hermannstr.
S46 Königs Wusterhausen/ Westend
S47 Spindlersfeld/ Südkreuz
S5 Strausberg Nord/ Westkreuz
S7 Ahrensfelde/ Potsdam Hauptbahnhof
S75 Wartenberg/ Spandau
S8 Grünau *(or Zeuthen)*/ Birkenwerder
S85 Grünau/ Waidmannslust
S9 Flughafen Berlin-Schönefeld/ Spandau
Schönfließ
Mühlenbeck-Mönchmühle
Bernau S2
Bernau-Friedenstal
Zepernick (bei Bernau)
Röntgental
Buch
Karow
Blankenburg
Pankow-Heinersdorf
Pankow U2
Wittenau U8
Wilhelmsruh
Schönholz
Wollankstr.
Bornholmer Str.
Vinetastr.
Gesundbrunnen
Schönhauser Allee
Eberswalder Str.
Senefelderplatz
Rosa-Luxemburg-Platz
Weinmeisterstr.
Voltastr.
Bernauer Str.
Rosenthaler Platz
Alexanderplatz U5
Schillingstr.
Strausberger Platz
Klosterstr.
Jannowitzbrücke
Weberwiese
Frankfurter Tor
Märkisches Museum
Ostbahnhof S3
Samariterstr.
Stadtmitte
Spittelmarkt
Hausvogteipl.
Heinrich-Heine-Str.
Warschauer Str. U1
Moritzplatz
Prinzenstr.
Kottbusser Tor
Schlesisches Tor
Görlitzer Bahnhof
Schönleinstr.
Gneisenaustr.
Südstern
Hermannplatz
Rathaus Neukölln
Boddinstr.
Leinestr.
Karl-Marx-Str.
Neukölln
Treptower Park
Sonnenallee
Ostkreuz
Nöldnerpl.
Prenzlauer Allee
Greifswalder Str.
Landsberger Allee
Storkower Str.
Frankfurter Allee
Magdalenenstr.
Lichtenberg
Friedrichsfelde Ost
Biesdorf
Wuhletal
Kaulsdorf
Mahlsdorf
Birkenstein
Hoppegarten (Mark)
Neuenhagen
Fredersdorf
Petershagen Nord
Strausberg
Hegermühle
Strausberg Stadt
Strausberg Nord S5
Wartenberg S75
Hohenschönhausen
Gehrenseestr.
Springpfuhl
Ahrensfelde S7
Mehrower Allee
Raoul-Wallenberg-Str.
Marzahn
Poelchaustr.
Hönow U5
Louis-Lewin-Str.
Hellersdorf
Cottbusser Platz
Neue Grottkauer Str.
Kaulsdorf-Nord
Elsterwerdaer Platz
Biesdorf-Süd
Tierpark
Friedrichsfelde
Karlshorst
Wuhlheide
Köpenick
Hirschgarten
Friedrichshagen
Rahnsdorf
Wilhelmshagen
Erkner S3
Rummelsburg
Betriebsbahnhof Rummelsburg
Plänterwald
Köllnische Heide
Baumschulenweg
Schöneweide
Spindlersfeld S47
Oberspree
Betriebsbahnhof Schöneweide
Adlershof
Grünau S8,S85
Eichwalde
Zeuthen S8
Wildau
Königs Wusterhausen S46
Altglienicke
Grünbergallee
Flughafen Berlin-Schönefeld S45,S9
Alt-Tempelhof
Hermannstr. U8,S45
Kaiserin-Augusta-Str.
Ullsteinstr.
Westphalweg
Alt-Mariendorf U6
Grenzallee
Blaschkoallee
Parchimer Allee
Britz-Süd
Johannisthaler Chaussee
Lipschitzallee
Wutzkyallee
Zwickauer Damm
Rudow U7

Value The Welcome Card

If you're going to be in Berlin for a while, you can purchase a **WelcomeCard** granting holders certain discounts, especially on public transportation. A card valid for 48 hours costs 16€ ($23) or else 22€ ($31) for a 72-hour card. You also get free admission or price reductions up to 50% on sightseeing tours, museums, and other attractions. Reductions of 25% are granted at 10 of the city's theaters as well. It's valid for one adult and up to three children 14 or younger.

to take to various locations and the ticket options. You can also purchase tickets, including discount cards.

The **BVG standard ticket** *(Einzelfahrschein)* is 2.10€ to 2.60€ ($3–$3.80) and is valid for 2 hours of transportation in all directions, transfers included. Also available at counters and vending machines is a 24-hour ticket; the price is 6€ to 10€ ($8.70–$15). On buses, only standard tickets can be purchased, and tram tickets must be purchased in advance. Tickets should be kept until the end of the journey; otherwise, you'll be liable for a fine of 40€ ($58).

By Taxi Taxis are available throughout Berlin. The meter starts at 2.50€ ($3.63), plus 1.50€ ($2.20) per kilometer (½ mile) after that. After 7km (4⅓ miles), the fare is 1€ ($1.45) per kilometer. Visitors can flag down taxis that have a T-sign illuminated. For a taxi, call ✆ **21-02-02,** 26-10-26, or 44-33-22.

By Car Touring Berlin by car isn't recommended. Free parking places are difficult to come by.

By Bicycle Berlin marks biking trails along major streets, especially in the leafy neighborhoods of the former West Berlin. A bike is also ideal for exploring old East Berlin, a city still in redevelopment. One of the best companies for rentals is **Bikes & Jeans** in Mitte at Friedrichstrasse 129 (✆ **030/447-6666**), renting bikes for 15€ ($22) for 24 hours.

FAST FACTS: Berlin

American Express Reiseland American Express offices are at Bayreuther Strasse 37 (✆ **030/21-47-6292;** U-Bahn: Wittenbergplatz), open Monday to Friday 9am to 7pm and Saturday 10am to 1pm; and Friedrichstrasse 172 (✆ **030/20-17-400;** U-Bahn: Friedrichstrasse or Stadtmitte), open Monday to Friday 9am to 6pm and Saturday 10am to 1pm.

Business Hours Most **banks** are open Monday to Friday 9am to 1 or 3pm. Most other **businesses** and **stores** are open Monday to Friday 9 or 10am to 6:30pm and Saturday 9am to 4pm. On *langer Samstag,* the first Saturday of the month, shops stay open until 4 or 6pm. Some stores observe late closing on Thursday, usually at 8:30pm.

Currency The long-standing German mark faded into history on January 1, 2002, giving way to the euro. Currently, the U.S. dollar and the European euro are trading at 1€ = $1.45, with slight daily fluctuations.

Currency Exchange You can exchange money at all airports, major department stores, any bank, and the American Express offices (see above).

Dentists & Doctors The Berlin tourist office in the Europa-Center (see "Visitor Information," p. 368) keeps a list of English-speaking dentists and doctors in Berlin. In case of a medical emergency, call ✆ **030/31-00-31** or Dental Emergency Service at ✆ **030/8900-4333.**

Drugstores If you need a pharmacy *(Apotheke)* at night, go to one on any corner. There you'll find a sign in the window giving the address of the nearest drugstore open at night. A central pharmacy is **Europa-Apotheke,** Osnabrücker Strasse 4 (✆ **030/3-44-56-56;** U-Bahn: Kurfürstendamm). It's open Monday to Friday 9am to 8pm and Saturday to 6pm.

Embassies & Consulates The embassy of the **United States** is at Neustaedtische Kirchstrasse 4–5 (✆ **030/2-38-51-74;** U-Bahn: Friedrichstrasse), and a consulate at Clayallee 170 (✆ **030/8-32-92-33;** U-Bahn: Hüttenweg). Hours are Monday to Friday 8:30am to 4pm. The **British embassy** is at Wilhelmstrasse 70–71 (✆ **030-20457-0;** U-Bahn: Friedrichstrasse), open Monday to Friday 9am to noon and 2 to 4pm. The embassy of **Australia** is at Wall Strasse 76–79 (✆ **030/8-80-08-80;** U-Bahn: Märkisches Museum). Hours are Monday to Thursday 8:30am to 5:30pm, Friday 8:30am to 4:15pm. **Canada** maintains a consulate at Friedrichstrasse 95 (✆ **030/20-31-20;** U-Bahn: Friedrichstrasse). Hours are Monday to Friday 9am to noon and 1:30 to 4pm by appointment. The embassy of **New Zealand** is at Friedrichstrasse 60 (✆ **030/20-62-10;** U-Bahn: Friedrichstrasse). Hours are Monday to Friday 9am to 1pm and 2 to 5:30pm. The consulate of **Ireland** is at Friedrichstrasse 200 (✆ **030/22-07-20;** U-Bahn: Friedrichstrasse). Hours are Monday to Friday 9:30am to 12:30pm and 2:30 to 4:45pm.

Emergencies Call the police at ✆ **110;** dial ✆ **112** to report a fire or to call an ambulance.

Internet Access If you're feeling out of touch, visit **Easy Internet Café,** Kurfürstendamm 224 (✆ **030/88-70-79-70;** U-Bahn: Kurfürstendamm, bus no. 109 or 129). Open 24 hours daily.

Post Office You'll find post offices scattered throughout Berlin, with particularly large branches positioned at Bahnhof Zoo, Hardenbergplatz (U-Bahn: Zoologischer Garten); at both Tegel and Schönefeld airports; at the main railway station (Hauptbahnhof); and in the town center at Joachimstalerstrasse 10. With a limited number of exceptions, most post offices in Germany are open Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm and Saturday from 8am to 1pm. None of them receives direct telephone calls from the public, but if you're interested in postal rates and procedures, go to www.deutschepost.de or call ✆ **0180/23-333** for information about postal procedures throughout Germany. Unlike the old days, German post offices no longer offer the use of pay telephones for long-distance calls, and no longer send international telegrams. (A limited number, however, offer telegram service for destinations within Germany.) When you enter a German post office, know in advance that the yellow-painted windows are for issues about the mail; and that the blue-painted windows are for issues associated with money orders and banking rituals. If you just want to buy a stamp for mailing a letter, it's usually more convenient to buy it at any of thousands of small stores, newsstands, or tobacco shops throughout the country that stock them.

Safety Germany is a reasonably safe country in which to travel, although neo-Nazi skinheads have sometimes attacked black or Asian travelers, especially in the eastern part of the country. One of the most dangerous places, especially at night, is around the large railway stations of large cities, such as Berlin. Some beer halls get rowdy late at night.

Taxes As a member of the European Union, Germany imposes a tax on most goods and services known as the **value-added tax (VAT)** or, in German, ***Mehrwertsteuer.*** Nearly everything is taxed at 19%, including vital necessities such as gas or luxury items like jewelry. VAT is included in the price of restaurants and hotels. Note that goods for sale, such as cameras, also have the 19% tax already factored into the price; but the listed prices of services, such as having a mechanic fix your car, don't include VAT, so an extra 19% will be tacked on to your bill. Stores that display a TAX FREE sticker will issue you a Tax-Free Shopping Check at the time of purchase. You can then get a refund at one of the Tax-Free Shopping Service offices in the major airports and many train stations (and some of the bigger ferry terminals). Otherwise, send checks to Tax-Free Shopping Service, Mengstrasse 19, 23552 Lübeck, Germany.

Telephone The **country code** for Germany is **49;** the **city code** for Berlin is **30** for calls from outside Germany or **030** if you're calling within the country.

If you're going to make a lot of phone calls or wish to make an international call from a phone booth, you'll probably want to purchase a **phone card.** Phone cards are sold at post offices and newsstands. The 6.30€ ($9.15) card offers about 40 minutes, and the 28€ ($41) card is useful for long-distance calls. Simply insert them into the telephone slot. Phone cards are becoming so popular in Germany that many public phones no longer accept coins.

Tipping If a restaurant bill says *Bedienung,* that means a service charge has already been added, so just round up to the nearest euro. If not, add 10% to 15%. Round up to the nearest euro for taxis. Bellhops get 1€ ($1.45) per bag, as does the doorperson at your hotel, restaurant, or nightclub. Room cleaning staffs get small tips in Germany, as do concierges who perform some special favors such as obtaining hard-to-get theater or opera tickets. Tip hairdressers or barbers 5% to 10%.

WHERE TO STAY

ON OR NEAR THE KURFÜRSTENDAMM

Very Expensive

Brandenburger Hof Relais & Châteaux ★★★ Rooms at this white-fronted classic, though perhaps too severe and minimalist for some tastes, are among the most stylish in the city. This is authentic Bauhaus—torchiere lamps, black leather upholstery, and platform beds. French doors open to small balconies, but not on the top floors. Bathrooms are spacious, with large tub/shower combos. Housekeeping is among the finest in Berlin, and there's state-of-the-art security.

Eislebener Strasse 14, 10789 Berlin. ✆ **030/21-40-50.** Fax 030/21-40-51-00. www.brandenburger-hof.com. 82 units. 270€–325€ ($392–$471) double; 395€–530€ ($573–$769) suite. Rates include breakfast buffet. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 21€ ($30). U-Bahn: Kurfürstendamm or Augsburger Strasse. S-Bahn: Zoologischer Garten. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; piano bar; room service; massage; babysitting; laundry service/valet/dry cleaning. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer, Wi-Fi.

Grand Hotel Esplanade ★★★ The Esplanade rivals the Kempinski for supremacy in Berlin. Rooms are spacious, bright, and cheerfully decorated, with sound insulation. Beds are large with quality linens and duvets. Bathrooms, which contain tub/shower combos, are among the city's most luxurious. When reserving, ask for one of the corner rooms, as they're the biggest and have the best views. Even if you don't stay here, stop in for a drink at the elegant **Harry's New York Bar,** or go native at the traditional German **EckKneipe.**

Lützowufer 15, 10785 Berlin. ✆ **866/597-8341** or 030/25-47-80. Fax 030/254-78-82-22. www.esplanade.de. 386 units. 129€–144€ ($187–$209) double; from 209€ ($303) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 21€ ($30). U-Bahn: Kurfürstenstrasse, Nollendorfplatz, or Wittenbergplatz. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; 2 bars; indoor pool; whirlpool; sauna; room service; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms; solarium; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, kitchenettes (in some), minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

Kempinski Hotel Bristol Berlin ★★★ The legendary Kempinski, or "Kempi," is matched in style only by the Grand Hotel Esplanade. Rooms range in size from medium to spacious. Furnishings are elegant and the mattresses firm. The cheapest (and smallest) rooms are called the Berlin rooms. The high-category Bristol rooms are larger and better appointed, and the finest accommodations of all are refined Kempinski rooms. Each room has a spacious bathroom with tub/shower combos, dual basins, scales, shoehorns, and deluxe toiletries.

Kurfürstendamm 27, 10719 Berlin. ✆ **800/426-3135** in the U.S., or 030/88-43-40. Fax 030/88-360-75. www.kempinski.com. 302 units. 138€–427€ ($200–$619) double; 170€–895€ ($247–$1,298) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 25€ ($36). U-Bahn: Kurfürstendamm. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; indoor pool; fitness room; sauna; room service; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms; solarium; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

Expensive

Savoy ★ If you don't demand the full-service facilities of the grander choices, this is the hotel for you. In general, rooms are a bit small but they are comfortable nonetheless, with such features as double-glazed windows and fine furnishings. Bathrooms are decent sizes, are maintained spotlessly, and contain tub/shower combos. For a nightcap, try the cozy **Times Bar.**

Fasanenstrasse 9–10, 10623 Berlin. ✆ **800/223-5652** in the U.S. and Canada, or 030/3-11-0-30. Fax 030/3-11-03-333. www.hotel-savoy.com. 125 units. 146€–277€ ($212–$402) double; 178€–317€ ($258–$460) suite. Children 11 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 13€ ($19). U-Bahn: Kurfürstendamm. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; sauna; theater ticket desk; car rental; room service; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer, trouser press, safe, Wi-Fi.

Moderate

Art Nouveau *Finds* On the fourth floor of an Art Nouveau apartment house, this little-known hotel is an atmospheric choice. Even the elevator is a historic gem of the upmarket and desirable neighborhood. Art Nouveau was fully renovated in 1998. The comfortable midsize rooms are pleasantly decorated and high ceilinged, with excellent beds and bathrooms with tub/shower combinations. Rooms in the rear are more tranquil except when the schoolyard is full of children. There's an honor bar in the lobby where guests keep track of their own drinks. A generous breakfast is the only meal served.

Leibnizstrasse 59, 10629 Berlin. ✆ **030/3-27-74-40.** Fax 030/327-744-40. www.hotelartnouveau.de. 20 units. 126€–176€ ($183–$255) double; 176€–236€ ($255–$342) suite. AE, MC, V. Rates include breakfast. Parking 5€ ($7.25). U-Bahn: Adenauerplatz. **Amenities:** Laundry/dry cleaning service; all nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV, hair dryer.

Bleibtreu Hotel ★ Hidden away from the bustle of Berlin, this is a trend-conscious choice. Its tiny lobby is accessible via an alleyway that leads past a garden and a big-windowed set of dining and drinking facilities. The setting is the labyrinthine premises of what was built long ago as a Jugendstil-era apartment house. Rooms are small, minimalist, and furnished in carefully chosen natural materials. Bathrooms are cramped but well designed with tub/shower combos.

Bleibtreustrasse 31, 10707 Berlin (1 block south of the Kurfürstendamm). ✆ **030/88474-0.** Fax 030/88474-444. www.bleibtreu.com. 60 units. 124€–227€ ($180–$329) double. AE, DC, MC, V. No parking. U-Bahn: Uhlandstrasse. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; steam bath; room service; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

Inexpensive

Hotel-Pension Bregenz This dignified pension occupies the fourth and sunniest floor of a four-story apartment building, accessible by elevator. The owner, Mr. Zimmermann, works hard to maintain the cleanliness and charm of his comfortably furnished, relatively large rooms. Double doors help minimize noise from the public corridors outside. A continental breakfast is served each morning in a small dining area. The staff assists guests in reserving tickets for shows and tours.

Bregenzer Strasse 5, 10707 Berlin. ✆ **030/8-81-43-07.** Fax 030/8-82-40-09. www.hotelbregenz-berlin.de. 14 units, 11 with bathroom (shower only). 62€ ($90) double without bathroom; 70€–90€ ($102–$131) double with bathroom. Rates include breakfast. MC, V. Parking 3€ ($4.35). S-Bahn: Savignyplatz. U-Bahn: Adenauerplatz. **Amenities:** All nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

Pension München This pension occupies only part of the third floor of a massive four-story building (with an elevator) erected as an apartment house in 1908. It offers a simple but tasteful decor of modern furnishings accented with fresh flowers. The small rooms are clean and color-coordinated, with bathrooms containing shower stalls, contemporary furnishings, and prints and engravings by local artists. Look for sculptures by the owner, an artist, in some of the public areas as well. Note that if no rooms are available at this place, you're likely to be recommended to a similar pension.

Guntzelstrasse 62 (close to Bayerischer Platz), 10717 Berlin. ✆ **030/8-57-91-20.** Fax 030/85-79-12-22. www.hotel-pension-muenchen-in-berlin.de. 8 units. 78€–98€ ($113–$142) double. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking is available on the street. U-Bahn: Guntzelstrasse. *In room:* TV, Wi-Fi.

NEAR THE MEMORIAL CHURCH & ZOO

Expensive

Palace Berlin ★ The stylish and comfortable Palace is much improved over recent years. However, in some rooms, the double-glazing on the windows is unable to deafen the noise from the adjacent Europa-Center. Rooms range from medium to spacious, each with deluxe bed. The best are in the Casino Wing. Bathrooms are medium-size, most often with tub/shower combo (sometimes with shower only).

In the Europa-Center, Budapesterstrasse 45, 10787 Berlin. ✆ **800/457-4000** in the U.S., or 030/2-50-20. Fax 030/2502-1161. www.palace.de. 282 units. 159€–189€ ($231–$274) double; from 395€–495€ ($573–$718) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 21€ ($30). U-Bahn: Zoologischer Garten. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; 2 bars; indoor pool; large health club; sauna; room service; nonsmoking rooms; solarium; 1 room for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, trouser press, safe, Wi-Fi.

Sorat Art'otel ★ Those partial to the more famous and highly regarded Brandenburger Hof (see above) also like this tasteful, discreet hotel. Chic and avant-garde, the Sorat is unlike any other hotel in Berlin. Rooms, all medium-size, are minimalist, with a touch of industrial design. Although they will not please clients seeking a traditional Berlin hotel, modernists will be at home with the pedestal tables evoking cable spools and chrome-legged furnishings, and everyone will appreciate the large beds. Bathrooms are generously proportioned with showers.

Joachimstalerstrasse 29, 10719 Berlin. ✆ **030/88-44-70.** Fax 030/88-44-77-00. www.sorat-hotels.com. 133 units. 90€–240€ ($131–$348) double. Rates include buffet breakfast with champagne. Parking 12€ ($17). AE, DC, MC, V. U-Bahn: Kurfürstendamm. **Amenities:** Breakfast room; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer.

Moderate

Hecker's Hotel This hotel is near the Ku'damm and the many bars, cafes, and restaurants around the Savignyplatz. Rooms range from small to medium, but are fairly routine despite good beds. There's a sterility here but also up-to-date comfort and top-notch maintenance. Bathrooms are small, with shower units.

Grolmanstrasse 35, 10623 Berlin. ✆ **030/8-89-00.** Fax 030/8-89-02-60. www.heckers-hotel.de. 69 units. 140€–162€ ($203–$235) double; 330€–350€ ($479–$508) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 12€ ($17). U-Bahn: Uhlandstrasse. Bus: 109 from Tegel Airport to Uhlandstrasse or 119 from Tempelhof Airport. **Amenities:** Small restaurant; bar (roof dining in summer); room service; laundry service; nonsmoking rooms; 1 room for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

Hotel Sylter Hof Berlin This hotel offers rich trappings at good prices. The main lounges are warmly decorated in old-world style. The well-maintained rooms, most of which are singles, may be too small for most tastes, but the staff pay special attention to your comfort. Bathrooms are cramped but efficiently arranged, with tub/shower combos.

Kurfürstenstrasse 116, 10787 Berlin. ✆ **030/21-20-0.** Fax 030/21-20-200. www.sylterhof-berlin.de. 161 units. 129€ ($187) double; from 159€ ($231) suite. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 10€–50€ ($15–$73). U-Bahn: Wittenbergplatz. Bus: 119, 129, 146, or 185. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; coffee bar; nightclub next door; laundry/dry cleaning service. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer, Wi-Fi.

IN BERLIN-MITTE

Very Expensive

Hotel Adlon ★★★ Only steps from the Brandenburg Gate, this hotel is one of Berlin's premier addresses and is famous among celebrities. The large, beautifully appointed rooms contain king-size or twin beds. Bathrooms are spacious with tub/shower combos, deluxe toiletries, and a phone.

Unter den Linden 77, 10117 Berlin. ✆ **800/426-3135** in the U.S., or 030/22-61-0. Fax 030/22-61-22-22. www.hotel-adlon.de. 394 units. 420€–530€ ($609–$769) double; from 800€ ($1,160) junior suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 25€ ($36). S-Bahn: Unter den Linden. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; bar; indoor pool; health club; spa; room service; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

The Ritz-Carlton ★★★ One of Berlin's most glamorous and prestigious hotels opened in January 2004 at the Potsdamer Platz. The building evokes the Art Nouveau heyday of the New York City skyscrapers constructed in the 1920s. The club-level rooms and the suites are, of course, the most luxurious way to stay here, but even the standard guest rooms are luxuriously furnished and decorated. The hotel is full of grace notes, such as afternoon tea in the lobby lounge by an open fireplace, live jazz or blues in the hotel bar, the Curtain Club, and an indoor pool. The dining facilities are among the finest in town.

Potsdamer Platz 3, 10785 Berlin. ✆ **800/241-3333** in the U.S and Canada, or 030/33-77-77. Fax 030/777-55-55. www.ritzcarlton.com/hotels/berlin. 302 rooms. 250€–415€ ($363–$602) double; 500€ ($725) junior suite; from 1,575€ ($2,284) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. No parking. U-Bahn: Potsdamer Platz. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; bar; indoor pool; fitness center; spa; Jacuzzi; sauna; room service; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

Westin Grand ★★★ Many hotels call themselves grand—this one truly is, rivaled only by the Kempinski. Since taking over, Westin has spent a fortune in making the rooms among the finest in the city. All are spacious and tastefully decorated. Bathrooms are also large and state-of-the-art with tub/shower combos and deluxe toiletries.

Friedrichstrasse 158–164, 10117 Berlin. ✆ **888/625-5144** in the U.S., or 030/2-02-70. Fax 030/20-27-33-62. www.westin.com/berlin. 358 units. 350€–520€ ($508–$754) double; from 750€ ($1,088) junior suite; from 1,110€ ($1,610) apt. suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 20€ ($29). U-Bahn: Französische Strasse. S-Bahn: Friedrichstrasse. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; bar; indoor pool; fitness club; Jacuzzi; sauna; salon; room service; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms; solarium; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, iron, Wi-Fi.

Moderate

Arte Luise Künsthotel ★ *Finds* Its name translates as "home for artists." No, it's not a communal crash pad for the bohemian fringe, but a choice and select boutique hotel where a different German artist designed and individually furnished each of the guest rooms. Under historic preservation, the hotel is in a restored 1825 city palace. Clients from the arts, media, and even the political or business world are drawn to this unusual hostelry. Each room comes as a total surprise, and, of course, you're treated to some of each artist's work, which runs the gamut from pop to classicism. Some units evoke modern minimalism, whereas others are much more quirky.

Luisenstrasse 19, 10119 Berlin. ✆ **030/28448-0.** Fax 030/28448-448. www.luise-berlin.com. 50 units, 30 with bathroom. 79€–110€ ($115–$160) double without bathroom; 124€–150€ ($180–$218) double with shower; 130€–180€ ($189–$261) double with bathroom. AE, DC, MC. Parking 10€ ($15). U-Bahn: Friedrichstrasse. **Amenities:** Restaurant/bar next door; laundry service. *In room:* AC in some, TV, minibar in suite, safe in suite.

Hotel Luisenhof ★ One of the most desirable small hotels in Berlin's eastern district, the Luisenhof occupies a dignified 1822 house. Five floors of high-ceilinged rooms will appeal to those desiring to escape modern Berlin's sterility. Rooms range greatly in size, but each is equipped with good queen-size or twin beds. Bathrooms, though small, are beautifully appointed, with shower stalls (often with a large tub).

Köpenicker Strasse 92, 10179 Berlin. ✆ **030/246-28-10.** Fax 030/246-28-160. www.luisenhof.de. 27 units. 120€–250€ ($174–$363) double; 150€–350€ ($218–$508) suite. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. U-Bahn: Märkisches Museum. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; room service; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms; 1 room for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer, Wi-Fi.

Lux 11 ★ *Finds* In the hip central *Mitte* district, among fashionable art galleries and trendy media firms, this is an oasis of charm, comfort, and style. Outfitted in a chic minimalist style, its bedrooms have modern, glamorous decors. The open-to-view bathrooms are furnished in honey-colored wood and concrete. Lux 11 is the latest creation from a well-known duo, Claudio Silvestrin and his wife Giuliana Salmaso, known for their minimalist designs. In the basement is the **Aveda Spa,** and adjacent to the lobby, there's a "micro" department store operated by a former buyer for Quartier 206, a posh fashion emporium in Berlin. An on-site restaurant and chill-out bar serves Italian and Asian fusion cuisine. Guests get acquainted in the cozy cafe/lounge.

Rosa-Luxemburg-Strasse 9-13, 10178 Berlin. ✆ **030/93-62-80-0.** Fax 030/93-62-80-80. www.lux-eleven.com. 72 units. 165€–205€ ($239–$297) double; 255€–295€ ($370–$428) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 18€ ($26). U-Bahn: Weinmeisterstrasse. **Amenities:** Restaurant; cafe; bar; health club; spa; sauna; department store; salon; room service; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms. In room: A/C, TV, kitchenette, beverage maker, hair dryer.

WHERE TO DINE

For food on the run, try one of the dozens of kabob stalls *(Imbisse)* that dot the streets. Some 200,000 Turks live in Berlin, and the food that they've introduced—meat- or *Scharfskäse-* (sheep's cheese, virtually identical to feta) stuffed pitas—make a filling, cheap meal, but watch out for the cascades of cabbage. Good sit-down Turkish restaurants are harder to find, but one of the best is **Hitit,** Knobelsdorffstrasse 35 (✆ **030/322-45-57**), near Charlottenburg Schloss, with a full array of Turkish specialties, some 150 dishes in all. It's open daily 8am to midnight.

ON OR NEAR THE KURFÜRSTENDAMM

Expensive

Paris Bar ★ FRENCH This French bistro has been a local favorite since the postwar years, when two Frenchmen established the restaurant to bring a little Parisian cheer to the dismal gray of bombed-out Berlin. The place is just as crowded with elbow-to-elbow tables as a Montmartre tourist trap, but you'll find it a genuinely pleasing little eatery. It's a true restaurant on the see-and-be-seen circuit between Savignyplatz and Gedächtniskiche. The food is invariably fresh and well prepared but not particularly innovative.

Kantstrasse 152. ✆ **030/313-80-52.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 12€–25€ ($17–$36). AE. Daily noon–2am. U-Bahn: Uhlandstrasse.

Moderate

Marjellchen ★ EAST PRUSSIAN This is the only restaurant in Berlin specializing in the cuisine of Germany's long-lost province of East Prussia, along with the cuisines of Pomerania and Silesia. Amid a Bismarckian ambience of still lifes, vested waiters, and oil lamps, you can enjoy a savory version of red-beet soup with strips of beef, East Prussian potato soup with crabmeat and bacon, *falscher Gänsebraten* (pork spareribs stuffed with prunes and bread crumbs), and *mecklenburger Kümmelfleisch* (lamb with chives and onions).

Mommsenstrasse 9. ✆ **030/883-26-76.** www.marjellchen-berlin.de. Reservations recommended. Main courses 12€–24€ ($17–$35). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat 5pm–midnight. Closed Dec 23, 24, and 31. U-Bahn: Adenauerplatz or Uhlandstrasse. Bus: 109, 119, or 129.

YVA Suite ★ *Finds* INTERNATIONAL There's an excellent restaurant associated with this club, a meeting place for the hip denizens of Berlin's inner sanctum of writers, artists, and cultural icons. The setting is on the ground floor of a building near the Savignyplatz, within a decor that's high-ceilinged, stylish, and almost surgically minimalist. Expect walls almost entirely sheathed in slabs of volcanic lava rock, elegant table settings, well-prepared food that includes selections for both hearty and delicate appetites, and a formidable tradition of welcoming stars and starlets from Germany's world of high fashion, sports, and the arts. Menu items vary with the season and the inspiration of the chefs, but are likely to include lemon-coconut soup with chicken satay; terrine of gooseliver; various forms of carpaccio; curried breast of duck with chorizo sausages; and Thai-style bouillabaisse.

Schlüterstrasse 52. ✆ **030/88-72-55-73.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 16€–28€ ($23–$41). AE, MC, V. Bar and full menu daily 6pm–midnight; bar and limited menu daily midnight–3 or 4am. S-Bahn: Savignyplatz.

Inexpensive

Hard Rock Cafe *Kids* AMERICAN This is the local branch of the familiar worldwide chain that mingles rock-'n'-roll nostalgia with American food. Menu choices range from a veggie burger to a "pig" sandwich (hickory-smoked pork barbecue) that you might find in rural Georgia. The food is unexceptional, but service is friendly.

Meinekestrasse 21. ☎ **030/88-46-20.** www.hardrock.com. Reservations accepted for groups of 10 or more. Main courses 10€–25€ ($15–$36). AE, MC, V. Sun–Thurs noon–11pm; Fri–Sat noon–1am. U-Bahn: Kurfürstendamm.

Lubitsch CONTINENTAL Its conservative chic reputation was enhanced in 1999 when Chancellor Schröder dropped in for lunch and a photo-op, causing ripples of energy to reverberate through the neighborhood. Menu items include lots of cafe drinks and steaming pots of afternoon tea, but if you drop in for a meal, expect platters of chicken curry salad with roasted potatoes; Berlin-style potato soup; braised chicken with salad and fresh vegetables; a roulade of suckling pig; and Nürnberger-style wursts. Expect brusque service, a black-and-white decor with Thonet-style chairs, and a somewhat arrogant environment that, despite its drawbacks, is very, very *Berliner.*

Bleibtreustrasse 47. ☎ **030/88-72-84-99.** Main courses 8€–20€ ($12–$29); business lunch 12€ ($17). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat 10am–midnight; Sun 6pm–1am. U-Bahn: Kurfürstendamm.

NEAR THE MEMORIAL CHURCH & ZOO

Very Expensive

First Floor ★★ REGIONAL GERMAN/FRENCH This is the showcase restaurant within one of the most spectacular hotels ever built near the Tiergarten. Set one floor above street level, it features a perfectly orchestrated service and setting that revolve around the cuisine of a master chef. Winning our praise are such dishes as a terrine of veal with arugula-flavored butter; sophisticated variations of Bresse chicken; guinea fowl stuffed with foie gras and served with a truffle vinaigrette sauce; a cassoulet of lobster and broad beans in a style vaguely influenced by the culinary precepts of southwestern France; filet of sole with champagne sauce; and a mascarpone mousse with lavender-scented honey.

In the Palace Berlin, Budapesterstrasse 42. ☎ **030/25-02-10-20.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 23€–32€ ($33–$46). Set menus 40€ ($58) at lunch only, 68€–138€ ($99–$200) at lunch and dinner. AE, DC, MC, V. Daily noon–3pm and 6:30–11pm. U-Bahn: Zoologischer Garten.

IN THE TIERGARTEN

Expensive

Paris-Moskau INTERNATIONAL The grand days of the 19th century are alive and well at this restaurant in the beautiful Tiergarten area, where good dining spots are scarce. Menu items are both classic and more cutting edge. The fresh tomato soup is excellent. Some of the dishes are mundane—the grilled filet of beef in mushroom sauce comes to mind—but other, lighter dishes with delicate seasonings are delightful. We recommend the grilled North Sea salmon with herbs accompanied by basil-flavored noodles. The chef should market his recipe for saffron sauce, which accompanies several dishes. You'll receive attentive service from the formally dressed staff.

Alt-Moabit 141. ☎ **030/3-94-20-81.** www.paris-moskau.de. Reservations recommended. Main courses 21€–29€ ($30–$42); fixed-price menus 66€–77€ ($96–$112). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 6–11:30pm. S-Bahn: Auhalter Bahnhof.

IN & AROUND CHARLOTTENBURG

Expensive

Alt-Luxemburg ★★ CONTINENTAL/FRENCH/GERMAN Alt-Luxemburg's Chef Karl Wannemacher is one of the most outstanding chefs in eastern Germany. Known for his quality and market-fresh ingredients, he prepares a seductively sensual plate. Everything shows his flawless technique, especially the stuffed veal or the saddle of venison with juniper sauce. Taste his excellent lacquered duck breast with honey sauce or saddle of lamb with stewed peppers. Alt-Luxemburg offers a finely balanced wine list, and service is both unpretentious and gracious.

Windscheidstrasse 31. ✆ **030/323-87-30.** www.alt-luxemburg.de. Reservations required. Fixed-price 4-course menu 62€ ($90); fixed-price 5-course menu 68€ ($99). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat 5–11pm. U-Bahn: Sophie-Charlotteplatz.

Moderate

Bierhaus Luisen-Bräu GERMAN Luisen-Bräu brewery established this restaurant in 1987. The decor includes enormous stainless-steel vats of the fermenting brew, from which the waiters refill your mug. There's no subtlety of cuisine here; it's robust and hearty fare. You serve yourself from a long buffet table. The seating is indoor or outdoor, depending on the season, at long picnic tables that encourage a sense of beer-hall *Bruderschaft* (camaraderie).

Luisenplatz 1, Charlottenburg (close to Charlottenburg Castle). ✆ **030/3-41-93-88.** Reservations recommended on weekends. Main courses 26€–28€ ($38–$41); fixed-price menus 65€–72€ ($94–$104). AE, MC, V. Sun–Thurs 9am–1am; Fri–Sat 9am–2am. U-Bahn: Richard-Wagner-Platz.

IN BERLIN-MITTE

Expensive

Guy ★ INTERNATIONAL At this top-notch restaurant, anticipate a strong sense of gastronomy as theater. Proceed to any of three separate balconies, each supporting at least one row of artfully decorated tables. The overall effect can be compared to the balconies and private boxes of an old-fashioned opera house. The cuisine is very haute, even to the point of seeming experimental. Examples change frequently, but might include a medley of marinated quail and gooseliver; mussels served on a purée of arugula; lobster and sweetbreads cooked in puff pastry with tarragon-flavored cream sauce; and braised breast of goose with a roulade of potatoes and herbs.

Jägerstrasse 59–60. ✆ **030/20-94-26-00.** www.guy-restaurant.de. Reservations recommended. Main courses 30€–34€ ($44–$49); set-price lunches 17€–22€ ($25–$32); set-price dinners 59€–79€ ($86–$115). AE, MC, V. Mon–Fri noon–3pm and 6pm–1am; Sat 6pm–1am. U-Bahn: Stadtmitte or Französischer Strasse.

Cafe Society

The family-owned **Café/Bistro Leysieffer,** Kurfürstendamm 218 (✆ **030/2064-9715;** U-Bahn: Kurfürstendamm), opened in the early 1980s within what had been the Chinese embassy. The street level contains a pastry and candy shop, but most clients climb the flight of stairs to a marble- and wood-sheathed cafe with a balcony overlooking the busy Ku'damm. The breakfast menu is one of the most elegant in town: Parma ham, smoked salmon, a fresh baguette, French butter, and—to round it off—champagne. Main courses cost 9€ to 15€ ($13–$22). Hours are daily 10am to 7pm.

Margaux ★★★ CONTINENTAL Chef Michael Hoffmann will dazzle your palate with his seductive, inventive dishes and his brilliant wine cellar. Several 21st-century food magazines have named his the "best gourmet restaurant in Berlin." Only a few steps from the Brandenburg Gate, the restaurant has a stunning modern interior, designed by the noted architect Johanne Nalbach. The exceptional food is made from only the highest-quality ingredients. Our party of four launched our repast with such perfectly prepared starters as marinated duck liver and Breton lobster, which appears with curry and, surprisingly, watermelon. Hoffmann's star shines brightest with his fish, such as John Dory with a Mediterranean "aroma" that turned out to be anchovies, olives, tomatoes, and pepper. Frogs' legs are delectably perfumed with parsley and garlic.

Unter den Linden 78. ✆ **030/22-65-26-11.** www.margaux-berlin.de. Reservations required. Main courses 20€–38€ ($29–$55); fixed-price lunch 45€–140€ ($65–$203); fixed-price dinner 80€–140€ ($116–$203). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat noon–2pm and 7–11pm. S-Bahn: Unter den Linden.

Restaurant VAU ★★ INTERNATIONAL This restaurant is the culinary showcase of master chef Kolja Kleeberg. Choices include terrine of salmon and morels with rocket salad; aspic of suckling pig with sauerkraut; salad with marinated red mullet, mint, and almonds; crisp-fried duck with marjoram; ribs of suckling lamb with thyme-flavored polenta; and desserts such as woodruff soup with champagne-flavored ice cream. The wine list is international and well chosen.

Jägerstrasse 54–55 (near the Four Seasons Hotel and the Gendamenmarkt). ✆ **030/202-9730.** www.vau-berlin.de. Reservations recommended. Main courses 22€–38€ ($32–$55); set-price lunches 65€–100€ ($94–$145); set-price dinners 85€–110€ ($123–$160). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat noon–2:30pm and 7–10:30pm. U-Bahn: Hausvoigteiplatz.

Moderate

Kaefer's Restaurant Dachgarten CONTINENTAL When a team of cutting-edge architects redesigned the most famous building in Berlin, the Reichstag (Parliament House), they added a restaurant on the uppermost floor. The setting is metallic looking and edgy. Lines to get in can be overwhelming, mingling sightseers and diners in the same queues. Included in the price of your meal will be a close-up view of the dome and the rest of the building's interior. Frankly, a visit here for breakfast may be your best bet, when there's a businesslike aura that's consistent with this building's august role as a Teutonic icon. The lunch menu is more "Berliner" than the Continental/Asian evening menu. Lunchtime menus include house-style meatballs with coleslaw and potato salad and grilled steaks and wursts. Dinners are a bit more exotic, focusing on such dishes as fried filet of duck with Austrian-style scalloped potatoes, Asian asparagus, and water chestnuts; and filet of turbot with a purée of truffles and herb-flavored risotto.

In the Reichstag, Platz der Republik. ✆ **030/22-62-99-0.** Reservations necessary. Breakfast 15€–25€ ($22–$36); lunch main courses 12€–15€ ($17–$22); dinner main courses 25€–33€ ($36–$48); fixed-price dinners 60€–84€ ($87–$122).

Malatesta ITALIAN Flavorful Italian food, served within an all-black-and-white venue whose rectilinear simplicity might remind you of a spartan version of a sushi bar, is the heartbeat of this likable Italian restaurant. The aura is high style rather than cozy, with an emphasis on the kind of offhanded hip you might have expected in Milan or Rome. The menu reflects whatever is fresh and succulent at the time, with dishes crafted anew almost every day. Three enduring specialties, however, include tagliatelle with asparagus, fried squid (calamari), and fresh tomatoes; filet of beef with black truffles; and pasta made with ricotta cheese, pesto, and balsamic vinegar.

Specialties from throughout Italy are the draw here, with no particular emphasis on northern, southern, or central Italian cuisine over any of the country's other regions.

Charlottenstrasse 59. ☎ **030/20-94-50-71.** www.ristorante-malatesta.de. Reservations recommended. Main courses 12€–20€ ($17–$28). AE, MC, V. Mon–Sat noon–midnight. U-Bahn: Stadmitte.

Restaurant Borchardt *Value* INTERNATIONAL This restaurant is elegant, lighthearted, and fashionable among the city's artistic movers and shakers. You can order anything from a simple salad (as supermodel Claudia Schiffer often does) to the more substantial cream of potato soup with bacon and croutons; filet of carp prepared with Riesling and herbs and finished with champagne; foie gras served with caramelized apples; chicken stuffed with morels and served with cream-and-herb sauce; and a pistachio mousse garnished with essence of fresh fruit.

Französische Strasse 47. ☎ **030/2038-7110.** Reservations recommended. Daily special menu 9€ ($13); main courses 9.50€–58€ ($14–$84) AE, V. Daily 11:30am–2am (kitchen closes at midnight). U-Bahn: Französische Strasse.

Inexpensive

Dressler CONTINENTAL No other bistro along Unter den Linden so successfully re-creates Berlin's prewar decor and style. Designed to resemble an arts-conscious bistro of the sort that might have amused and entertained tuxedo-clad clients in the 1920s, it's outfitted with leather banquettes, tile floors, mirrors, and film memorabilia from the great days of early German cinema. Waiters scurry around, carrying trays of everything from caviar to strudel, as well as three kinds of oysters and hefty portions of lobster salad. Substantial menu items include perfectly prepared turbot with champagne vinaigrette; pheasant breast with Riesling sauce; local salmon trout with white-wine sauce and braised endive; stuffed breast of veal; and calves' liver with apples.

Unter den Linden 39. ☎ **030/204-44-22.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 18€–24€ ($26–$35). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 8am–1am. S-Bahn: Unter den Linden.

La Gaiola CONTINENTAL It's crowded, it's hip, and its decor evokes the 1930s allure of what might have been a coffee plantation in the highlands of Africa. Many clients come here just for its bar scene, but if you're hungry, the food is firmly based on what's cooking in the area that stretches between North Germany and southern Austria, and is served in generous portions. Come here for a chance to meet unattached residents of the surrounding neighborhood, a dialogue with a hip Berliner or two, and good-tasting food items that include beef filet with braised arugula; all manner of fresh fish; homemade salmon with apples, roasted potatoes, and horseradish; and drinks that include raspberry daiquiris.

Monbijouplatz 11–12. ☎ **030/28-53-98-90.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 10€–20€ ($15–$29). AE, MC, V. Mon–Sat 6pm–midnight. U-Bahn: Hackescher Markt.

Mutter Hoppe GERMAN This cozy, wood-paneled restaurant still serves the solid Teutonic cuisine favored by a quasi-legendary matriarch (Mother Hoppe) who used to churn out vast amounts of traditional cuisine to members of her extended family and entourage. Within a quartet of old-fashioned dining rooms, you'll enjoy heaping portions of such rib-sticking fare as sauerbraten with roasted potatoes; creamy goulash with wild mushrooms; filets of zander with dill-flavored cream sauce; and braised filets of pork in mushroom-flavored cream sauce. Wine is available, but most guests opt for at least one foaming mug of beer.

Rathausstrasse 21, Nikolaiviertel. ☎ **030/241-56-25.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 10€–28€ ($15–$41). DC, MC, V. Daily 11:30am–11:30pm. U- and S-Bahn: Alexanderplatz.

Native Behavior

Traditional Germans enjoy their big meal at noon and, in the evening, satisfy hunger with deli cold cuts, open-faced sandwiches, sour pickles, and liver sausage, among other food. To be truly native, you'll begin your *Mittagessen* (main noonday meal) with *Leberknodel-suppe* (liver dumpling).

Germany is a land that welcomes all serious beer drinkers. The country is home to about 40% of the world's breweries, with the largest concentration found in Bavaria. The best and most plentiful beer gardens and beer halls are in Munich (see the box "What's Brewing at the Beer Halls?" on p. 422).

In general the German people are rather candid, especially if they don't agree with something. Whereas this might appear argumentative to foreigners, locals might counterclaim that they are "merely being honest, not hypocritical."

Many young Germans seem obsessed with all things Yankee; yet, almost in contradiction, they possess deeply felt anti-American sentiments. You must wander carefully through the maze of politics, if the subject comes up at all.

As a rule, expect more formality in Germany than in America or even Britain. By all means, if you have an appointment, show up on time!

StäV ★ *Finds* RHENISH For years, this upscale tavern entertained the politicians and journalists whose business involved the day-to-day running of the German government from Germany's former capital of Bonn. Although its owners at first opposed the reinauguration of Berlin as the German capital, when the switch was made, they valiantly pulled out of the Rhineland and followed their clientele to new digs within a 5-minute walk of the Brandenburg Gate near the Friedrichstrasse Bahnhof. The only beer served is Kölsch, a brew more closely associated with the Rhineland than any other beer. Rhenish food items include a mass of apples, onions, and blood sausage known as *Himmel und Ärd* ("heaven and hell"); braised beef with pumpernickel and raisin sauce; and Rhineland sauerbraten with noodles. Other items, many influenced by the culinary traditions of Berlin, include braised liver with bacon and onions; a crisp version of Alsatian pizza known as *Flammenküche;* and a potato cake topped with apples and shredded beets or with smoked salmon and sour cream.

8 Schiffbauerdamm. ✆ **030/282-3965.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 10€–20€ ($15–$29). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 10am–1am. U-Bahn: Friedrichstrasse.

IN KREUZBERG

Expensive

Horváth INTERNATIONAL In the Kreuzberg district, this restaurant is installed in a 19th-century front room, a showcase for the savory viands of Chef Wolfgang Müller. Celebrities, including the mayor of Berlin, continue to frequent these airy, hyper avant-garde dining rooms, enjoying dishes that are inspired by recipes from Bavaria to Bangkok. Over chilled elderberry soup, you can decide on your next course—perhaps stuffed shoulder of veal with artichoke hearts, olives, pine nuts, and a mushroom-flavored risotto. Finish off with, perhaps, the passion fruit tart with marinated fruit and a coconut-flavored lime sauce.

44A Paul-Lincke-Ufer. ✆ **030/6128-9992.** www.restaurant-horvath.de. Reservations recommended. Main courses 37€–45€ ($54–$65); fixed-price menu 41€ ($59) for 3 courses, 69€ ($100) for 10 courses. No credit cards. Tues–Sun 6pm–midnight. U-Bahn: Kottbusser Tor.

SEEING THE SIGHTS

SIGHTSEEING SUGGESTIONS FOR FIRST-TIME VISITORS

If You Have 1 Day Get up early and visit the **Brandenburg Gate,** symbol of Berlin, then walk down **Unter den Linden** and have coffee and pastry at the Operncafé. Visit the **Gemäldegalerie** to see some of the world's greatest masterpieces. In the evening, walk along the Kurfürstendamm, visit the **Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church,** and dine in a local restaurant.

If You Have 2 Days On day 2, visit the **Pergamon Museum** on Museum Island, seeing the Pergamon Altar. Explore the **National Gallery,** and then head for Alexanderplatz. Take the elevator up for a view from its TV tower, before exploring the **Nikolai Quarter** on foot. Spend an hour in the evening walking around the rebuilt **Potsdamer Platz.**

If You Have 3 Days On day 3, go to **Potsdam** (see "Day Trips from Berlin," p. 399).

If You Have 4 or 5 Days On day 4, visit the Judisches Museum Berlin. In the afternoon return to Charlottenburg Palace and explore the Historical Apartments, and in the evening visit the Europa-Center for drinks and dinner. On day 5, see some of the sights you might have missed. Take some walks through Berlin and stop at the Cold War's Checkpoint Charlie, with its museum. If time remains, visit the Berlin Zoo, stroll through the Tiergarten, and attend a cabaret in the evening.

THE TOP MUSEUMS

In the Tiergarten

Gemäldegalerie ★★★ This is one of Germany's greatest painting galleries. Several rooms are devoted to early German masters, with altarpieces dating from the 13th to 15th centuries. Note the panel of *The Virgin Enthroned with Child* (1350), surrounded by angels that resemble the demons so popular in the later works of Hieronymus Bosch. Eight paintings make up the Dürer collection in adjacent rooms.

Another gallery is given over to Italian painting. Here are five Raphael Madonnas; and works by Titian *(The Girl with a Bowl of Fruit),* Fra Filippo Lippi, Botticelli, and Correggio *(Leda with the Swan).* There are also early Netherlandish paintings from the 15th and 16th centuries (van Eyck, Van der Weyden, Bosch, and Bruegel). Several galleries are devoted to Flemish and Dutch masters of the 17th century, with no fewer than 20 works by Rembrandt, including the *Head of Christ.*

Stauffenbergstrasse (entrance is at Matthäiskirchplatz 4). ✆ **030/266-29-51**. www.smb.spk-berlin.de/gg/e/s.html. Admission 8€ ($12) adults, 4€ ($5.80) children. Tues–Sun 10am–6pm (Thurs to 10pm). U-Bahn: Potsdamer Platz, then bus 148. Bus: 129 from Ku'damm (plus a 4-min. walk).

Neue Nationalgalerie (New National Gallery) ★ In its modern glass-and-steel home designed by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, the Neue Nationalgalerie is a sequel of sorts to the art at Dahlem. It contains a continually growing collection of modern European and American art. Here you'll find works of 19th-century artists, with a stellar concentration on French Impressionists. German art starts with Adolph von Menzel's paintings from about 1850. The 20th-century collection includes works by

Preserving What's Left of a Dreaded Memory

City officials have allocated $51 million to save what remains of the once-dreaded Berlin Wall. Only a few strips are still left. In the euphoria that accompanied the collapse of the wall in 1989, few bothered to think about it as a monument to history—or even as a tourist attraction. Most Berliners wanted to get rid of it as soon as possible. But now an attempt will be made to preserve what's left so that future generations can see how the superpowers in the Cold War stood nose-to-nose for 4 decades.

Max Beckmann, Edvard Munch, and E. L. Kirchner *(Brandenburger Tor),* as well as a few paintings by "the usual suspects," Bacon, Picasso, Ernst, Klee, and American artists such as Barnett Newman. There's food service in the cafe on the ground floor. Hot meals are served from 11am to 5pm.

Potsdamer strasse 50 (just south of the Tiergarten). ☎ **030/2-66-26-51.** www.smb.spk-berlin.de/nng/e/s.html. Permanent collection 8€ ($12) adults, 4€ ($5.80) children. Tues–Wed 10am–6pm; Thurs 10am–10pm; Fri–Sun 10am–8pm. U-Bahn: Mendelssohn-Bartholdy-Park. S-Bahn: Potsdamer Platz.

Museumsinsel (Museum Island)

Alte Nationalgalerie ★ This museum is known for its collection of 19th-century German art as well as for its French Impressionists. A feature of the museum is the world's largest collection of the works of one of the best known of all Berlin artists, Adolph von Menzel (1815–1905). We especially like his *Das Balkonzimmer.* Other paintings include a galaxy of art representing the romantic and classical movements as well as the Biedermeier era. Allow at least an hour and a half to take in canvasses by everybody from Pissarro to Cézanne, from Delacroix to Degas, and from van Gogh to Monet. The collection would have been far greater than it is had not the Nazis either sold or destroyed so many early-20th-century works they viewed as "degenerate."

Bodestrasse 1–3. ☎ **030/20905801**. Admission 8€ ($12) adults, 4€ ($5.80) children. Fri–Wed and Fri 10am–6pm, Thurs 10am–10pm; Sat–Sun 11am–6pm. S-Bahn: Hackescher Markt or Friedrichstrasse. Tram: 3, 4, 5, 12, 13, 15, or 53. Bus: 100, 157, or 378.

Altes Museum ★ Karl Friedrich Schinkel, the city's greatest architect, designed this structure, which resembles a Greek Corinthian temple, in 1822. On its main floor is the **Antikensammlung,** or Museum of Greek and Roman Antiquities. This great collection of world-famous works of antique decorative art was inaugurated in 1960. It's rich in pottery; Greek, Etruscan, and Roman bronze statuettes and implements; ivory carvings, glassware, objects in precious stone, and jewelry of the Mediterranean region, as well as gold and silver treasures; mummy portraits from Roman Egypt; wood and stone sarcophagi; and a few marble sculptures. The collection includes some of the finest Greek vases of the black- and red-figures style dating from the 6th century to the 4th century B.C. The best known is a large Athenian wine jar (amphora) found in Vulci, Etruria, dating from 490 B.C., which shows a satyr with a lyre and the god Hermes.

Museumsinsel am Lustgarten. ☎ **030/20-90-55-55.** Admission 8€ ($12) adults, 4€ ($5.80) children. Fri-Wed 10am–6pm; Thurs 10am-10pm. U-Bahn/S-Bahn: Friedrichstrasse. Bus: 100 to Lustgarten, 147, 157, or 358.

Bode Museum ★★★ One of the great museums of Germany, long closed for restoration, is now open with enlarged exhibits, better lighting, and more viewer-friendly exhibitions. It contains a vast array of museums, including the Egyptian Museum ★★★, the Papyrus Collection, the Museum of Late Ancient and Byzantine Art, the Sculpture Collection, the Picture Gallery ★★, the Museum of Prehistory, the Children's Gallery, and the extensive Cabinet of Coins and Medals.

In the Egyptian Collection, exhibits range in size from the huge sphinx of Hatsheput (1490 B.C.) to fragments of reliefs from Egyptian temples. Of special interest is the Burial Cult Room ★★, where coffins, mummies, and grave objects are displayed along with life-size X-ray photographs of the mummies of humans and animals.

Nearby is the Papyrus Collection, displaying about 25,000 documents of papyrus, ostraca, parchment, limestone, wax, and wood in eight different languages.

The Museum of Late Ancient and Byzantine Art has displays of early Christian sarcophagi, Coptic and Byzantine sculpture, icons, and even gravestones dating from the 3rd through the 18th century. The rich Sculpture Collection exhibits magnificent pieces from ancient churches and monasteries, including a sandstone pulpit support by Anton Pilgram (1490) carved in the shape of a medieval craftsman.

The Picture Gallery is devoted in part to masterpieces from the Dutch and German schools of the 15th and 16th centuries, as well as great works by Italian, Flemish, Dutch, French, and British painters of the 14th to the 18th century.

Monbijoubrücke, Bodestrassel 1-3 Museumsinel. ☎ **030/266-3666.** Admission 8€ ($12) adults, 4€ ($5.80) students and children. Fri–Wed 10am–5pm; Thurs 10am–10pm. U-Bahn: Friedrichstrasse.

Pergamon Museum ★★★ The Pergamon Museum houses several departments, but if you have time for only one exhibit, go to the central hall of the U-shaped building to see the **Pergamon Altar** ★★★. This Greek altar (180–160 B.C.) has a huge room all to itself. Some 27 steps lead up to the colonnade. Most fascinating is the frieze around the base, tediously pieced together over a 20-year period. Depicting the struggle of the Olympian gods against the Titans as told in Hesiod's *Theogony,* the relief is strikingly alive, with figures projecting as much as a foot from the background. This, however, is only part of the collection of Greek and Roman antiquities, housed in the north and east wings. You'll also find sculptures from many Greek and Roman cities, including a statue of a goddess holding a pomegranate (575 B.C.), found in southern Attica. If your guidebook is old and you're looking to see the famed Market Gate of Miletus, you're out of luck. This towering Roman gate, built around A.D. 120 at the entrance to the market square in the Aegean coastal city of Miletus (now Turkey) has been dismantled. Museum experts will spend 10 years restoring it, perhaps putting it on display once again in 2015. The **Near East Museum** ★, in the south wing, contains one of the largest collections anywhere of antiquities discovered in the lands of ancient Babylonia, Persia, and Assyria. Among the exhibits is the Processional Way of Babylon with the Ishtar Gate (580 B.C.).

Bodestrasse 1–3. ☎ **030/2090-53-01.** Admission 10€ ($15) adults, 5€ ($7.25) children; free the 1st Sun of the month. Tues–Wed and Fri–Sun 10am–6pm; Thurs 10am–10pm. U-Bahn/S-Bahn: Friedrichstrasse. Tram: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 13, 15, or 53.

In Charlottenburg

Charlottenburg is the quarter of Berlin just west of the Tiergarten. In addition to viewing the exhaustive collections in Charlottenburg Palace, you can enjoy a relaxing ramble through Schlossgarten Charlottenburg. The gardens have been restored and landscaped much as they were in the days of Friedrich Wilhelm II.

Bröhan Museum This wonderful museum specializes in decorative objects of the Art Nouveau (*Jugendstil* in German) and Art Deco periods (1889–1939), with exquisite vases, glass, furniture, silver, paintings of artists belonging to the Berlin Secession, and other works of art arranged in drawing-room fashion, including an outstanding porcelain collection.

Schlossstrasse 1a. ✆ **030/3269-0600.** Admission 5€ ($7.25) adults, 4€ ($5.80) students and children. Tues–Sun 10am–6pm. U-Bahn: Sophie-Charlotte-Platz. Bus: 109 or 145 to Luisenplatz/Schloss Charlottenburg.

Die Sammlung Berggruen: Picasso und Seine Zeit (The Berggruen Collection: Picasso and His Era) ★ *Finds* One of the most unusual private museums in Berlin has accumulated the awesome collection of respected art and antiques dealer Heinz Berggruen. A native of Berlin who fled the Nazis in 1936, he later established antiques dealerships in Paris and California before returning, with his collection, to his native home in 1996. The setting is a renovated former army barracks designed by noted architect August Stüler in 1859. Although most of the collection is devoted to Picasso, there are also works by Cézanne, Braque, Klee, and van Gogh. Some 60 or more works in all, the Picasso collection alone is worth the trip, ranging from his teenage efforts to all of his major periods.

Schlossstrasse 1. ✆ **030/326-9580.** Admission 8€ ($12) adults, 4€ ($5.80) students and children. Tues–Sun 10am–6pm. U-Bahn: Richard-Wagner-Platz, followed by a 10-min. walk. Bus: 129, 145, or 210.

Schloss Charlottenburg (Charlottenburg Palace) ★★ Napoleon exaggerated a bit in comparing Schloss Charlottenburg to Versailles when he invaded Berlin in 1806, but in its heyday this palace was the most elegant residence for Prussian rulers outside the castle in Potsdam. Begun in 1695 as a summer palace for the Electress Sophie Charlotte, patron of philosophy and the arts and wife of King Frederick I (Elector Frederick III), the little residence got out of hand until it grew into the massive structure you see today. The main wing contains the apartments of Frederick I and his "philosopher queen." The **new wing,** known as the Knobelsdorff-Flügel and built from 1740 to 1746, shelters the apartments of Frederick the Great, which now houses a collection of paintings, many of which were either collected or commissioned by the king.

Luisenplatz. ✆ **030/320-91-275.** Combined ticket for all buildings and historical rooms 16€ ($23) adults, 12€ ($17) children 13 and under and students. Palace Tues–Fri 9am–4pm, Sat–Sun 10am–4pm; museum Tues–Fri 10am–6pm; gardens (free admission) daily 6:30am–8pm. Closes at 6pm Nov–Feb. U-Bahn: Richard-Wagner-Platz. Bus: 145 or 204.

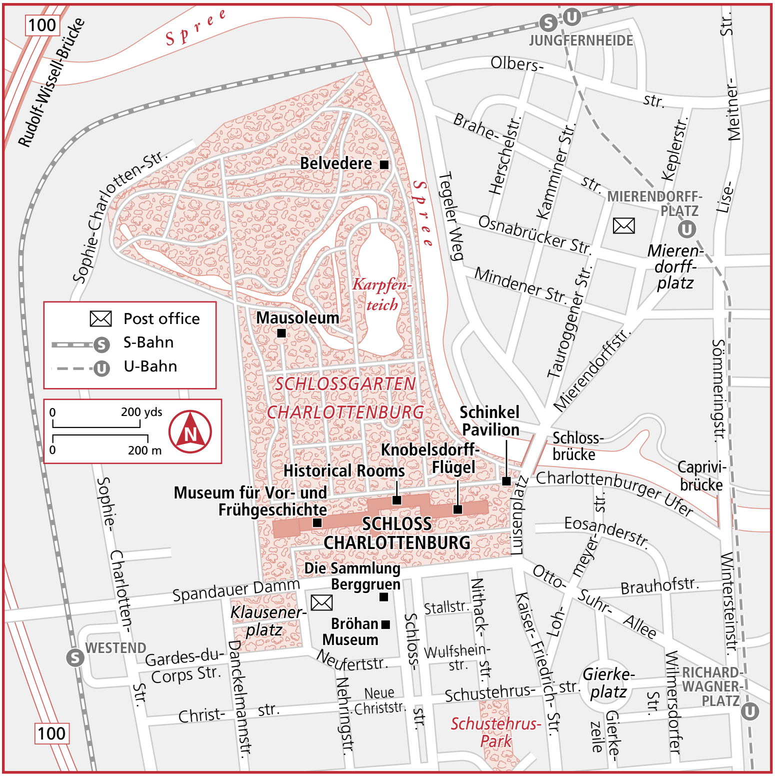
OTHER MUSEUMS

Deutsche Guggenheim Berlin ★ This state-of-the-art museum is devoted to organizing and presenting exhibitions of modern and contemporary art. The Guggenheim

Previews of Coming Attractions

In November 2007, the German Parliament agreed to provide $650 million to finance the reconstruction of Berlin's old city palace. The actual job will cost $810 million, with the State of Berlin making up the difference in expenses. The palace dates from the Middle Ages, and in 1701 it became the major residence of the Kings of Prussia. Allied bombs virtually leveled it in 1945, and the new East German Communist rulers wiped out all trace of it, because to them it suggested capitalistic imperialism. In its place they erected the dull Palace of the Republic in the 1970s.

Charlottenburg


Spree
Rudolf-Wissell-Brücke
100
JUNGFERNHEIDE
Olbers-
str.
Brahe-
Herschelstr.
Kamminer Str.
str.
Keplerstr.
Meitner-
Lise-
Str.
MIERENDORFF-PLATZ
Mieren-dorff-platz
Osnabrücker Str.
Mindener Str.
Tauroggener Str.
Mierendorffstr.
Tegeler Weg
Sophie-Charlotten-Str.
Belvedere
Karpfen-teich
Mausoleum
SCHLOSSGARTEN CHARLOTTENBURG
Schinkel Pavilion
Schloss-brücke
Caprivi-brücke
Sömmeringstr.
Knobelsdorff-Flügel
Historical Rooms
Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte
SCHLOSS CHARLOTTENBURG
Charlottenburger Ufer
Eosanderstr.
Luisenplatz
Die Sammlung Berggruen
Bröhan Museum
Spandauer Damm
Klausener-platz
Otto-Suhr-Allee
Brauhofstr.
Wintersteinstr.
Sophie-Charlotten-Str.
WESTEND
Gardes-du-Corps Str.
Danckelmannstr.
Neufertstr.
Schloss-str.
Stallstr.
Nithack-str.
Kaiser-Friedrich-Str.
Loh-meyer-str.
Wulfshein-str.
Schustehrus-str.
Gierke-platz
Gierke-zeile
Wilmersdorfer Str.
RICHARD-WAGNER-PLATZ
Christ-str.
Nehringstr.
Neue Christstr.
Schustehrus-Park
Post office
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Foundation conceives, organizes, and installs several exhibitions annually, and also presents exhibitions of newly commissioned works created specifically for this space by world-renowned artists. In addition to contemporary artists, exhibition subjects in the past have ranged from Picasso and Cézanne to Andy Warhol.

Unter den Linden 13–15. ✆ **030/2020-930.** Admission 5€ ($7.25) adults, 4€ ($5.80) children. Free on Mon. Daily 11am–8pm (Thurs to 10pm). S-Bahn: Unter den Linden.

Judisches Museum Berlin ★★ The most talked-about museum in Berlin, the Jewish Museum is housed in a building that is one of the most spectacular in the city. Called “the silver lightning bolt,” it was designed by architect Daniel Libeskind. To some viewers, the building suggests a shattered Star of David by its building plan and the scarring in the zinc-plated facade.

Inside, the spaces are designed to make the visitor uneasy and disoriented, simulating the feeling of those who were exiled. A vast hollow cuts through the museum to mark what is gone. When the exhibits reach the rise of the Third Reich, the hall’s walls, ceiling, and floor close in as the visitor proceeds. A chillingly hollow Holocaust Void, a dark, windowless chamber, evokes much that was lost.

The exhibits concentrate on three themes: Judaism and Jewish life, the devastating effects of the Holocaust, and the post–World War II rebuilding of Jewish life in Germany.

The on-site Liebermanns Restaurant features world cuisine, with an emphasis on Jewish recipes—all strictly kosher.

Lindenstrasse 9–14. ✆ **030/259-93-300.** www.juedisches-museum-berlin.de. Admission 5€ ($7.25) adults, 2.50€ ($3.63) students and seniors, free for kids 6 and under. Family ticket 10€ ($15) for 2 adults and up to 4 children. Mon 10am–10pm; Tues–Sun 10am–8pm. U-Bahn: Hallesches Tor or Kochstrasse. Bus: 129, 240, or 341.

Käthe-Kollwitz Museum ★ More than any other museum in Germany, this one reflects the individual sorrow of the artist whose work it contains. Some visitors call it a personalized revolt against the agonies of war, as well as a welcome change from the commercialism of the nearby Ku'damm. Established in 1986, it was inspired by Berlin-born Käthe Kollwitz, an ardent socialist, feminist, and pacifist whose stormy social commentary led to the eventual banning of her works by the Nazis. Many Kollwitz works show the agonies of wartime separation of mother and child, inspired in part by her loss of a son in Flanders during World War I and a grandson during World War II.

Fasanenstrasse 24. ✆ **030/882-52-10.** www.kaethe-kollwitz.de. Admission 5€ ($7.25) adults, 2.50€ ($3.63) children and students. Wed–Mon 11am–6pm. U-Bahn: Uhlandstrasse or Kurfürstendamm. Bus: 109, 119, 129, or 219.

Kunstgewerbe Museum (Museum of Applied Arts) This museum, next to the Gemäldegalerie in a modern red-brick edifice built for the collection, is devoted to European applied arts from the early Middle Ages to the present, including the Renaissance, baroque, rococo, Jugendstil (German Art Nouveau), and Art Deco periods. Displayed are glassware, porcelain, silver, furniture, jewelry, and clothing. The collection of medieval goldsmiths' works is outstanding, as are the displays of Venetian glass, early Meissen and KPM porcelain, and Jugendstil vases, porcelain, furniture, and objects.

Matthäiskirchplatz. ✆ **030/266-2902.** Admission 3€ ($4.35) adults, 1.50€ ($2.20) students and children. Tues–Fri 10am–6pm; Sat–Sun 11am–6pm. U-Bahn/S-Bahn: Potsdamer Platz. Bus: 129 from Ku'damm to Potsdamer Brücke, also bus 142, 148, 248, 346, or 348.

Märkisches Museum The full cultural history of Berlin is displayed in one of the most prominent buildings on the banks of the Spree; 42 rooms contain collections of artifacts from excavations, plus such art treasures as Slav silver items and Bronze Age finds. You can learn about Berlin's theaters and literature, the arts in Berlin and Brandenburg, and the life and work of Berlin artists. Most visitors like the array of mechanical musical instruments that can be played Sunday from 11am to 2pm, for an extra euro.

Am Köllnischen Park 5. ✆ **030/30-86-60.** Admission 4€ ($5.80) adults, 2€ ($2.90) children. Tues–Sun 9am–5pm. U-Bahn: Märkisches Museum. Bus: 147, 240, or 265.

Museum für Gegenwart Hamburger Bahnhof This Museum of Contemporary Art opened in 1996 north of the Spree in the old Hamburger Bahnhof. The structure was the terminus for trains from Hamburg. Today, the station no longer receives trains but is a premier storehouse of postwar art, a sort of Musée d'Orsay of Berlin. Traces of its former function are still evident in the building, including the high roof designed for steam engines. The modern art on display is some of the finest in Germany, the nucleus of the collection, a donation from the Berlin collector Erich Marx (no relation to Karl Marx). A multimedia event, you can view everything from Andy Warhol's now legendary *Mao* to an audiovisual Joseph Beuys archive. The museum houses one of the best collections of Cy Twombly. Other works on display are by Rauschenberg, Lichtenstein, and Dan Flavin. The conceptual artist Beuys is also represented by 450 drawings.

Invalidenstrasse 50–51. ✆ **030/397-834-11.** www.hamburgerbahnhof.de. Admission 8€ ($12) adults, 4€ ($5.80) students, free 16 and under. Tues–Fri 10am–6pm; Sat 11am–8pm; Sun 11am–6pm. U-Bahn: Zinnowitzer Strasse. S-Bahn: Lehrter Bahnhof. Bus: 157, 245, 248, or 340.

Museum Haus am Checkpoint Charlie This small building houses exhibits depicting the tragic events leading up to and following the erection of the former Berlin Wall. You can see some of the instruments of escape used by East Germans. Photos document the construction of the wall, escape tunnels, and the postwar history of both parts of Berlin from 1945 until today, including the airlift of 1948 and 1949. One of the most moving exhibits is the display on the staircase of drawings by schoolchildren who, in 1961 and 1962, were asked to depict both halves of Germany in one picture.

Friedrichstrasse 43–45. ✆ **030/253-72-50.** www.mauermuseum.de. Admission 9.50€ ($14) adults, 5.50€ ($8) children. Daily 9am–10pm. U-Bahn: Kochstrasse or Stadtmitte. Bus: 129.

The Story of Berlin This multimedia extravaganza portrays 8 centuries of the city's history through photos, films, sounds, and colorful displays. Beginning with the founding of Berlin in 1237, it chronicles the plague, the Thirty Years' War, Frederick the Great's reign, military life, the Industrial Revolution and the working poor, the golden 1920s, World War II, divided Berlin during the Cold War, and the fall of the Wall. Lights flash in a media blitz as you enter the display on the fall of the Wall, making you feel like one of the first East Berliners to wonderingly cross to the West. Conclude your tour on the 14th floor with a panoramic view over today's Berlin. Though the displays are a bit jarring and the historical information is too jumbled to be truly educational, the museum does leave a lasting impression. Allow at least 2 hours.

Ku'damm-Karree, Kurfürstendamm 207–208 (at the corner of Uhlandstrasse). ✆ **030/887-201-00.** www.story-of-berlin.de. Admission 9.80€ ($14) adults; 8€ ($12) students, seniors, and children; 21€ ($30) families. Daily 10am–8pm (you must enter by 6pm). U-Bahn: Uhlandstrasse.

HIGHLIGHTS OF BERLIN-MITTE

Brandenburger Tor (Brandenburg Gate) ★★ This triumphal arch stood for many years next to the Wall, symbolizing the divided city. Today it represents the reunited German capital. Six Doric columns hold up an entablature inspired by the Propylaea of the Parthenon at Athens. Surrounded by the famous and much-photographed Quadriga of Gottfried Schadow from 1793, the gate was designed by Carl Gotthard Langhans in 1789. Napoleon liked the original Quadriga so much he ordered them taken down and shipped to Paris, but they were returned to Berlin in 1814. In Berlin's heyday before World War II, the gate marked the grand western extremity of the "main street," Unter den Linden. In the Room of Silence, visitors still gather to meditate and reflect on Germany's past.

Pariser Platz. Free admission. Room of Silence daily 10am–6pm. S-Bahn: Unter den Linden. Bus: 100.

Reichstag (Parliament) On the night of February 17, 1933, a fire broke out in the seat of the German parliament, the Reichstag. It was obviously set by the Nazis, but the German Communist Party was blamed. That was all the excuse Hitler's troops needed to begin mass arrests of "dissidents and enemies of the lawful government." During World War II, the Reichstag faced massive Allied bombardment. Today it's once again the home of Germany's parliament. A glass dome, designed by English architect Sir Norman Foster, now crowns the neo-Renaissance structure originally built in 1894. You can go through the west gate for an elevator ride up to the dome, where a sweeping vista of Berlin opens before you. There's both an observation platform and a rooftop restaurant (the view is better than the food).

Platz der Republik 1. ☎ **030/2273-2152.** Free admission. Daily 8am–midnight (last entrance at 10pm). S-Bahn: Unter den Linden. Bus: 100.

A PARK & A ZOO

Tiergarten ★ Tiergarten, the largest green space in central Berlin, covers just under 2.5 sq. km (1 sq. mile), with more than 23km (14 miles) of meandering walkways. Late in the 19th century, partially to placate growing civic unrest, it was opened to the public, with a layout formalized by one of the leading landscape architects of the era, Peter Josef Lenné. The park was devastated during World War II, and the few trees that remained were chopped down for fuel as Berlin shuddered through the winter of 1945 and 1946. Beginning in 1955, trees were replanted and alleyways, canals, ponds, and flower beds rearranged in their original patterns through the cooperative efforts of many landscape architects.

The park's largest monuments include the Berlin Zoo, described below, and the **Siegessäule (Victory Column),** which perches atop a soaring red-granite pedestal from a position in the center of the wide boulevard (Strasse des 17 Juni) that neatly bisects the Tiergarten into roughly equivalent sections.

From the Bahnhof Zoo to the Brandenburger Tor. Bus: 100, 141, or 341 to Grosser Stern.

Zoologischer Garten Berlin (Berlin Zoo) ★ Kids Occupying most of the southwest corner of Tiergarten is Germany's oldest and finest zoo. Founded in 1844, it's a short walk north from the Ku'damm. Until World War II, the zoo boasted thousands of animals of every imaginable species and description—many familiar to Berliners by nicknames. The tragedy of the war struck here as well, and by the end of 1945, only 91 animals remained. Since the war, the city has been rebuilding its large and unique collection; today more than 13,000 animals are housed here. The zoo has Europe's most modern birdhouse, with more than 550 species. The most valuable inhabitants here are giant pandas.

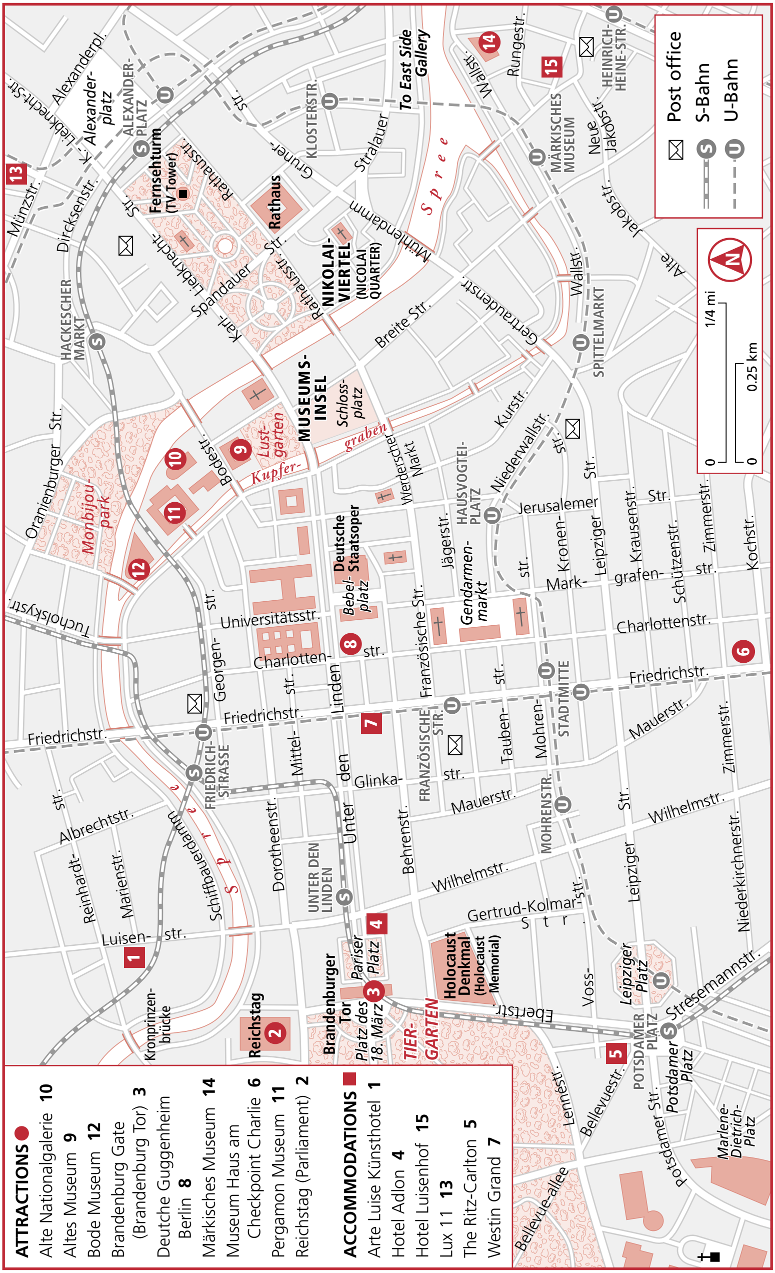
Hardenbergplatz 8. ☎ **030/25-40-10.** www.zoo-berlin.de. Zoo 12€ ($17) adults, 9€ ($13) seniors, 6€ ($8.70) children. Zoo and aquarium 18€ ($26) adults, 14€ ($20) seniors, 9€ ($13) children. Zoo Nov–Feb daily 9am–5pm; Mar daily 9am–5:30pm; Apr–Sept daily 9am–6:30pm; Oct daily 9am–6pm. Aquarium year-round, daily 9am–6pm. S-Bahn/U-Bahn: Zoologischer Garten.

ORGANIZED TOURS

BUS & BOAT TOURS Some of the best tours are operated by **Severin+Kühn,** Kurfürstendamm 216 (☎ **030/880-41-90;** www.severin-kuehn-berlin.de), which offers half a dozen tours of Berlin and its environs. Their 2-hour **"Berlin City Tour"** departs at 30-minute intervals April to October daily from 10am to 6pm. Priced at 20€ ($29) per person, the tour passes most of the important attractions using buses equipped with taped commentaries in eight languages. Among the attractions visited are the Europa-Center, the Brandenburg Gate, and Unter den Linden.

You can supplement this bus tour with a 1-hour boat ride on the Spree, which will carry you past the riverbanks and among some of the backwater harbors that are difficult to access except by water. The boat-tour supplement is available only April to October, with departures at 10:30am Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday for 28€ ($41) per person. The Severin+Kühn drivers and staff, at the end of the bus tour portion of the experience, will deposit you at the appropriate quays (either adjacent to the

Berlin-Mitte


Post office
S-Bahn
U-Bahn
1/4 mi
0
0.25 km
0
N
Alexanderpl.
Alexander-platz
ALEXANDER-PLATZ
Liebknecht-Str.
Münzstr.
Dircksenstr.
HACKESCHER MARKT
Oranienburger Str.
Monbijou-park
Tucholskystr.
Friedrichstr.
Albrechtstr.
Reinhardt-str.
Marienstr.
Luisen-str.
Kronprinzen-brücke
Schiffbauerdamm
S p r e e
Reichstag
FRIEDRICH-STRASSE
Georgen-str.
Universitätsstr.
Dorotheenstr.
Mittel-str.
UNTER DEN LINDEN
Unter den Linden
Glinka-str.
Charlotten-str.
Brandenburger Tor
Platz des 18. März
Pariser Platz
TIER-GARTEN
Behrenstr.
Bebel-platz
Deutsche Staatsoper
Kupfer-graben
Bodestr.
Lust-garten
MUSEUMS-INSEL
Schloss-platz
Fernsehturm (TV Tower)
Rathausstr.
Rathaus
Spandauer Str.
Karl-Liebknecht-Str.
NIKOLAI-VIERTEL (NICOLAI QUARTER)
Mühlendamm
Gruner Str.
KLOSTERSTR.
Stralauer Str.
To East Side Gallery
Wallstr.
Rungestr.
MÄRKISCHES MUSEUM
Neue Jakobstr.
HEINRICH-HEINE-STR.
Jakobstr.
Alte Jakobstr.
SPITTELMARKT
Wallstr.
Gertraudenstr.
Breite Str.
Werderscher Markt
Kurstr.
Niederwallstr.
Jägerstr.
HAUSVOGTEI-PLATZ
Jerusalemer Str.
Kronen-str.
Leipziger Str.
Krausenstr.
Mark-grafen-str.
Schützenstr.
Zimmerstr.
Kochstr.
Gendarmen-markt
Französische Str.
FRANZÖSISCHE STR.
Tauben-str.
Mohren-str.
STADTMITTE
Charlottenstr.
Friedrichstr.
Mauerstr.
Zimmerstr.
MOHRENSTR.
Wilhelmstr.
Leipziger Str.
Niederkirchnerstr.
Gertrud-Kolmar-Str.
Holocaust Denkmal (Holocaust Memorial)
Ebertstr.
Voss-str.
Leipziger Platz
POTSDAMER PLATZ
Potsdamer Platz
Stresemannstr.
Bellevuestr.
Lennéstr.
Bellevue-allee
Potsdamer Str.
Marlene-Dietrich-Platz
Spree

ATTRACTIONS ●
- Alte Nationalgalerie **10**
- Altes Museum **9**
- Bode Museum **12**
- Brandenburg Gate (Brandenburg Tor) **3**
- Deutche Guggenheim Berlin **8**
- Märkisches Museum **14**
- Museum Haus am Checkpoint Charlie **6**
- Pergamon Museum **11**
- Reichstag (Parliament) **2**

ACCOMMODATIONS ■
- Arte Luise Künsthotel **1**
- Hotel Adlon **4**
- Hotel Luisenhof **15**
- Lux 11 **13**
- The Ritz-Carlton **5**
- Westin Grand **7**

Berliner Dom or in the Nikolaiviertel, depending on the day of your visit) in time for the boat's departure.

More appealing and personalized is the 3-hour **"Big Berlin Tour,"** which departs 10am and 2pm daily, costs around 22€ ($32) per person, and—depending on the itinerary—usually incorporates sights not included on the shorter tour. Among the attractions is a section of the Grünewald Forest.

One interesting tour lasts 4 hours and visits Potsdam and Sans Souci Palace, former residence of Frederick the Great. The price is 49€ ($71) per person. Departures are Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday at 10am; May and October, there are additional departures Friday, Saturday, and Sunday at 2:15pm.

THE SHOPPING SCENE

The central shopping destinations are **Kurfürstendamm, Tauentzienstrasse, Am Zoo,** and **Kantstrasse.** You might also want to walk up streets that intersect with Tauentzienstrasse: Marburger, Ranke, and Nürnberger. Most stores are open Monday through Friday from 9 or 10am to 6 or 6:30pm. Many stores stay open late on Thursday evening, usually until about 8:30pm. Saturday hours for most stores are from 9 or 10am to 2pm.

One of Berlin's largest indoor shopping centers, topped by the Mercedes-Benz logo, is the **Europa-Center,** Breitscheidplatz Tauentzienstrasse (✆ **030/264-97-940;** U-Bahn: Kurfürstendamm), in the heart of the western city. You'll find a number of restaurants and cafes, in addition to an array of shops offering wide-ranging merchandise.

The city's largest shopping and entertainment complex is the **Potsdamer Platz Arkaden,** Alte Potsdamer Strasse 7 (✆ **030/25-59-27-0**), where you'll find nearly 150 shops, cafes, and restaurants on three different levels. The square is also home to the Grand Hyatt Berlin and a movie complex as well as the Berlin casino.

TWO STORES WORTH A LOOK

Known popularly as KaDeWe (pronounced Kah-*Day*-Vay), **Kaufhaus des Westens,** Wittenbergplatz (✆ **030/21-21-0;** www.kadewe.de; U-Bahn: Wittenbergplatz), is about 2 blocks from the Kurfürstendamm. The huge luxury store, whose name means "department store of the west," was established some 75 years ago. Displaying extravagant items, it's known mainly for its sixth-floor food department. It's been called the greatest food emporium in the world. More than 1,000 varieties of German sausages are displayed, and delicacies from all over the world are shipped in.

KPM, Wegelystrasse 1 (✆ **030/39-009-0;** S-Bahn: Tiergarten), is one of Europe's most prestigious emporiums of luxury dinnerware. Königliche Porzellan Manufaktur was founded in 1763 when Frederick the Great invested his personal funds in a lackluster porcelain factory and elevated it to royal status. Each item is hand-painted, hand-decorated, and hand-packed in almost unbreakable formats that can be shipped virtually anywhere.

BERLIN AFTER DARK

The German *Zitty* and *Tip* include some listings in English, and keep you informed about various nightlife and cultural venues. Both *Berlin Programm* and *Kultur!news* also contain theater listings and other diversions. Performance arts are also covered in *Berlin,* a quarterly published in both English and German. These pamphlets and magazines are available at news kiosks.

THE PERFORMING ARTS

The **Berliner Philharmonisches Orchester (Berlin Philharmonic)** is one of the world's premier orchestras. Its home, the **Philharmonie,** in the Kulturforum, Herbert-von-Karajan Strasse 1 (✆ **030/254-88-000;** www.berlin-philharmonic.com; U-Bahn: Potsdamer Platz), is a significant piece of modern architecture; you may want to visit even if you don't attend a performance. None of the 2,218 seats are more than 30m (100 ft.) from the rostrum. The box office is open Monday to Friday 3 to 6pm and Saturday and Sunday 11am to 2pm. You can place orders by phone at ✆ **030/25-48-89-99.** If you're staying in a first-class or deluxe hotel, you can usually get the concierge to obtain seats for you. Tickets are 20€ to 85€ ($29–$123), special concerts 40€ to 120€ ($58–$174).

The famed **Deutsche Oper Berlin (Berlin Opera),** Bismarckstrasse 35 (✆ **030/34-384-01;** www.deutscheoperberlin.de; U-Bahn: Deutsche Oper; S-Bahn: Charlottenburg), performs in one of the world's great opera houses, built on the site of the prewar opera house in Charlottenburg. A ballet company performs once a week. Concerts, including *Lieder* evenings, are also presented on the opera stage. Tickets are 12€ to 112€ ($17–$162).

Deutsche Staatsoper (German State Opera), Unter den Linden 7 (✆ **030/20-35-40;** www.staatsoperberlin.de; U-Bahn: Französische Strasse), presents some of the finest opera in the world, along with a regular repertoire of ballet and concerts. Its home was rebuilt within the walls of the original 1740s Staatsoper, destroyed in World War II. The box office generally is open Monday to Friday 11am to 7pm and Saturday and Sunday 2 to 7pm. Concert tickets are 10€ to 38€ ($15–$55); opera tickets are 5€ to 120€ ($7.25–$174). The opera closes from late June to the end of August.

Komische Oper Berlin, Behrensstrasse 55–57 (✆ **030/20-26-00;** www.komische-oper-berlin.de; U-Bahn: Französische Strasse; S-Bahn: Friedrichstrasse or Unter den Linden), lies in the middle of the city near Brandenburger Tor. Over the years, it has become one of the most innovative theater ensembles in Europe, presenting many avant-garde productions. The box office is open Monday to Saturday 11am to 7pm and Sunday 1pm until 1½ hours before the performance. Tickets are 8€ to 85€ ($12–$123).

LIVE-MUSIC CLUBS

A-Trane, Bleibtreustrasse 105 (✆ **030/313-25-50;** www.a-trane.de; S-Bahn: Savignyplatz), is a small and smoky jazz house where virtually everyone seems to have a working familiarity with great names from the jazz world's past and present. The name is a hybrid of the old Duke Ellington standard "Take the 'A' Train," with the "ane" in "Trane" derived from the legendary John Coltrane's name. It's open daily at 8pm; music begins around 10pm. Closing hours vary. Cover is 10€ to 20€ ($15–$29), depending on who's playing.

With its kitschy knickknacks, colored lights, and wine-red walls, **Wild at Heart,** Wienerstrasse 20 (✆ **030-6-11-92-31;** www.wildatheartberlin.de; U-Bahn: Görlitzer Bahnhof), is dedicated to the rowdier side of rock. Hard-core punk, rock, and rockabilly bands from Germany and elsewhere are featured. Live performances take place Wednesday to Saturday nights. It's open Monday to Friday 8pm to 3am, and Saturday and Sunday 8pm to 10am (yes, you may miss breakfast). Cover is 10€ to 15€ ($15–$22).

Hypertrendy **Oxymoron,** in the courtyard at Rosenthaler Strasse 40–41 (✆ **030/283-91-88-6;** www.oxymoron-berlin.de; S-Bahn: Hackenschen Höfe), is a lot of fun on most nights. The setting is a high-ceilinged room with old-fashioned proportions and enough battered kitsch to remind you of a century-old coffeehouse in Franz-Josef's Vienna. Local wits refer to it as a *Gesamtkunstwerk*—a self-obsessed, self-sustaining work of art that might have been appreciated by Wagner. On Friday and Saturday after around 11pm, a slightly claustrophobic, much-used annex room—all black with ghostly flares of neon—opens as a disco, usually with a clientele that's about 75% hetero and 100% iconoclastic. If live bands appear at all, it will usually be on Thursday. The restaurant is open daily from 11am to 2am. Cover is 8€ to 12€ ($12–$17).

Knaack-Klub, Greifswalderstrasse 224 (✆ **030/442-7061;** www.knaack-berlin.de; S-Bahn: Alexanderplatz), is a household name to an army of young clubgoers in Berlin, thanks partly to the fact that its prices are cheaper than any other club in the city, and because of its sprawling premises that incorporate four floors, seven bars, a roiling mass of clients, and a huge variety of musical styles. Painted a strident shade of red, it was originally built as a slaughterhouse in the 19th century, with a small part of its echoing interior transformed into a nightclub in 1952. Expect a very loud medley of, among others, "alternative hard-core punk," heavy metal, indie, rock, and disco from the '70s and '80s. There's even a karaoke bar. Some of the bars within this place open nightly at 7pm; and by 9pm, the whole place is usually in full swing, staying open until at least 2am, and sometimes later. Performances by live bands are interspersed with the recorded tunes every Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday. Depending on what time of night you arrive, the cover charge ranges from 3€ to 6€ ($4.35–$8.70).

The premises that contain **Opernschänke,** in the Opernpalais, Unter den Linden 5 (✆ **030/202-683;** U-Bahn: Friedrichstrasse), were built in 1762, a fact that seems to add a certain importance to a setting that's undeniably historic, and to the artists who perform their music live. For the most part, this is a restaurant serving Continental food every day from noon to midnight, with the last order accepted at 11:30pm. Main courses cost 15€ to 25€ ($22–$36). The food is augmented with live music, usually jazz, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights from 6pm to 1am, as well as Sunday afternoon from 11am to 2pm, as part of set-price "Jazz Brunch" costing 26€ ($38). After the end of the jazz brunch, the restaurant remains open until 7pm for food and drink.

DANCE CLUBS

Gays, straights, and everybody in between show up at **SO 36,** Oranienstrasse 190 (✆ **030/01-40-13-06;** www.so36.de; U-Bahn: Görlitzer Bahnhof), for wild action and frantic dancing into the wee hours. A young, vibrant Kreuzberg crowd is attracted to this joint where the scene changes nightly. On Wednesday and Sunday it's strictly gay and lesbian disco. On Friday and Saturday the parties "get really wild, man," as the bartender accurately promised. Some nights are devoted to themes such as James Bond where you can show up looking like a Cold War spy. Hours are Wednesday through Saturday from 10pm until "we feel like closing," and Sunday from 5pm to 1am. Cover ranges from 6€ to 22€ ($8.70–$32), depending on the venue.

Metropole, Nollendorfplatz 5, Schöneberg (✆ **030/217-36-80;** U-Bahn: Nollendorfplatz), one of the leading dance clubs in Berlin, opens only on weekends and attracts

Moments Come to the Cabaret!

If you know how to sing "Life is a cabaret, old chum," in German no less, you may enjoy an evening in this postwar "Porcupine." Like its namesake, **Die Stachelschweine,** Tauentzienstrasse and Budapester Strasse (in the basement of the Europa-Center; ✆ **030/261-47-95;** U-Bahn: Kurfürstendamm), pokes prickly fun at German, and often American, politicians. Get a ticket early, because the Berliners love this one. The box office is open Tuesday to Friday 11am to 2pm and 3 to 7:30pm, and Saturday 10am to 2pm and 3 to 8:45pm. Shows are presented Tuesday to Friday at 8pm and Saturday at 6 and 9pm. Cover is 12€ to 24€ ($17–$35). The cabaret is closed during July.

Opened in 1893 as one of the most popular purveyors of vaudeville in Europe, the **Wintergarten,** Potsdamer Strasse 96 (✆ **030/25-00-88-88;** U-Bahn: Kurfürstenstrasse), operated in fits and starts throughout the war years, until it was demolished in 1944 by Allied bombers. In 1992, a modernized design reopened. Today, it's the largest and most nostalgic Berlin cabaret, laden with schmaltzy reminders of yesteryear and staffed with chorus girls; magicians from America, Britain, and countries of the former Soviet bloc; circus acrobats; political satirists; and musician/dancer combos. Shows begin at 8pm Monday to Friday, at 6 and 10pm Saturday, and at 6pm Sunday. Shows last around 2¼ hours. The box office is open Monday to Saturday 10am to 6pm and Sunday 2 to 6pm. Cover Friday and Saturday is 25€ to 55€ ($36–$80), Sunday to Thursday 15€ to 45€ ($22–$65), depending on the seat. The price including a two-course meal is 60€ ($87). On Friday and Saturday, the price including a two-course meal is 80€ ($116). The price includes your first drink.

patrons ages 18 to 38. Built as a theater around a century ago, Metropole hosts live concerts and special events. It's open Friday and Saturday 9pm to 6am. Cover is 10€ ($15).

First opened almost 100 years ago, **Clärchens Ballhaus,** 24 Augustrasse (✆ **030/282-9295;** www.ballhaus.de; S-Bahn: Oranienburger Strasse), has reemerged as a landmark in old East Berlin. The legendary dance hall opened in the autumn of 1913 right before The Great War. The club thrived until the end of World War II. A hot DJ and live bands rage through the night, with occasional tango dancers or whatever, even Johann Strauss music. Gypsy street musicians are a favorite. Everybody from wild Turks out for a night on the town to elderly East Berlin couples fill the joint. Nazi officers once used the top floor as a private club. It's usually open from 7 to 11pm but not every night, so call before heading here.

DAY TRIPS FROM BERLIN

POTSDAM ★★★ Of all the tours possible from Berlin, the best attraction is the baroque town of Potsdam, 24km (15 miles) southwest of Berlin on the Havel River, often called Germany's Versailles. From the beginning of the 18th century it was the residence and garrison town of the Prussian kings. World attention focused on Potsdam from July 17 to August 2, 1945, when the Potsdam Conference shaped postwar Europe.

West of the historic core lies **Sans Souci Park,** with its palaces and gardens. Northwest of Sans Souci are the New Garden and the Cecilienhof Palace, on the Heiliger See.

Getting There There are 29 daily connections by rail from Bahnhof Zoo (trip time: 23 min.) and Berliner Hauptbahnhof (54 min.). For rail information in Potsdam, call ✆ **018/05-99-66-33.** Potsdam can also be reached by S-Bahn (30 min.). Car access is via the E-30 Autobahn east and west or the E-53 north and south.

Visitor Information The organization known as **Tourist-Information der Stadt Potsdam** maintains two offices in Potsdam, one at Friedrich-Ebert-Strasse 5 and another at the **Neuer Markt** (both branches can be reached at ✆ **0331/275-58-50**). Both branches are open April to October, Monday to Friday 9am to 7pm, Saturday and Sunday 9am to 4pm; November to March, Monday to Friday 10am to 6pm, Saturday and Sunday 10am to 4pm.

Exploring Potsdam In the 18th century, Prussia's answer to Paris's Château de Versailles was clustered within the **Sans Souci Park** ★★★, whose gardens and fountains represented the finest and most elegant aspect of north Germany during the Age of Enlightenment. Covering about a square mile of terraced, statue-dotted grounds, a very short walk west of Potsdam's center, it's the destination of many locals, who stroll around its precincts, perhaps reflecting on another era of German history. You can enter from many points around the perimeter of the park, but the main entrance, and the one closest to the park's major monument, is in **Zur Historisches Mühle,** inside of which you'll find the Welcome Station (Besucher Zentrum; ✆ **0331/96-94-200**). Whereas you can visit the park's buildings only during the hours noted below, you can stroll within most areas of the park at any hour.

Frederick II ("the Great") chose Potsdam rather than Berlin as his permanent residence. The style of the buildings he ordered erected is called Potsdam rococo, an achievement primarily of Georg Wenzeslaus von Knobelsdorff. Knobelsdorff built **Sans Souci Palace** ★★★, with its terraces and gardens, as a summer residence for Frederick II. The palace, inaugurated in 1747, is a long one-story building crowned by a dome and flanked by round pavilions. The music salon is the supreme example of the rococo style, and the elliptical Marble Hall is the largest in the palace. As a guest of the king, Voltaire visited in 1750.

The Palace of Sans Souci is open April to October, daily 9am to 5pm; November to March, Tuesday to Sunday 9am to 4pm. You'll have to visit its interior as part of a guided, 40-minute tour that's conducted mostly in German, and which costs 8€

Tips A Fabulous Place to Dine in Potsdam

In 1878, a courtier in the service of the Prussian monarch built an elegant villa on the shore of the Heiliger See. During the 1920s, author Bernhardt Kellerman wrote some of his best work here. After a Cold War stint as a base for Russian officers, it now functions as the most talked-about restaurant in Potsdam: **Villa Kellerman,** Mangerstrasse 33–36 (✆ **0331/29-15-72;** bus no. 695). The classical Italian cuisine might include marinated carpaccio of whitefish; a mixed platter of antipasti; spaghetti with scampi, herbs, and garlic; or John Dory in butter-and-caper sauce. Reservations are recommended. American Express and Visa are accepted. It's open Tuesday to Sunday noon to 10pm.

($12) for adults and 5€ ($7.25) for children 17 and under. Entrance is free for children 5 and under.

Schloss Charlottenhof ★, south of Okonomieweg (✆ **0331/969-42-28;** tram no. 1 or 4), was designed by Karl Friedrich Schinkel, the great neoclassical master, and built between 1826 and 1829. He erected the palace in the style of a villa and designed most of the furniture inside. It's open only between May and October, every Tuesday to Sunday from 10am to 5pm, and completely closed the rest of the year. Guided tours, mostly in German, depart at 30-minute intervals throughout opening hours, and are priced at 4€ ($5.80) for adults, 3€ ($4.35) for children 6 to 17, free for children 5 and under.

North of the 80-hectare (200-acre) park, the **Cecilienhof Palace** ★, Im Neuer Garten (✆ **0331/969-42-44;** tram no. 92 or 95, then bus no. 692), was built in the style of an English country house by Kaiser Wilhelm II between 1913 and 1917. The 176-room mansion became the new residence of Crown Prince Wilhelm of Hohenzollern. It was occupied as a royal residence until March 1945, when the crown prince and his family fled to the West, taking many of their possessions. Cecilienhof was the headquarters of the 1945 Potsdam Conference. It's open year-round, Tuesday through Sunday, as follows: April through October from 9am to 5pm; November through March from 9am to 4pm. Between November and March visitors can see the palace interior only as part of a guided tour; adults pay 4€ ($5.80), and children 6 and under and students pay 3€ ($4.35). Between April and October guided tours are 5€ ($7.25) for adults, and 4€ ($5.80) for children 6 and under and students; during this period (April to October), if visitors opt not to participate in the guided tour, they're free to visit the palace on their own for 4€ ($5.80) for adults and 3€ ($4.35) for students.

2 Munich ★★★ & the Bavarian Alps ★★

Sprawling Munich, home of some 1.3 million people and such industrial giants as Siemens and BMW, is the pulsating capital and cultural center of Bavaria. One of Germany's most festive cities, Munich exudes a hearty Bavarian *Gemütlichkeit.*

Longtime resident Thomas Mann wrote, "Munich sparkles." Although the city he described was swept away by some of the most severe bombing of World War II, Munich continues to sparkle, as it introduces itself to thousands of new visitors annually.

The Munich cliché as a beer-drinking town of folkloric charm is marketed by the city itself. Despite a roaring gross national product, Munich likes to present itself as a large, agrarian village peopled by jolly beer drinkers who cling to rustic origins despite the omnipresence of symbols of the computer age, high-tech industries, a sophisticated business scene, a good deal of Hollywood-style glamour, and fairly hip night action. Bavarians themselves are a minority in Munich—more than two-thirds of the population comes from other parts of the country or from outside Germany—but everybody buys into the folkloric charm and schmaltz.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **By Plane** The **Munich International Airport** (✆ **089/97-52-13-13;** www.munich-airport.de) lies 27km (17 miles) northeast of central Munich at Erdinger Moos.

S-Bahn (✆ **089/41-42-43-44**) trains connect the airport with the Hauptbahnhof (main railroad station) in downtown Munich, with departures every 20 minutes for the 40-minute trip. The fare is 10€ ($15); Eurailpass holders ride free. A taxi into the center costs about 50€ to 60€ ($73–$87). You can also take the Lufthansa Airport

Munich

ATTRACTIONS ●

Alte Pinakothek	**14**
Altes Rathaus	**28**
Amalienburg	**18**
Antikensammkungen	**33**
Asamkirche	**4**
Bayerisches Nationalmuseum	**20**
Deutsches Museum	**23**
Frauenkirche	**30**
Glyptothek	**11**
Marstallmuseum	**17**
Michaelskirche	**5**
Neue Pinakothek	**15**
Neues Rathaus	**29**
Peterskirche	**25**
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ⓘ	Information
✉	Post Office
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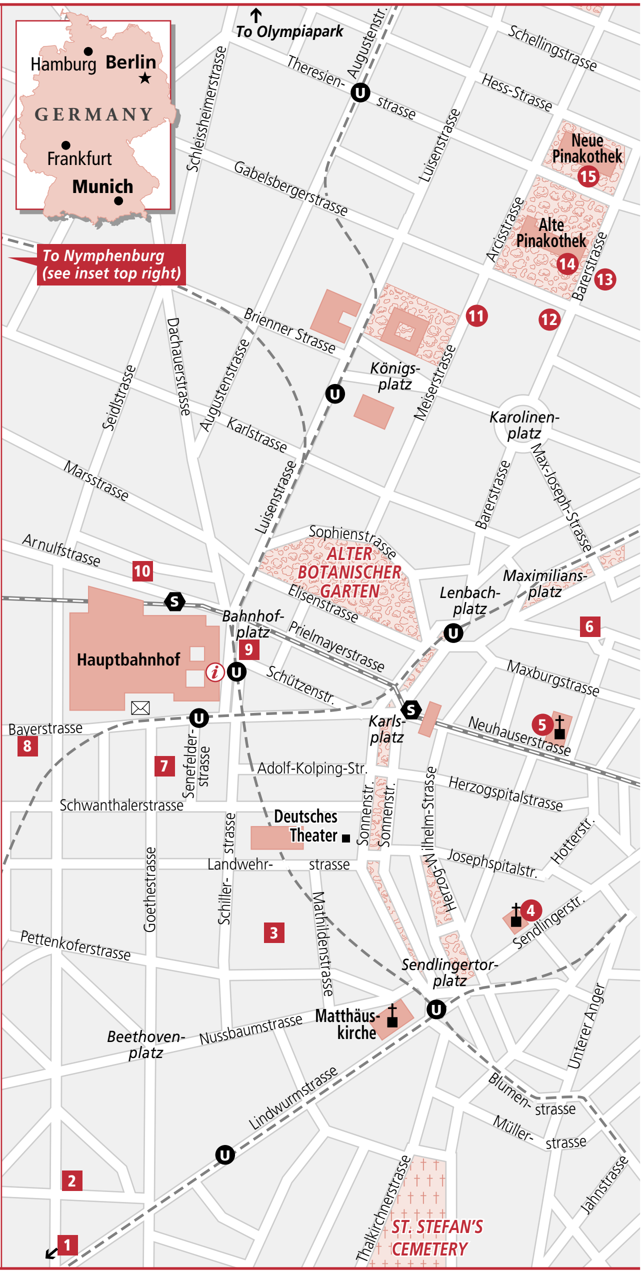
Ⓤ	U-Bahn



Hamburg
Berlin
GERMANY
Frankfurt
Munich
To Olympiapark
To Nymphenburg (see inset top right)
Schellingstrasse
Theresien- strasse
Augustenstr.
Hess-Strasse
Schleissheimerstrasse
Luisenstrasse
Neue Pinakothek
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Gabelsbergerstrasse
Arcisstrasse
Alte Pinakothek
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Barerstrasse
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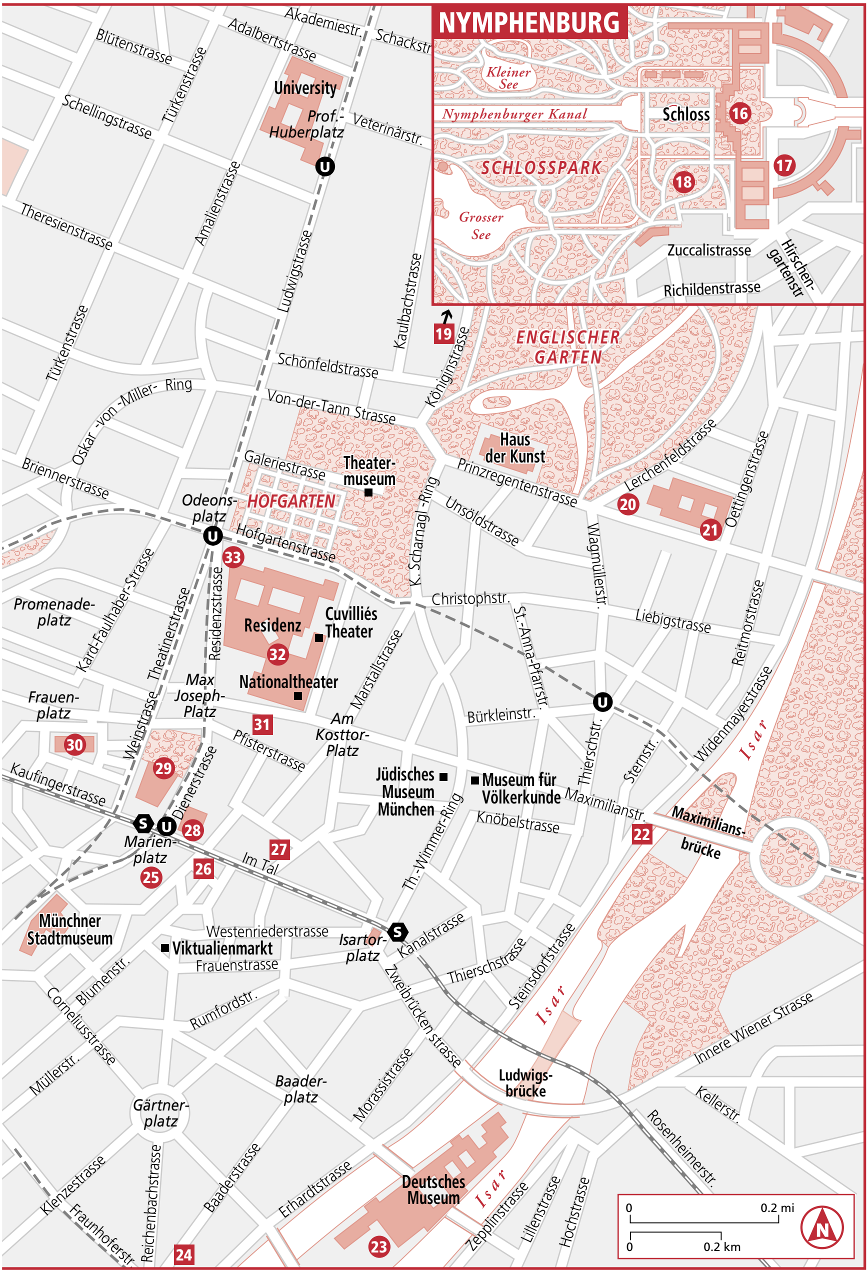
12
Brienner Strasse
Königs- platz
Dachauerstrasse
Augustenstrasse
Meiserstrasse
Seidlstrasse
Karlstrasse
Karolinen- platz
Max-Joseph-Strasse
Luisenstrasse
Marsstrasse
Barerstrasse
Sophienstrasse
ALTER BOTANISCHER GARTEN
Arnulfstrasse
10
Elisenstrasse
Lenbach- platz
Maximilians- platz
Bahnhof- platz
6
Hauptbahnhof
9
Prielmayerstrasse
Schützenstr.
Maxburgstrasse
Bayerstrasse
8
Karls- platz
Neuhauserstrasse
5
7
Senefelder- strasse
Adolf-Kolping-Str.
Herzogspitalstrasse
Schwanthalerstrasse
Deutsches Theater
Sonnenstr.
Sonnenstr.
Herzog-Wilhelm-Strasse
Josephspitalstr.
Hotterstr.
Goethestrasse
Schiller- strasse
Landwehr- strasse
4
Sendlingerstr.
Pettenkoferstrasse
3
Mathildenstrasse
Sendlingertor- platz
Unterer Anger
Beethoven- platz
Nussbaumstrasse
Matthäus- kirche
Lindwurmstrasse
Blumen- strasse
Müller- strasse
2
Thalkirchnerstrasse
ST. STEFAN'S CEMETERY
Jahnstrasse
1


NYMPHENBURG
Kleiner See
Nymphenburger Kanal
Schloss
16
17
SCHLOSSPARK
18
Grosser See
Zuccalistrasse
Richildenstrasse
Hirschengartenstr.
Akademiestr.
Adalbertstrasse
Schackstr.
Blütenstrasse
University
Prof.-Huberplatz
Veterinärstr.
Türkenstrasse
Schellingstrasse
Amalienstrasse
Theresienstrasse
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ENGLISCHER GARTEN
Türkenstrasse
Schönfeldstrasse
Oskar-von-Miller-Ring
Von-der-Tann Strasse
Haus der Kunst
Galeriestrasse
Theater-museum
Prinzregentenstrasse
Lerchenfeldstrasse
Briennerstrasse
Odeons-platz
HOFGARTEN
K.-Scharnagl-Ring
Unsöldstrasse
20
21
Oettingenstrasse
Wagmüllerstr.
Hofgartenstrasse
33
Promenade-platz
Kard.-Faulhaber-Strasse
Theatinerstrasse
Residenzstrasse
Residenz
Cuvilliés Theater
Christophstr.
Liebigstrasse
Reitmorstrasse
St.-Anna-Pfarrstr.
32
Marstallstrasse
Frauen-platz
Max Joseph-Platz
Nationaltheater
Bürkleinstr.
Widenmayerstrasse
Weinstrasse
31
Am Kosttor-Platz
Thierschstr.
Sternstr.
Isar
30
Pfisterstrasse
29
Dienerstrasse
Jüdisches Museum München
Museum für Völkerkunde
Maximilianstr.
Kaufingerstrasse
Th.-Wimmer-Ring
Knöbelstrasse
22
Maximilians-brücke
Marien-platz
28
25
26
27
Im Tal
Münchner Stadtmuseum
Westenriederstrasse
Viktualienmarkt
Frauenstrasse
Isartor-platz
Kanalstrasse
Zweibrückenstrasse
Thierschstrasse
Steinsdorfstrasse
Isar
Blumenstr.
Corneliusstrasse
Rumfordstr.
Innere Wiener Strasse
Müllerstr.
Baader-platz
Morassistrasse
Ludwigs-brücke
Kellerstr.
Gärtner-platz
Rosenheimerstr.
Klenzestrasse
Fraunhoferstr.
Reichenbachstrasse
Baaderstrasse
Erhardtstrasse
Deutsches Museum
Isar
Zeppelinstrasse
Lilienstrasse
Hochstrasse
24
23
0
0.2 mi
0
0.2 km
N

Bus, which runs directly into the heart of Munich, with just one stop in Schwabing. The trip takes 35 to 50 minutes, depending on traffic, and costs 10€ to 15€ ($15–$22) round-trip.

By Train Munich's main rail station, the **Hauptbahnhof,** on Bahnhofplatz, is one of Europe's largest. Near the city center, it contains a hotel, restaurants, shops, a parking garage, and banking facilities. All major German cities are connected to this station, most with service every hour. For information about long-distance trains, call ✆ **0800/150-70-90.**

By Bus Munich is one of the biggest metropolitan areas in Europe, and as such, receives dozens of buses that congregate here from other parts of Europe. A few of them, including the bus that services central Munich from the airport, stop in the town center, at the **Zentraler BusBahnhof,** immediately adjacent (on the western end) of the city's main railway station (Hauptbanhhof München), with an entrance on the Arnulfstrasse. Note, however, that the majority of long-distance buses pulling into Munich arrive in the city's northern suburbs, at the **Fröttmanning Bus Terminal,** about 7km (about 4⅓ miles) north of the Marienplatz, beside the highway running between Munich and Nürnberg. (From central Munich, take U-Bahn line 6 for a 15-min. ride to reach it.) For information about most bus services coming into Munich from other parts of Germany and the rest of Europe, call **Deutsch Touring** at ✆ **089/88-98-95-13;** www.deutsch-touring.de.

VISITOR INFORMATION There are three tourist offices in Munich: Sendlinger Strasse 1 (✆ **089/233-03-00**), open Monday to Friday 8am to 8pm, Saturday 9am to 8pm, and Sunday 10am to 6pm; Bahnhofplatz 2, Monday to Saturday 9am to 8pm, Sunday 10am to 6pm; and Marienplatz in Neuen Rathaus, Monday to Friday 10am to 8pm, Saturday 10am to 4pm. For information call ✆ **089/233-03-00.**

Websites Updated for each year's Oktoberfest, **www.munich-tourist.de** from the Munich Tourist Office includes a program of events, a guide to various beer tents, and images from past festivals. Also included are descriptions of hotel packages and discount voucher packages. All things Bavarian are touched on at **www.bavaria.com**, including Mad King Ludwig's castle, Oktoberfest beers, and a music raft ride down the river Isar.

CITY LAYOUT Munich's Hauptbahnhof lies just west of the town center and opens onto Bahnhofplatz. From the square, you can take Schützenstrasse to **Karlsplatz** (nicknamed Stachus), one of the major centers of Munich. Many tram lines converge on this square. From Karlsplatz, you can continue east along the pedestrians-only Neuhäuserstrasse and Kaufingerstrasse until you reach Marienplatz, where you'll be deep in the Altstadt (Old Town) of Munich.

From **Marienplatz,** the center and heart of the city, you can head north on Dienerstrasse, which will lead you to Residenzstrasse and finally to **Max-Joseph-Platz,** a landmark square, with the National Theater and the former royal palace, the Residenz. East of this square runs **Maximilianstrasse,** the most fashionable shopping and dining street of Munich. Between Marienplatz and the National Theater is the **Platzl** quarter, where you'll want to head for nighttime diversions, as it's the seat of some of the finest (and some of the worst) restaurants in Munich, along with the landmark Hofbräuhaus, the most famous beer hall in Europe.

North of the old town is **Schwabing,** the university and former bohemian section whose main street is Leopoldstrasse. The large, sprawling municipal park grounds, the Englischer Garten, are found due east of Schwabing.

GETTING AROUND **By Public Transportation** The city's efficient rapid-transit system is the **U-Bahn,** or Untergrundbahn, one of the most modern subway systems in Europe. The **S-Bahn** rapid-transit system, a 420km (260-mile) network of tracks, provides service to various city districts and outlying suburbs. The city is also served by a network of **trams** and **buses.** The same ticket entitles you to ride the U-Bahn, the S-Bahn, trams, and buses. For more information, call ✆ **089/210-33-0** or go to www.mvv.muenschen.de.

A single-journey ticket for a ride within the city's central zone—a large area that few tourists ever leave—costs 2.20€ ($3.20). If you go to the outermost zones of the subway system, your ride could cost as much as 8€ ($12). One of the best things about Munich's transit system is that you can make as many free transfers between subways, buses, and trams as you need to reach your destination.

More economical than single-journey tickets is the ***Streifencarte,*** a strip-ticket that contains 10 units, two of which are annulled for each zone of the system you travel through. A Streifencarte costs 10€ ($15). Children ages 6 to 14 can purchase a ***Kinderstreifencarte*** for 4€ ($5.80). With this type of ticket, you can travel in one continuous direction during any 2-hour time period with unlimited transfers. You can also use it for multiple passengers (for two people to ride two zones, simply stamp four units).

An even better deal may be the ***Tageskarte*** (day ticket), which for 5€ ($7.25) gives you unlimited access within the central zone for a full day. Double the price for access to all of Greater Munich—an 80km (50-mile) radius. For more information call ✆ **41-42-43-44;** www.mvv-muenchen.de.

By Taxi Cabs are relatively expensive—you'll pay 2.50€ ($3.65) when you get inside, plus 1.20€ to 1.45€ ($1.75–$2.10) per kilometer (½ mile); add 1€ ($1.45) if you call for pickup. In an emergency, call ✆ **089/2161-0** or 089/194-10 for a radio-dispatched taxi.

By Car Driving in the city, which has an excellent public transportation system, is not advised. The streets around Marienplatz in the Altstadt are pedestrian-only. If you are interested in renting a car locally, try **Sixt Autovermietung,** Einsteinstrasse 106 (✆ **1805/25-25-25**), or look under *Autovermietung* in the Munich Yellow Pages.

By Foot & Bicycle Of course, the best way to explore Munich is by foot, since it has a vast pedestrian zone in the center. Many of its attractions can, in fact, be reached only by foot. Pick up a good map and set out.

The tourist office sells a pamphlet that outlines itineraries for touring Munich by bicycle called *Radl-Touren für unsere Gäste,* costing .40€ (60¢). One of the most convenient places to rent a bike is **Radius Bikes** (✆ **089/59-61-13**), at the far end of the Hauptbahnhof, near lockers opposite tracks 27 and 36. The charge is 12€ to 16€ ($17–$23) up to 4 hours, or else 14€ to 18€ ($20–$26) from 10am to 6pm. Mountain bikes are rented for about 25% more. A deposit of 50€ ($73) is assessed; students and Eurailpass holders are granted a 10% discount. The store is open May to early October daily 10am to 6pm; it's closed November to April.

Value A Money-Saving Tip

Munich's S-Bahn is covered by Eurail, so if you have a rail pass, don't buy a separate ticket.

FAST FACTS: Munich

American Express The American Express Foreign Exchange Service, Kaufingerstrasse 24 (✆ **089/228-013-87**), is open Monday to Friday 9:30am to 6:30pm, Saturday from 10am to 3pm. Reisland American Express, Promenadeplatz 6 (✆ **089/228-014-65;** U-Bahn: Marienplatz), is open for mail pickup and check cashing Monday to Friday 9am to 6pm, Saturday 9:30am to 12:30pm.

Business Hours Most **banks** are open Monday to Friday 8:30am to 12:30pm and 1:30 to 3:30pm (many stay open until 5:30pm on Thurs). Most **businesses** and **stores** are open Monday to Friday 9am to 6pm and Saturday 9am to 2pm. On *langer Samstag* (1st Sat of the month), stores remain open until 6pm. Many observe an 8 or 9pm closing on Thursday.

Consulates There's a **United States** consulate at Känigstrasse 4–5 (✆ **089/288-80;** U-Bahn: Universitäl); hours are Monday to Friday 8 to 11am. The Consulate General Office for the **United Kingdom** at Bürkleinstrasse 10 (✆ **089/21-10-90;** U-Bahn: Isartor) is open Monday to Friday 8:30am to noon and 1 to 3:30pm. The consulate of **Canada** at Tal Strasse 29 (✆ **089/219-95-70;** U-Bahn: Marienplatz) is open Monday to Thursday 9am to noon and 2 to 5pm, Friday 9am to noon and 2 to 3:30pm. The governments of Australia and New Zealand do not maintain offices in Munich.

Currency See "Fast Facts: Berlin," p. 374.

Currency Exchange You can get a better rate at a bank than at your hotel. On weekends or at night, you can exchange money at the Hauptbahnhof exchange, open daily from 6am to 11:30pm.

Dentists & Doctors For an English-speaking dentist, go to **Klinik und Poliklinik für Kieferchirurgie der Universität München,** Lindwurmstrasse 2A (✆ **089/51-60-00;** U-Bahn: Goetheplatz); it deals with emergency cases and is always open. The American, British, and Canadian consulates keep a list of recommended English-speaking physicians. For dental or medical emergencies, call **Notfallpraxis,** Elisenstrasse 3 (✆ **089/55-17-71;** bus no. 69). It's open Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday from 7 to 11pm; Wednesday and Friday from 2 to 11pm; and Saturday, Sunday, and holidays from 8am to 11pm.

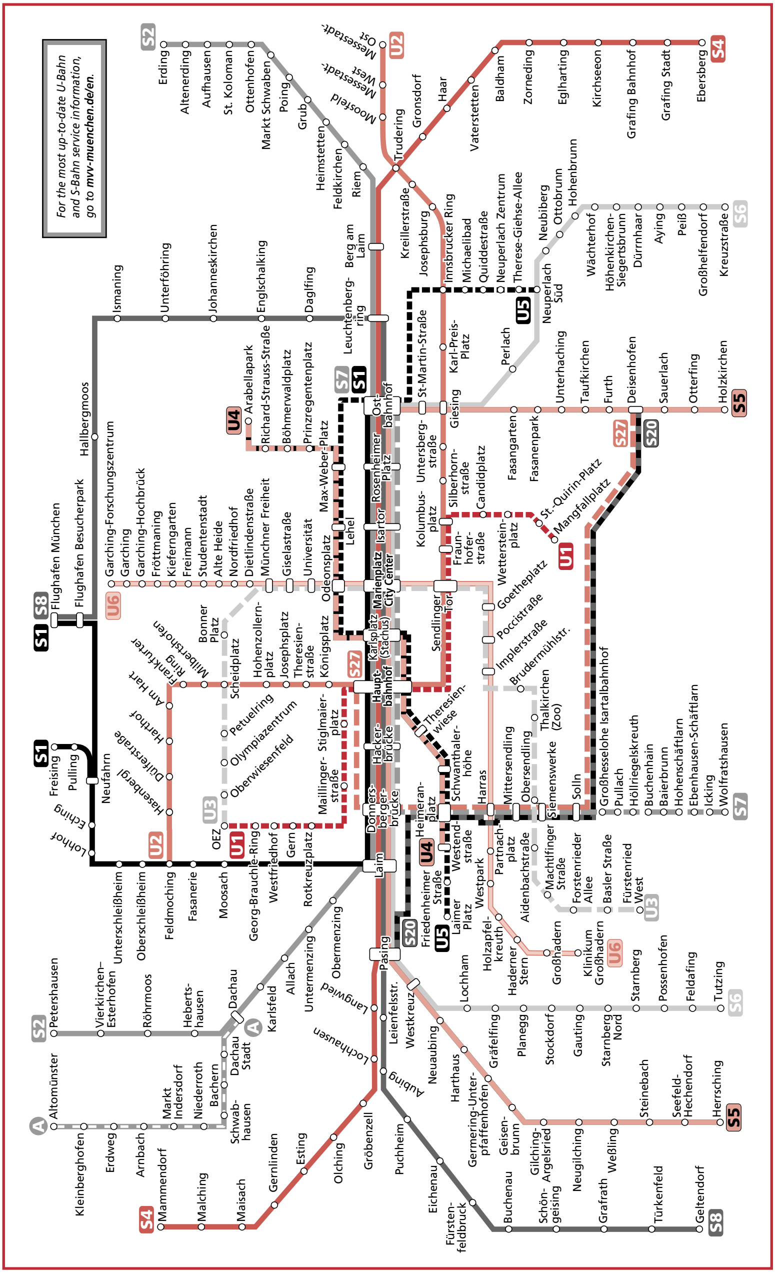
Drugstores For an international drugstore where English is spoken, go to **Bahnhof Apotheke,** Bahnhofplatz 2 (✆ **089/59-41-19;** U-Bahn/S-Bahn: Hauptbahnhof), open Monday to Friday from 8am to 6:30pm and Saturday from 8am to 2pm. If you need a prescription filled during off-hours, call ✆ **089/55-76-61** for information about what's open. The information is recorded and in German only, so you may need to get someone from your hotel staff to assist you.

Emergencies Call the police at ✆ **110.**

Internet Access You can send e-mails or check your messages at the **Easy Internet Café,** Bahnhofplatz 1; U-Bahn: Hauptbahnhof. It's open daily 7:30am to 11:45pm.

Post Office The most central post office is at Bahnhofplatz (U-Bahn/S-Bahn: Hauptbahnhof), opposite the main train station exit. It's open Monday to Friday 7am to 8pm, and Saturday 9am to 4pm. You can have your mail sent here

Munich U-Bahn & S-Bahn


For the most up-to-date U-Bahn and S-Bahn service information, go to mvv-muenchen.de/en.
S1
S8
Flughafen München
Flughafen Besucherpark
Hallbergmoos
Freising
Pulling
Neufahrn
Eching
Lohhof
Unterschleißheim
Oberschleißheim
Feldmoching
Fasanerie
Moosach
S2
Erding
Altenerding
Aufhausen
St. Koloman
Ottenhofen
Markt Schwaben
Poing
Grub
Heimstetten
Feldkirchen
Riem
Berg am Laim
Leuchtenberg-ring
Ismaning
Unterföhring
Johanneskirchen
Englschalking
Daglfing
U2
Messestadt-Ost
Messestadt-West
Moosfeld
Trudering
Kreillerstraße
Josephsburg
Innsbrucker Ring
Karl-Preis-Platz
Giesing
Untersberg-straße
Silberhorn-straße
Kolumbus-platz
Fraunhofer-straße
Sendlinger Tor
S4
Ebersberg
Grafing Stadt
Grafing Bahnhof
Kirchseeon
Eglharting
Zorneding
Baldham
Vaterstetten
Haar
Gronsdorf
U5
Neuperlach Süd
Therese-Giehse-Allee
Neuperlach Zentrum
Quiddestraße
Michaelibad
St-Martin-Straße
S6
Kreuzstraße
Großhelfendorf
Peiß
Aying
Dürrnhaar
Höhenkirchen-Siegertsbrunn
Wächterhof
Hohenbrunn
Ottobrunn
Neubiberg
Perlach
S5
Holzkirchen
Otterfing
Sauerlach
Deisenhofen
Furth
Taufkirchen
Unterhaching
Fasanenpark
Fasangarten
S27
S20
U1
Mangfallplatz
St.-Quirin-Platz
Candidplatz
Wetterstein-platz
Goetheplatz
Poccistraße
Implerstraße
Brudermühlstr.
Thalkirchen (Zoo)
Obersendling
Siemenswerke
Machtlfinger Straße
Forstenrieder Allee
Basler Straße
Fürstenried West
U3
Harras
Partnach-platz
Westpark
Holzapfel-kreuth
Haderner Stern
Großhadern
Klinikum Großhadern
U6
S7
Mittersendling
Solln
Großhesselohe Isartalbahnhof
Pullach
Höllriegelskreuth
Buchenhain
Baierbrunn
Hohenschäftlarn
Ebenhausen-Schäftlarn
Icking
Wolfratshausen
U4
Heimeran-platz
Schwanthaler-höhe
Theresien-wiese
Westend-straße
Friedenheimer Straße
Laimer Platz
Garching-Forschungszentrum
Garching
Garching-Hochbrück
Fröttmaning
Kieferngarten
Freimann
Studentenstadt
Alte Heide
Nordfriedhof
Dietlindenstraße
Münchner Freiheit
Giselastraße
Universität
Odeonsplatz
OEZ
Oberwiesenfeld
Olympiazentrum
Petuelring
Scheidplatz
Bonner Platz
Hohenzollern-platz
Josephsplatz
Theresien-straße
Königsplatz
Hasenbergl
Dülferstraße
Harthof
Am Hart
Frankfurter Ring
Milbertshofen
Georg-Brauchle-Ring
Westfriedhof
Gern
Rotkreuzplatz
Maillinger-straße
Stiglmaier-platz
Arabellapark
Richard-Strauss-Straße
Böhmerwaldplatz
Prinzregentenplatz
Max-Weber-Platz
Lehel
Haupt-bahnhof
Karlsplatz (Stachus)
Marienplatz
Isartor
Rosenheimer Platz
Ost-bahnhof
City Center
Hacker-brücke
Donners-berger-brücke
Laim
Pasing
Petershausen
Vierkirchen–Esterhofen
Röhrmoos
Heberts-hausen
Dachau
Dachau Stadt
Karlsfeld
Allach
Untermenzing
Obermenzing
A
Altomünster
Kleinberghofen
Erdweg
Arnbach
Markt Indersdorf
Niederroth
Bachern
Schwab-hausen
Mammendorf
Malching
Maisach
Gernlinden
Esting
Olching
Gröbenzell
Lochhausen
Langwied
S8
Geltendorf
Türkenfeld
Grafrath
Schön-geising
Buchenau
Fürsten-feldbruck
Eichenau
Puchheim
Aubing
Leienfelsstr.
Westkreuz
Herrsching
Seefeld-Hechendorf
Steinebach
Weßling
Neugilching
Gilching-Argelsried
Geisen-brunn
Germering-Unter-pfaffenhofen
Harthaus
Neuaubing
Tutzing
Feldafing
Possenhofen
Starnberg
Starnberg Nord
Gauting
Stockdorf
Planegg
Gräfelfing
Lochham

Poste Restante (general delivery), but include the postal code 80335. You'll need a passport to reclaim mail, and you can't call for information but have to show up in person.

Telephone The **country code** for Germany is **49.** The **city code** for Munich is **89.** Use this code when you're calling from outside Germany; if you're within Germany, use **089.** For more information on making calls from Germany, see "Fast Facts: Berlin," p. 374.

WHERE TO STAY

VERY EXPENSIVE

Bayerischer Hof & Palais Montgelas ★★★ A Bavarian version of New York's Waldorf-Astoria, this hotel is in a swank location, opening onto a little tree-filled square. Rooms range from medium to extremely spacious, each with plush duvets; many beds are four-posters. Decor ranges from Bavarian provincial to British country-house chintz. The large bathrooms have tub/shower combos, private phones, and state-of-the-art luxuries.

Promenadeplatz 2–6, 80333 München. ☎ **089/2-12-00.** Fax 089/21-20-906. www.bayerischerhof.de. 395 units. 211€–454€ ($306–$658) double; from 488€ ($708) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 26€ ($38). Tram: 19. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; 5 bars; nightclub; rooftop pool and garden; gym; sauna; room service; massage; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms; 1 room for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

Hotel Vier Jahreszeiten München ★★★ This grand hotel, with a tradition dating from 1858, is the most elegant place to stay in Munich. Rooms range from medium to very spacious. Bedside controls, luxury furnishings, and Oriental rugs, plus spacious bathrooms with showers, will keep any guest comfortable. The restaurant is one of the most esteemed in Germany.

Maximilianstrasse 17, 80539 München. ☎ **800/426-3135** in the U.S., or 089/212-50. Fax 089/21-25-20-00. www.kempinski-vierjahreszeiten.de. 316 units. 246€–450€ ($357–$653) double; from 720€ ($1,044) junior suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 22€ ($32). Tram: 19. **Amenities:** Restaurant; 3 bars; bistro; indoor pool; fitness equipment; sauna; room service; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service; solarium. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

EXPENSIVE

Eden-Hotel-Wolff ★ If you must stay near the train station, this is your best bet, a hotel that lies directly across the street from the Munich terminus of the Lufthansa Airport Bus. With some exceptions, most rooms are spacious, their styles ranging from modern to rustic Bavarian. Rooms have luxurious appointments and double-glazed windows; and the large bathrooms have tub/shower combos. Some rooms are hypoallergenic with special beds and a private ventilation system.

Arnulfstrasse 4–8, 80335 München. ☎ **089/55-11-50.** Fax 089/551-15-555. www.ehw.de. 210 units. 143€–292€ ($207–$423) double; 270€–385€ ($392–$558) suite. 1 child up to age 6 stays free in parent's room. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 15€ ($22). U-Bahn/S-Bahn: Hauptbahnhof. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; room service; babysitting; laundry service; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

MODERATE

Advokat Hotel This hotel occupies a 1930s apartment house. Its streamlined interior borrows in discreet ways from Bauhaus and minimalist models. The rooms look as if Philippe Starck had gone on a shopping binge at Ikea. All come with neatly kept bathrooms with tub/shower combination. The result is an aggressively simple, clean-lined, and artfully spartan hotel with very few extras and facilities.

Baaderstrasse 1, 80469 München. ☎ **089/21-63-10.** Fax 089/21-63-190. www.hotel-advokat.de. 50 units. 160€–280€ ($232–$406) double. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. S-Bahn: Isartor. **Amenities:** Breakfast room; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer, Wi-Fi.

An der Oper ★ Just off Maximilianstrasse, near Marienplatz, this is a superb base for sightseeing or shopping in the traffic-free malls, just steps from the Bavarian National Theater. Built in the 1970s, it's one of the best-run hotels in this price category. Recently renovated rooms, which range from small to medium, have such amenities as double-glazed windows, firm beds, a small sitting area, and a table for those who want breakfast in their rooms. Bathrooms are medium in size and beautifully maintained, with tub/shower combos.

Falkenturmstrasse 11, 80331 München. ☎ **089/290-02-70.** Fax 089/290-02-729. www.hotelanderoper.com. 68 units. 180€–270€ ($261–$392) double; 246€–390€ ($357–$566) apt. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, MC, V. No parking. Tram: 19. **Amenities:** Nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* TV, minibar.

Anna Hotel In 1900 this building was a four-story office block, but in 2002 it was converted into a stylish and streamlined hotel. This clean, charming, well-managed hotel has a minimalist and stylish decor that's loaded with wood paneling and warm tones of ocher and russet, with touches of yellow and black marble in all the bathrooms. A collection of postmodern sculptures in the lobby are by Stephan Ester, a locally well-known artist. Many of the hotel clients are business travelers, who appreciate the stylish and well-choreographed service and the comfortably secure bedrooms. Four of the suites are in a tower that affords exceptionally good views.

1 Schützenstrasse, 80335 München. ☎ **089/59-99-40.** Fax 089/55-99-43-33. www.annahotel.de. 56 units. 190€–235€ ($276–$341) double; 240€–550€ ($348–$798) tower rooms. Rates include breakfast and free access to nonalcoholic contents of minibar. MC, V. Parking 20€ ($29). U-Bahn: Karlsplatz or Hauptbahnhof. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; free access to health club and sauna at the Anna's sister hotel, the Könighof; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, Wi-Fi.

Cortiina ★ *Finds* Built in 2001, this hotel has quickly gained a foothold with a corps of loyal business clients. It rises five stories above a centrally located and historic neighborhood in the heart of Munich, in a cozy and warm design that evokes an alpine retreat. You'll find a sheathing of intricately crafted dark-stained oak and exposed flagstones in both the public areas and the bedrooms, and an allegiance throughout to the design principles of feng shui, wherein objects, windows, traffic patterns, and doors are balanced for a maximum of emotional and psychic harmony.

Lederstrasse 8, 80331 München. ☎ **089/242-24-90.** Fax 089/242249-100. www.cortiina.com. S-Bahn: Marienplatz. 196€–266€ ($284–$386) double; 246€ ($357) studio. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 13€ ($19). **Amenities:** Breakfast room; honor bar/lounge; room service; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

Gästehaus Englischer Garten ★ This oasis of charm and tranquillity, close to the Englischer Garten, is one of our preferred stopovers. The decor of the rooms might be termed "Bavarian grandmother." Bathrooms are small and not one of the hotel's stronger features. In an annex across the street are 15 small apartments, each with a shower-only bathroom and a tiny kitchenette. Try for room nos. 16, 23, 26, or especially 20; all are more spacious, are better furnished, and have better views. In fair weather, breakfast is served in a rear garden.

Liebergesellstrasse 8, 80802 München-Schwabing. ☎ **089/38-39-41-0.** Fax 089/38-39-41-33. 28 units, 22 with bathroom. 70€–130€ ($102–$189) double without bathroom; 109€–130€ ($158–$189) double with bathroom; 100€–180€ ($145–$261) apt. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking10€ ($15). U-Bahn: Münchner Freiheit. *In room:* TV, minibar, Wi-Fi.

Hotel Exquisit ★ One of the most appealing hotels in the Sendlinger Tot neighborhood lies behind a wine-colored facade on a quiet residential street that seems far removed from the heavy traffic and bustle of the nearby theater district. Built in 1988, it has a paneled lobby whose focal point is a lounge that gets busy around 6 or 7pm. Staff is pleasant, offering a genuine welcome and ushering you up to rooms that are spacious and comfortably furnished. About half overlook an ivy-draped garden; others look over the street. Bathrooms are efficient, with a tiled shower unit.

Pettenkoferstrasse 3, 80336 München. ☎ **089/55-19-900.** Fax 089/199-499. www.hotel-exquisit.com. 50 units. 175€–285€ ($254–$413) double; 220€–315€ ($319–$457) suite. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 20€ ($29). U-Bahn: Sendlinger Tor. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; sauna; room service; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer, Wi-Fi.

Hotel Mark *Value* This hotel near the Hauptbahnhof's south exit is known for comfort and moderate prices. The rooms are functionally furnished, although a bit cramped, and furnishings were recently renewed, so you should sleep in peace. Bathrooms are small but tidily maintained, each with a shower unit. Breakfast is the only meal served.

Senefelderstrasse 12, 80336 München. ☎ **089/55-98-20.** Fax 089/559-82-333. www.heh.de. 95 units. 110€–192€ ($160–$278) double. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 14€ ($20). U-Bahn/S-Bahn: Hauptbahnhof. **Amenities:** Laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

INEXPENSIVE

Am Markt This popular but basic Bavarian hotel stands in the heart of the older section. You're likely to find yourself surrounded by opera and concert artists who stay here to be close to where they perform. The rooms are trim, neat, and small—space to store your stuff is at a minimum. Private bathrooms are also small, and corridor bathrooms are kept quite fresh; all have shower units.

Heiliggeistrasse 6, 80331 München. ☎ **089/22-50-14.** Fax 089/22-40-17. 32 units, 16 with bathroom (shower only). 68€–89€ ($99–$129) double without bathroom; 109€–149€ ($158–$216) double with bathroom. Rates include continental breakfast. MC, V. Parking 10€ ($15). U-Bahn/S-Bahn: Marienplatz. *In room:* TV, Wi-Fi.

Hotel Jedermann *Value* This pleasant spot's central location and value make it a good choice. It's especially good for families, as both cribs and cots are available. Rooms are generally small and old-fashioned, but are cozy and comfortable. Private bathrooms with shower stalls are also small. A generous breakfast buffet is served in a charming room.

Bayerstrasse 95, 80335 München. ☎ **089/54-32-40.** Fax 089/54-32-41-11. www.hotel-jedermann.de. 55 units. 49€–185€ ($75–$189) double. Rates include buffet breakfast. MC, V. Parking 8€ ($12). U-Bahn/S-Bahn: Hauptbahnhof. *In room:* TV, A/C in some, hair dryer, safe (most units), Wi-Fi.

Pension Westfalia Facing the meadow where the annual Oktoberfest takes place, this 19th-century town house near Goetheplatz is another of Munich's top pensions. Rooms range from small to medium, but the owner takes great pride in seeing that they are well maintained and comfortable. Private bathrooms with shower stalls are small, and corridor bathrooms are well maintained and do the job just as well.

Mozartstrasse 23, 80336 München. ☎ **089/53-03-77.** Fax 089/54-39-120. www.pension-westfalia.de. 19 units, 14 with bathroom (shower only). 55€ ($80) double without bathroom; 78€ ($113) double with bathroom. Rates include continental breakfast. AE, MC, V. Parking, when available, is free on the street. U-Bahn: Goetheplatz. Bus: 58. **Amenities:** Nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV.

Uhland Garni In a residential area, just a 10-minute walk from the Hauptbahnhof, the Uhland could easily become your home in Munich. It offers friendly, personal service. The stately town mansion, built in Art Nouveau style, stands in its own small garden. Its rooms are soundproof, traditional, and cozy. The bathrooms contain shower units. Only breakfast is served.

Uhlandstrasse 1, 80336 München. ☎ **089/54-33-50.** Fax 089/54-33-52-50. www.hotel-uhland.de. 30 units. 81€–185€ ($117–$268) double. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. U-Bahn/S-Bahn: Theresienwiese. Bus: 58. **Amenities:** Nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

WHERE TO DINE

For beer halls serving plenty of low-priced food, see the box "What's Brewing at the Beer Halls?" on p. 422.

VERY EXPENSIVE

Boettner's ★ INTERNATIONAL The restaurant today is housed in Orlandohaus, a Renaissance structure in the very heart of Munich. Culinary fans from yesterday will recognize its wood-paneled interior, which was dismantled from a previous site and moved here. The cookery is lighter and more refined, and seems better than ever. Try the lobster stew in a cream sauce and almost any dish with white truffles. Pike balls appear delectably in a Chablis herb sauce, and succulent lamb or venison appear enticingly in a woodsy morel sauce. Desserts are as sumptuous as ever. The French influence is very evident, as are many traditional Bavarian recipes.

Pfisterstrasse 9. ☎ **089/22-12-10.** Reservations required. Main courses 30€–65€ ($44–$94). AE, DC, MC, V. Summer Mon–Fri 11:30am–3pm and 6–11pm; Oct–May Mon–Sat 11:30am–10pm. U-Bahn/S-Bahn: Marienplatz.

Ederer ★★ MODERN INTERNATIONAL Noted as one of the most posh and immediately desirable addresses in Munich, and the culinary domain of celebrity chef Karl Ederer, this restaurant occupies an antique building with huge windows, very high ceilings, several blazing fireplaces, and an appealing collection of paintings. Inspiration for the menu items covers the gamut of cuisines from Bavaria, France, Italy, the New World, and the Pacific Rim. The menu changes with the seasons and the whim of the kitchen staff but might include such starters as marinated sweet-and-sour pumpkin served with shiitake mushrooms, parsley roots, and lukewarm chunks of octopus; and terrine of duckling foie gras with a very fresh brioche and a dollop of pumpkin jelly. Main courses might include a roasted breast of duckling with stuffing, glazed baby white cabbage, mashed potatoes, and gooseliver sauce; or pan-fried anglerfish with a sauce made from olive oil, lemon grass, and thyme.

Kardinal Faulhaber Strasse 10. ☎ **089/24-23-13-10.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 25€–28€ ($36–$41); set-price 2-course lunch 25€ ($36); set-price 6-course dinner 145€ ($210). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat noon–2pm and 6:30–10pm. U-Bahn: Marienplatz or Odéonplatz.

Restaurant Königshof ★★ INTERNATIONAL/FRENCH On the top floor of this deluxe hotel, this is Munich's best shot at hotel dining. You're rewarded not only with a fine cuisine, but with a view of the city. Appetizers are sometimes pleasantly startling in their originality, as exemplified by the delicately diminutive rib and loin chops, liver, and rolled duck in a sweet-and-sour ice wine, the flavor enhanced by a pumpkin vinaigrette. Instead of the typical lasagna, you get a pasta layered with morels and crayfish, a real delicacy. The city's best veal dishes are served here; veal sweetbreads rest on a bed of fresh vegetables, including beets and green beans. The wine list is one of the finest in Germany, though it may take you a good hour just to read it.

In the Hotel Königshof, Karlsplatz 25 (Am Stachus). ✆ **089/55-13-60.** Reservations required. Main courses 34€–48€ ($49–$70); fixed-price menus 98€–125€ ($142–$181). AE, DC, MC, V. Tues–Sat noon–2:30pm and 7–10pm. S-Bahn: Karlsplatz. Tram: 19, 20, or 21.

Tantris ★★★ FRENCH/INTERNATIONAL Tantris serves Munich's finest cuisine. Hans Haas was voted the top chef in Germany in 1994, and, if anything, he has refined and sharpened his culinary technique since. Once inside, you're transported into an ultramodern atmosphere with fine service. You might begin with a terrine of smoked fish served with green cucumber sauce, and then follow with classic roast duck on mustard-seed sauce, or perhaps a delightful concoction of lobster medallions on black noodles. These dishes show a refinement and attention to detail that you find nowhere else in Munich. And just when you think you've had the perfect meal, the dessert arrives, and you're hungry again as you sample the gingerbread soufflé with chestnut sorbet.

Johann-Fichte-Strasse 7, Schwabing. ✆ **089/3-61-95-90.** Reservations required. Fixed-price 4-course lunch 96€ ($139); fixed-price dinner 135€–195€ ($196–$283). AE, DC, MC, V. Tues–Sat noon–2pm and 6:30–10:30pm. Closed public holidays and annual holidays in Jan and May. U-Bahn: Dietlindenstrasse.

EXPENSIVE

Alois Dallmayr ★ CONTINENTAL One of the city's most historic and famous dining spots was established in 1700 as a food shop. Today, you'll find one of the city's most prestigious delicatessens on the street level, and a rather grand restaurant upstairs, where you'll find a subtle German version of Continental cuisine that owes many of its inspirations to France. The food array is rich, varied, and sophisticated, including the best herring and sausages we've ever tasted, very fresh fish, meats, and game dishes. Partially thanks to its dual role as a delicatessen with products imported from around the world, you'll find such rare treats as vine-ripened tomatoes flown in from Morocco, splendid papayas from Brazil, and the famous French hens, *poulets de Bresse,* believed by many gourmets to be the world's finest.

Dienerstrasse 14–15. ✆ **089/213-51-00.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 20€–30€ ($29–$44); set-price menus 35€–45€ ($51–$65). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri 11:30am–7pm; Sat 9am–4pm. Tram: 19.

MODERATE

Bistro Terrine ★★ FRENCH The restaurant in Schwabing looks like an Art Nouveau French bistro, and its nouvelle cuisine is based on traditional recipes as authentic and savory as anything you'd find in Lyon or Paris. There's room for up to 50 diners at a time, but because of the way the dining room is arranged, with banquettes and wood and glass dividers, it seems bigger than it actually is. During clement weather, there's additional seating on an outdoor terrace.

Menu items are innovative, and might include tartar of herring with freshly made potato chips and salad, watercress salad with sweetbreads, cream of paprika soup, an autumn fantasy of nuggets of venison served with hazelnut-flavored gnocchi in port-wine sauce, zander baked in an herb-and-potato crust, or an alluring specialty salmon with a chanterelle-studded risotto.

Amalienstrasse 89. ✆ **089/28-17-80.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 23€–28€ ($33–$41); fixed-price lunch 25€–30€ ($36–$44); fixed-price dinner 65€–75€ ($94–$109). AE, MC, V. Tues–Fri noon–3pm and Mon–Sat 6:30pm–midnight. U-Bahn: U3 or U6 to Universität.

Buon Gusto (Talamonti) ★ ITALIAN Some of Munich's best Italian food is served here in the rustic-looking bistro, or in the more formal and more upscale-looking dining room. Menu items and prices are identical in both. Owned and managed by an extended family, the Talamontis, the restaurant emphasizes fresh ingredients, strong and savory flavors, and food items inspired by the Italian Marches and Tuscany. Stellar examples include ravioli stuffed with mushrooms and herbs, roasted lamb with potatoes, lots of scaloppine, and fresh fish that seems to taste best when served simply, with oil or butter and lemon. Especially appealing are the array of risottos whose ingredients change with the seasons. During Oktoberfest and trade fairs, the place is mobbed.

Hochbruckenstrasse 3. ☎ **089/296-383.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 16€–30€ ($23–$44). AE, MC, V. Mon–Sat 11am–1am. Closed Dec 23–Jan 3. U-Bahn/S-Bahn: Marienplatz.

Hunsingers Pacific ★ SEAFOOD Despite the name, don't expect the menu to be devoted exclusively to Pacific Rim cuisine. Fish is the premier item here. Preparation is based on classic French-inspired methods, but the innovative flavors come from Malaysia (coconut milk), Japan (wasabi), Thailand (lemon grass), and India (curry). You could begin with a tuna carpaccio with sliced plum, fresh ginger, and lime. Main courses include a succulent version of bouillabaisse with aioli, which you might follow with cold melon soup garnished with a dollop of tarragon-flavored granita. Fried monkfish in the Malaysian style and turbot in chili-and-ginger sauce are evocative of Hawaii. Prices here are relatively low compared to those of its competitors.

Maximilianplatz 5 (entrance on Max-Joseph-Strasse). ☎ **089/5502-9741.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 18€–30€ ($26–$44). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri 11:30am–3:30pm; Mon–Sat 6pm–1am. Closed Sun May–Sept. U-Bahn: Stachus/Odeonsplatz.

Pfistermühle BAVARIAN The country comes right into the heart of Munich at this authentic and old-fashioned place. A warm welcome and a refreshing cuisine await you here. Many of the dishes would be familiar to your Bavarian grandmother, and portions are generous and most satisfying. Come here for some of the most perfectly prepared roasts in the city. You can also opt for a fine array of fresh fish from the lakes and rivers of Bavaria, especially the delectable salmon trout or brown trout. Most fish dishes come with chive-flecked sour cream and a potato pancake. The fish is also simply prepared, such as pikeperch sautéed in butter. Finish with a pyramid of vanilla custard served with a fresh berry sauce, followed by a glass of wild cherry schnapps.

In the Platz Hotel, Pfistermühle 4. ☎ **089/2370-3865.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 15€–20€ ($22–$29); set menus 35€–45€ ($51–$65). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat 11:30am–midnight. U-Bahn: Marienplatz.

Ratskeller München BAVARIAN Go here for the old Bavarian ambience at one of the best town-hall cellars in the country. The decor is typical: lots of dark wood and carved chairs. The most interesting tables, the ones staked out by in-the-know locals, are the semiprivate dining nooks in the rear, under the vaulted painted ceilings. Bavarian music adds to the ambience. The menu, a showcase of regional fare, includes many vegetarian choices, which is unusual for a rathskeller. Some of the dishes are a little heavy and too porky, but you can find lighter fare if you search the menu.

Im Rathaus, Marienplatz 8. ☎ **089/219-98-90.** Reservations required. Main courses 10€–26€ ($15–$38). AE, MC, V. Daily 10am–midnight. U-Bahn/S-Bahn: Marienplatz.

Spatenhaus ★ BAVARIAN/INTERNATIONAL One of Munich's best-known beer restaurants has wide windows overlooking the opera house on Max-Joseph-Platz. Of course, to be loyal, you should accompany your meal with the restaurant's own beer, Spaten-Franziskaner-Bier. You can sit in an intimate, semiprivate dining nook or at a big table. The Spatenhaus has old traditions, offers typical Bavarian food, and is known for generous portions and reasonable prices. If you want to know what all this fabled Bavarian gluttony is about, order the "Bavarian plate," which is loaded down with various meats, including lots of pork and sausages.

Residenzstrasse 12. ✆ **089/290-70-60.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 16€–28€ ($23–$41). AE, MC, V. Daily 9:30am–12:30pm. U-Bahn: Odeonsplatz or Marienplatz.

INEXPENSIVE

Andechser am Dom GERMAN/BAVARIAN Set on two floors of a postwar building erected adjacent to the back side of the Frauenkirche, this restaurant and beer hall serves copious amounts of a beer brewed in a monastery near Munich (Andechser) as well as generous portions of German food. Order a snack, a full meal, or just a beer, and enjoy the frothy fun of it all. Menu items include such dishes as veal schnitzels, steaks, turkey croquettes, roasted lamb, fish, and several kinds of sausages that taste best with tangy mustard. During clement weather, tables are set up on the building's roof and on the sidewalk in front, both of which overlook the back of one of the city's most evocative churches.

Weinstrasse 7A. ✆ **089/29-84-81.** www.andechser-am-dom.de. Reservations recommended. Main courses 9.50€–16€ ($14–$23). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 10am–1am. U-Bahn/S-Bahn: Marienplatz.

Donisl ★ *Value* BAVARIAN/INTERNATIONAL This is one of Munich's oldest beer halls, dating from 1715. The seating capacity of this relaxed and comfortable restaurant is about 550, and in summer you can enjoy the hum and bustle of Marienplatz while dining in the garden area out front. The standard menu offers traditional Bavarian food, as well as a weekly changing specials menu. The little white sausages, Weisswürst, are a decades-long tradition here.

Weinstrasse 1. ✆ **089/22-01-84.** www.bayerischer-donisl.de. Reservations recommended. Main courses 10€–15€ ($15–$22). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 9am–midnight. U-Bahn/S-Bahn: Marienplatz.

Nürnberger Bratwurst Glöckl Am Dom *Value* BAVARIAN In the coziest and warmest of Munich's local restaurants, the chairs look as if they were made by some Black Forest woodcarver, and the place is full of memorabilia—pictures, prints, pewter, and beer steins. Upstairs through a hidden stairway is a dining room decorated with reproductions of Dürer prints. The restaurant has a strict policy of shared tables, and service is on tin plates. The homesick Nürnberger comes here just for one dish: *Nürnberger Schweinwurstl mit Kraut* (little sausages with kraut). Last food orders go in at midnight. If you're with a party of between four and eight, consider ordering one of the house specialties, a *Pfanne* (large frying pan) that's loaded with a mixed grill of chops, wursts, and cutlets interspersed with potatoes and vegetables. Many groups of travelers opt for this, helping themselves to the contents as it's perched in the center of your table grouping. The cost per Pfanne is 52€ to 104€ ($75–$151).

Frauenplatz 9. ✆ **089/29-52-64.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 8€–22€ ($12–$32). MC, V. Mon–Sat 10am–1am; Sun 11am–11pm. U-Bahn/S-Bahn: Marienplatz.

Zum Alten Markt *Value* BAVARIAN/INTERNATIONAL Snug and cozy, Zum Alten Markt serves beautifully presented fresh cuisine. Located on a tiny square off Munich's large outdoor food market, the restaurant has a mellow charm and a welcoming host, Josef Lehner. The interior decor, with its intricately coffered wooden ceiling, came from a 400-year-old Tyrolean castle. In summer, tables are set up outside. Fish and fresh vegetables come from the nearby market. You may begin with a tasty home-made soup, such as cream of carrot or perhaps black-truffle tortellini in cream sauce with young onions and tomatoes. The chef makes a great *Tafelspitz* (boiled beef). You can also order classic dishes such as roast duck with applesauce or a savory roast suckling pig.

Am Viktualienmarkt, Dreifaltigkeitsplatz 3. ☎ **089/299995**. Reservations recommended. Main courses 10€–18€ ($15–$26). No credit cards. Mon–Sat noon–midnight. U-Bahn/S-Bahn: Marienplatz. Bus: 53.

SEEING THE SIGHTS

SIGHTSEEING SUGGESTIONS FOR FIRST-TIME VISITORS

If You Have 1 Day Local tourist tradition calls for a morning breakfast of Weisswürst; head for **Donisl** (p. 414). A true Münchener downs them with a mug of beer. Then walk to **Marienplatz,** with its glockenspiel and **Altes Rathaus (Old Town Hall).** Later, stroll along **Maximilianstrasse,** one of Europe's great shopping streets. In the afternoon, visit the **Neue Pinakothek** and see at least some exhibits at the **Deutsches Museum.** Cap the evening with a night of Bavarian food, beer, and music at the **Hofbräuhaus am Platzl.**

If You Have 2 Days In the morning of day 2, visit the **Bayerisches Nationalmuseum (Bavarian National Museum),** with three vast floors devoted to Bavaria's artistic and historical riches. If the weather's right, plan a lunch in one of the beer gardens of the **Englischer Garten.** In the afternoon, visit the **Nymphenburg Palace,** summer residence of the Wittelsbach dynasty, longtime rulers of Bavaria.

If You Have 3 Days Pass your third day exploring the sights you've missed so far: the **Residenz,** the **Antikensammlungen (Museum of Antiquities),** and the **Glyptothek.** If you have any more time, return to the Deutsches Museum. Enjoy dinner or at least a drink at **Olympiapark,** along with a panoramic view of the Alps.

If You Have 4 or More Days As fascinating as Munich is, tear yourself away on day 4 for an excursion to the **Royal Castles** once occupied by the "mad king" Ludwig II (see "Organized Tours," p. 420, and "The Romantic Road," p. 434). On day 5, take an excursion to **Dachau,** the notorious World War II concentration camp, and in the afternoon visit **Mittenwald** for a taste of the Bavarian Alps.

EXPLORING THE ALTSTADT (OLD TOWN)

Marienplatz, dedicated to the patron of the city whose statue stands on a huge column in the center of the square, is the heart of the Altstadt. On its north side is the **Neues Rathaus (New City Hall)** built in 19th-century Gothic style. Each day at 11am, and also at noon and 5pm in the summer, the **Glockenspiel** on the facade performs a miniature tournament, with enameled copper figures moving in and out of the archways. Since you're already at the Rathaus, you may wish to climb the 55 steps to the top of its tower (an elevator is available if you're conserving energy) for a good overall view of the city center. The **Altes Rathaus (Old City Hall),** with its plain Gothic tower, is to the right. It was reconstructed in the 15th century, after being destroyed by fire.

MUSEUMS & PALACES

Alte Pinakothek ★★★ This is one of the most significant art museums in Europe. The paintings represent the greatest European artists of the 14th through the 18th centuries. Begun as a small court collection by the royal Wittelsbach family in the early 1500s, the collection has grown and grown. There are two floors with exhibits, but the museum is immense. Albrecht Altdorfer, landscape painter par excellence of the Danube school, is represented by no fewer than six monumental works. Albrecht Dürer's works include his greatest—and final—*Self-Portrait* (1500). Here the artist has portrayed himself with almost Christ-like solemnity. Also displayed is the last great painting by the artist, his two-paneled work called *The Four Apostles* (1526).

Barer Strasse 27. ✆ **089/238-052-16.** www.pinakothek.de. Admission 5.50€ ($8) adults, 4€ ($5.80) students and seniors, free for children 15 and under. 1€ ($1.45) entrance on Sun. Tues 10am–8pm; Wed–Sun 10am–5pm. U-Bahn: Theresienstrasse. Tram: 27. Bus: 53.

Antikensammlungen (Museum of Antiquities) ★ This collection grew around the vase collection of Ludwig I, who had fantasies of transforming Munich into a second Athens. It was originally known as the *Museum Antiker Kleinkunst* (Museum of Small Works of Ancient Art). Many pieces displayed within are small in size but not in value or artistic significance. The museum's five main-floor halls house more than 650 Greek vases. The oldest, the pre-Mycenaean "goddess from Aegina" (3000 B.C.) carved from a mussel shell, is in room 1. The upper level of the Central Hall is devoted to large Greek vases discovered in Sicily and to Etruscan art. On the lower level is the collection of Greek, Roman, and Etruscan jewelry. (Note the similarities with today's designer fashions.) Also on this level are rooms devoted to ancient colored glass, Etruscan bronzes, and Greek terra cotta.

Königsplatz 1. ✆ **089/599888-30.** Admission 3.50€ ($5.10) adults; 2.50€ ($3.65) students and seniors, free for children 15 and under. Joint ticket to the Museum of Antiquities and the Glyptothek 5.50€ ($8) students and seniors, free for children 15 and under. Tues–Sun 10am–5pm (Thurs until 8pm). U-Bahn: Königsplatz.

Bayerisches Nationalmuseum (Bavarian National Museum) ★★ Three vast floors of sculpture, painting, folk art, ceramics, furniture, textiles, and scientific instruments demonstrate Bavaria's artistic and historical riches. Entering the museum, turn to the right and go into the first large gallery, called the **Wessobrunn Room.** Devoted to early church art from the 5th century to the 13th century, this room holds some of the oldest and most valuable works. The desk case contains ancient and medieval ivories, including the so-called Munich ivory, from about A.D. 400. The **Riemenschneider Room** is devoted to the works of the great sculptor Tilman Riemenschneider (ca. 1460–1531) and his contemporaries. The second floor contains a fine collection of stained and painted glass—an art in which medieval Germany excelled—baroque ivory carvings, Meissen porcelain, and ceramics.

Prinzregentenstrasse 3. ✆ **089/211-2401.** www.deutsches-museum.de. Admission 5€ ($7.25) adults, 4€ ($5.80) students and children. 1€ ($1.45) entrance on Sun. Tues–Sun 10am–5pm; Thurs 10am–8pm. U-Bahn: Lehel. Tram: 17. Bus: 53.

Deutsches Museum (German Museum of Masterpieces of Science and Technology) ★★★ On an island in the Isar River is the largest technological museum of its kind in the world. Its huge collection of priceless artifacts and historic originals includes the first electric dynamo (Siemens, 1866), the first automobile (Benz, 1886), the first diesel engine (1897), and the laboratory bench at which the atom was first split (Hahn, Strassmann, 1938). There are hundreds of buttons to push, levers to crank, and gears to turn, as well as a knowledgeable staff to answer questions and demonstrate how steam engines, pumps, or historical musical instruments work. Among the most popular displays are those on mining, with a series of model coal, salt, and iron mines, as well as the electrical power hall, with high-voltage displays that actually produce lightning. There are many other exhibits, covering the whole range of science and technology.

Museumsinsel 1. ✆ **089/2-17-91.** www.deutsches-museum.de. Admission 8.50€ ($12) adults, 7€ ($10) seniors, 3€ ($4.35) children 6–15, free for children 5 and under. Daily 9am–5pm. Closed major holidays. S-Bahn: Isartor. Tram: 18. U-Bahn: Fraunhoferstrasse.

Glyptothek ★ This museum has assembled a world-class collection of ancient Greek and Roman sculpture. Included are the famous pediments from the temple of Aegina, two marvelous statues of *kouroi* (youths) from the 6th century B.C., the colossal figure of a *Sleeping Satyr* from the Hellenistic period, and a splendid collection of Roman portraits.

Königsplatz 3. ✆ **089/28-61-00.** Admission 3.50€ ($5.10) adults, 2.50€ ($3.65) students, seniors, and children. Tues–Sun 10am–5pm; Thurs 10am–8pm. U-Bahn: Königsplatz.

Neue Pinakothek ★★ This gallery is a showcase of Munich's most valuable 18th- and 19th-century art, an artistic period that was hardly the Renaissance but has its artistic devotees nonetheless. Across Theresienstrasse from the Alte Pinakothek, the museum has paintings by Gainsborough, Goya, David, Manet, van Gogh, and Monet. Among the more popular German artists represented are Wilhelm Leibl and Gustav Klimt. Note particularly the genre paintings by Carl Spitzweg.

Barer Strasse 29. ✆ **089/23-80-51-95.** www.pinakothek.de/neue-pinakothek. Admission 5.50€ ($8) adults, 4€ ($5.80) students and seniors, free for children 15 and under. 1€ ($1.50) entrance on Sun. Thurs–Mon 10am–5pm; Wed 10am–8pm. U-Bahn: Theresienstrasse. Tram: 27. Bus: 53.

Pinakothek der Moderne ★★ In 2002, one of the world's largest museums devoted to the visual arts of the 19th and 20th centuries opened in Munich, just minutes from the Alte and Neue Pinakothek. Four major collections have been brought together under one roof, making this the most vast display of fine and applied arts in the country. It's Munich's version of the Tate Gallery in London or the Pompidou in Paris.

Wander where your interest dictates: the **Staatsgalerie Moderner Kunst (State Gallery of Modern Art)** ★★★, with paintings, sculpture, photography, and video; **Die Neue Sammlung,** which constitutes the national museum of applied art featuring design and craftwork; the **Architekturmuseum der Technischen Universität (University of Architecture Museum),** with architectural drawings, photographs, and models; and the **Staatliche Grapische Sammlung,** with its outstanding collection of prints and drawings.

Whenever we visit, we spend most of our time in the modern art collection, lost in a world of some of our favorite artists: Picasso, Magritte, Klee, Kandinsky, even Francis Bacon, de Kooning, and Warhol. The museum also owns 400,000 drawings and prints from Leonardo da Vinci to Cézanne up to contemporary artists. They are presented as alternating exhibits.

The architectural galleries hold the largest specialist collection of its kind in Germany, comprising some 350,000 drawings, 100,000 photographs, and 500 models. The applied arts section features more than 50,000 items. You go from the beginnings of the Industrial Revolution up to today's computer culture, with exhibitions of Art Nouveau and Bauhaus along the way.

Barerstrasse 40. ✆ **089/23805-360.** www.pinakothek.de/pinakothek-der-moderne. Admission 7€ ($10) adults, 4€ ($5.80) students age 15–25. Fri–Sun and Wed 10am–8pm; Thurs 10am–8pm. U-Bahn: Odeonsplatz.

Residenz ★ The official residence of Bavaria's rulers from 1385 to 1918, the complex is a conglomerate of various styles of art and architecture. Depending on how you approach the Residenz, you might first see a German Renaissance hall (the western facade), a Palladian palace (on the north), or a Florentine Renaissance palace (on the south facing Max-Joseph-Platz). The Residenz has been completely restored since its almost total destruction in World War II and now houses the Residenz Museum, a concert hall, the Cuvilliés Theater, and the Residenz Treasure House.

Residenzmuseum comprises the southwestern section of the palace, some 120 rooms of art and furnishings collected by centuries of Wittelsbachs. There are two guided tours, one in the morning and the other in the afternoon, or you may visit the rooms on your own.

If you have time to view only one item in the **Schatzkammer (Treasure House)** ★★, make it the 16th-century Renaissance statue of *St. George Slaying the Dragon.* The equestrian statue is made of gold, but you can barely see the precious metal for the thousands of diamonds, rubies, emeralds, sapphires, and semiprecious stones embedded in it.

From the Brunnenhof, you can visit the **Cuvilliés Theater** ★, whose rococo tiers of boxes are supported by seven bacchants. The huge box, where the family sat, is in the center. In summer, this theater is the scene of frequent concert and opera performances. Mozart's *Idomeneo* was first performed here in 1781.

Max-Joseph-Platz 3. ✆ **089/29-06-71.** www.residenz-muenchen.de. Adults 9€ ($13), 8€ ($12) students and seniors, free for children 14 and under. Ticket for either Schatzkammer or Residenzmuseum 5€ ($7.25) adults, 4€ ($5.80) seniors and students, free for children 14 and under. Daily 9am–6pm; Thurs 10am–8pm. U-Bahn: Odeonsplatz.

Schack-Galerie To appreciate this florid and romantic overdose of sentimental German paintings of the 19th century, you've got to enjoy fauns and elves at play in picturesque, even magical, landscapes. Such art has its devotees. Obviously, if you're a Picasso Cubist, you'd be better off going elsewhere. But this once-private collection adheres to the baroque tastes of Count Adolf Friedrich von Schack of Schwerin (1815–94), who spent a rich life acquiring works by the likes of Spitzweg, Schwind, Fuerbach, and others, many others, some of whom frankly should have been assigned to the dustbin of art history. Still, in all, we find a visit here fun, at least on a rainy, gray day. It's like wandering back to a lost world and getting absorbed in the taste of yesterday.

Prinzregentenstrasse 9. ✆ **089/23805-224.** www.schack-galerie.de. Admission 3€ ($4.35) adults, 2€ ($2.90) children 15 and under. Wed–Mon 10am–5pm. U-Bahn: U4 and U5 to Lehel.

Schloss Nymphenburg ★★ In summer, the Wittelsbachs would pack up their bags and head for their country house, Schloss Nymphenburg. A more complete, more sophisticated palace than the Residenz, it was begun in 1664 in Italian villa style and went through several architectural changes before completion.

The main building's great hall, decorated in rococo colors and stuccos with frescoes by Zimmermann (1756), was used for both banquets and concerts. Concerts are still presented here in summer. From the main building, turn left and head for the arcaded gallery connecting the northern pavilions. The first room in the arcade is the Great Gallery of Beauties. More provocative, however, is Ludwig I's Gallery of Beauties in the south pavilion (the apartments of Queen Caroline). Ludwig commissioned no fewer than 36 portraits of the most beautiful women of his day. The paintings by J. Stieler include the *Schöne Münchnerin (Lovely Munich Girl)* and a portrait of Lola

Montez, the dancer whose "friendship" with Ludwig I caused a scandal that factored into the revolution of 1848.

To the south of the palace buildings, in the rectangular block of low structures that once housed the court stables, is the **Marstallmuseum.** In the first hall, look for the glass coronation coach of Elector Karl Albrecht, built in Paris in 1740. From the same period comes the elaborate hunting sleigh of Electress Amalia, adorned with a statue of Diana, goddess of the hunt; even the sleigh's runners are decorated with shellwork and hunting trophies. The coaches and sleighs of Ludwig II are displayed in the third hall.

One of Nymphenburg's greatest attractions is the **park** ★. Stretching for 200 hectares (494 acres) in front of the palace, it's divided into two sections by the canal that runs from the pool at the foot of the staircase to the cascade at the far end of the English-style gardens.

Within the park are a number of pavilions. The guided tour begins with **Amalienburg** ★★, whose plain exterior belies the rococo decoration inside. Built as a hunting lodge for Electress Amalia (in 1734), the pavilion carries the hunting theme through the first few rooms and then bursts into salons of flamboyant colors, rich carvings, and wall paintings. The most impressive room is the Hall of Mirrors, a symphony of silver ornaments on a faint blue background.

Other attractions include the **Porzellansammlung,** or museum of porcelain, which is above the stables of the Marstallmuseum. Some of the finest pieces of porcelain in the world, executed in the 18th century, are displayed here, along with an absolute gem—extraordinarily detailed miniature porcelain reproductions of some of the grand masterpieces in the Old Pinakothek, each commissioned by Ludwig I.

The **Botanischer Garten (Botanical Gardens)** ★★ is among the most richly planted in Europe. It's worth a spring trip to Munich for garden lovers to see this great mass of vegetation burst into bloom.

Schloss Nymphenburg 1. ✆ **089/17-908-668.** www.schloesser-bayern.de. Admission to all attractions: 10€ ($15) adults, 8€ ($12) students and seniors, free for children 6 and under. Separate admission to Schloss Nymphenburg: 5€ ($7.25) adults, 4€ ($5.80) seniors and students. Admission to either Marstallmuseum, Amalienburg, or Porzellansammlung 8€ ($12) adults, free for children 15 and under.

CHURCHES

When the smoke cleared from the 1945 bombings, only a fragile shell remained of Munich's largest church, the **Frauenkirche (Cathedral of Our Lady)** ★, Frauenplatz 1 (✆ **089/290-08-20;** U-Bahn/S-Bahn: Marienplatz). Workers and architects who restored the 15th-century Gothic cathedral used whatever remains they could find in the rubble, along with modern innovations. The overall effect of the rebuilt Frauenkirche is strikingly simple yet dignified. The twin towers, which remained intact, have been a city landmark since 1525. Instead of the typical flying buttresses, huge props on the inside that separate the side chapels support the edifice. The Gothic vaulting over the nave and chancel is borne by 22 simple octagonal pillars. Except for the tall chancel window, when you enter the main doors at the west end, you don't notice windows; they're hidden by the enormous pillars. According to legend, the devil laughed at the notion of hidden windows and stamped in glee at the stupidity of the architect—you can still see the strange footlike mark called "the devil's step" in the entrance hall.

Peterskirche (St. Peter's Church), Rindermarkt 1 (✆ **089/260-48-28;** U-Bahn/S-Bahn: Marienplatz), is Munich's oldest church (1180). Its tall steeple is worth the climb in clear weather for a view as far as the Alps. In its gilded baroque interior are murals by Johann Baptist Zimmermann. The **Asamkirche** ★, Sendlinger Strasse (U-Bahn/S-Bahn: Sendlingertor), is a remarkable example of rococo, designed by the Asam brothers, Cosmas Damian and Edgar Quirin, from 1733 to 1746. The **Michaelskirche,** Neuhauser Strasse 6 (U-Bahn/S-Bahn: Karlsplatz), has the distinction of being the largest Renaissance church north of the Alps. The lovely **Theatinerkirche,** Theatinerstrasse 22 (U-Bahn/S-Bahn: Odeonsplatz), with its graceful fluted columns and arched ceilings, is the work of the court architect, François Cuvilliés and his son.

ORGANIZED TOURS

The easiest, and fastest, way to gain an overview of Munich is on a guided tour. One of the largest organizers of these is **Gray Line** (✆ **089/54-90-75-60**). At least a half-dozen touring options are available, ranging from a quickie 1-hour overview of the city to full-day excursions to such outlying sites as Berchtesgaden, Oberammergau, and Hohenschwangau, site of three of Bavaria's most stunning palaces. City tours encompass aspects of both modern and medieval Munich, and depart from the main railway station. Departures, depending on the season and the tour, occur between two and eight times a day, and tours are conducted in both German and English.

Depending on the tour, adults pay 11€ to 25€ ($16–$36), and children 13 and under pay 6€ to 12€ ($8.70–$17), for experiences that last between 1 and 2½ hours. Advance reservations for most city tours aren't required, and you can buy your ticket from the bus driver at the time you board. The company also offers a 4½-hour "Munich by Night" tour that costs 60€ ($87) per person and departs several nights a week at 7:30pm, and which hauls its participants in and out of a series of cabarets and beerhalls at a lukewarm, and ultimately not particularly happy, encounter that has "I am a tourist" permeating almost every aspect of the experience.

If you want to participate in any tour that covers attractions outside the city limits, advance reservations are required, especially if you want the bus to pick you up at any of Munich's hotels. Travel agents in Munich, as well as the concierge or reception staff at your hotel, can book any of these tours.

Pedal pushers will want to try Mike Lasher's **Mike's Bike Tour** (✆ **089/255-43-988;** www.mikesbiketours.com). His bike rentals for 12€ to 18€ ($17–$26) include maps and locks, child and infant seats, and helmets at no extra charge. English and bilingual tours of central Munich run from March to November, leaving daily at 10:30am (call to confirm). The 4-hour tour is 24€ ($35).

THE SHOPPING SCENE

The most interesting shops are concentrated on Munich's pedestrians-only streets between **Karlsplatz** and **Marienplatz.**

Handmade crafts can be found on the fourth floor of Munich's major department store, **Ludwig Beck am Rathauseck,** Am Marienplatz 11 (✆ **089/236-910;** U-Bahn/S-Bahn: Marienplatz). **Wallach,** Residenzstrasse 3 (✆ **089/22-08-72;** U-Bahn/S-Bahn: Odeonplatz), is a fine place to obtain handcrafts and folk art, both new and antique. Shop here for a memorable object to remind you of your trip. You'll find antique churns, old hand-painted wooden boxes and trays, painted porcelain clocks, and many other items.

On the grounds of Schloss Nymphenburg at Nördliches Schlossrondell 8, you'll find **Nymphenburger Porzellan-manufaktur** (✆ **089/17-91-970;** U-Bahn:

Rotkreuzplatz, then tram no. 17 toward Amalienburgstrasse; bus no. 41), one of Germany's most famous porcelain makers. You can visit the exhibition and sales rooms; shipments can be arranged if you make purchases. There's also a branch in Munich's center, at Odeonsplatz 1 (✆ **089/28-24-28;** U-Bahn/S-Bahn: Odeonplatz).

MUNICH AFTER DARK

To find out what's happening in the Bavarian capital, go to the tourist office and buy a copy of *Monatsprogramm* (2€/$2.90). This monthly publication contains complete information about what's going on in Munich and how to purchase tickets.

THE PERFORMING ARTS

Nowhere else in Europe, other than London and Paris, will you find so many musical and theatrical performances. And the good news is the low cost of the seats—you'll get good tickets if you're willing to pay anywhere from 10€ to 55€ ($15–$80).

A part of the Residenz (see "Museums & Palaces," p. 415), **Altes Residenztheater (Cuvilliés Theater),** Residenzstrasse 1 (✆ **089/2185-19-40;** U-Bahn: Odeonsplatz), is a sightseeing attraction in its own right, and Germany's most outstanding example of a rococo tier-boxed theater. During World War II, the interior was dismantled and stored. You can tour it Tuesday to Friday from 2 to 4pm and Sunday from 11am to 5pm. **Bavarian State Opera** and the **Bayerisches Staatsschauspiel** (**State Theater Company;** ✆ **089/2185-1920**) perform smaller works here in keeping with the tiny theater's intimate character. Box-office hours are Monday to Friday 10am to 6pm, plus 1 hour before performances; Saturday 10am to 1pm only. Opera tickets are 18€ to 150€ ($26–$218); theater tickets 15€ to 60€ ($22–$87); building tours 5€ ($7.25).

The regular season of the **Deutsches Theater,** Schwanthalerstrasse 13 (✆ **089/552-34-444;** www.deutsches-theater.de; U-Bahn: Karlsplatz/Stachus), lasts year-round. Musicals, operettas, ballets, and international shows are performed here. During carnival season (Jan–Feb) the theater becomes a ballroom for more than 2,000 guests. Tickets are 20€ to 64€ ($29–$93), higher for special events.

Gasteig München GmbH, Rosenheimer Strasse 5 (✆ **089/48-09-80;** www.gasteig.de; S-Bahn: Rosenheimerplatz; tram no. 18; bus no. 51), is the home of the **Münchner Philharmoniker** (www.muenchnerphilharmoniker.de), founded in 1893. Its present home opened in 1985 and shelters the Richard Strauss Conservatory and the Munich Municipal Library. The orchestra performs in Philharmonic Hall. Purchase tickets Monday to Friday 9am to 6pm, Saturday 9am to 2pm, for 10€ to 51€ ($15–$74). The Philharmonic season runs mid-September to July.

Practically any night of the year, except from August to mid-September, you'll find a performance at the **Nationaltheater,** Max-Joseph-Platz 2 (✆ **089/21-85-1920;** www.bayerische.staatsoper.de; U-Bahn/S-Bahn: Marienplatz or Odeonsplatz), home of the **Bavarian State Opera,** one of the world's great opera companies. The productions are beautifully mounted and presented, and sung by famous singers. Hard-to-get tickets may be purchased Monday through Friday from 10am to 6pm, plus 1 hour before performance; Saturday from 10am to 1pm. The Nationaltheater is also home to the **Bavarian State Ballet.** Opera tickets are 15€ to 243€ ($22–$352); ballet tickets, 8€ to 66€ ($12–$96).

What's Brewing at the Beer Halls?

The world's most famous beer hall, **Hofbräuhaus am Platzl,** Am Platzl 9 (✆ **089/22-16-76;** www.hofbraeuhaus.de; U-Bahn/S-Bahn: Marienplatz), is a legend. Visitors with only 1 night in Munich usually target the Hofbräuhaus as their top nighttime destination. Owned by the state, the present Hofbräuhaus was built at the end of the 19th century, but the tradition of a beer house on this spot dates from 1589. In the 19th century it attracted artists, students, and civil servants and was known as the Blue Hall because of its dim lights and smoky atmosphere. When it became too small to contain everybody, architects designed another in 1897. This one was the 1920 setting for the notorious meeting of Hitler's newly launched German Workers Party. Today, 4,500 beer drinkers can crowd in on a given night. Several rooms are spread over three floors, including a top-floor room for dancing. The ground floor, with its brass band (which starts playing at 11am), is exactly what you'd expect of a beer hall—here it's eternal Oktoberfest. It's open daily from 10am to midnight.

In a century-old house northwest of Schwabing at the edge of Luitpold Park, **Bamberger Haus,** Brunnerstrasse 2 (✆ **089/308-89-66;** www.restaurant-la-villa.de; U-Bahn: Scheidplatz), is named after the city most noted for the quantity of beer its residents drink. Bavarian and international specialties served in the street-level restaurant include well-seasoned soups, grilled steak, veal, pork, and sausages. If you only want to drink, visit the rowdier and less expensive beer hall in the cellar, where a large beer is 5€ ($7.25). The restaurant is open daily noon to midnight and the beer hall daily 5pm to 1am; in summer, weather permitting, a beer garden is open daily 11am to 11pm.

THE CLUB & MUSIC SCENE

You'll find some of Munich's most sophisticated entertainment at **Bayerischer Hof Night Club,** in the Hotel Bayerischer Hof, Promenadeplatz 2–6 (✆ **089/212-00;** www.bayerischerhof.de; tram no. 19). Within one very large room is a piano bar where a musician plays melodies every night except Monday from 10am to 3am. The piano bar is free, but there's a nightclub cover charge of 5€ to 50€ ($7.25–$73). Daily happy hour is from 7 to 8:30pm in the piano bar.

Jazzclub Unterfahrt, Einsteinstrasse 42 (✆ **089/448-27-94;** U-Bahn/S-Bahn: Ostbahnhof), is Munich's leading jazz club, lying near the Ostbahnhof in the Haidhausen district. The club presents live music Tuesday to Sunday 8:30pm to 1am (it opens at 8pm). Wine, small snacks, beer, and drinks are sold as well. Sunday night there's a special jam session for improvisation. Cover Tuesday to Saturday is 10€ to 20€ ($15–$29), Sunday jam session is 15€ ($22). Small, dark, and popular with blues and jazz aficionados, **Mister B's,** Herzog-Heinrichstrasse 38 (✆ **089/534901;** www.misterbs.de; U-Bahn: Goetheplatz), hosts a slightly older, mellower crowd than the rock and dance clubs. It's open Tuesday to Sunday 8pm to 3am. Blues, jazz, and rhythm-and-blues combos take the stage Thursday to Saturday. Cover is 5€ to 10€ ($7.25–$15).

Englischer Garten, the park between the Isar River and Schwabing, is the biggest city-owned park in Europe. It has a main restaurant and several beer gardens, of which the **Biergärten Chinesischer Turm,** Englischer Garten 3 (✆ **089/38-38-73-27;** www.chinaturm.de; U-Bahn: Giselastrasse), is our favorite. It takes its name from its location at the foot of a pagoda-like tower. Plenty of beer and cheap Bavarian food are what you get here. A large glass or mug of beer (ask for *ein mass Bier*), enough to bathe in, costs 6€ to 8€ ($8.70–$12). Homemade dumplings are a specialty, as are all kinds of tasty sausage. Oompah bands often play. It's open daily 10am to midnight (closed Jan 11–Feb 5).

On the principal pedestrian-only street of Munich, **Augustinerbrau,** Neuhäuserstrasse 27 (✆ **089/231-83-257;** www.augustiner-braeu.de; U-Bahn/S-Bahn: Stachus), offers generous helpings of food, good beer, and a mellow atmosphere. It's been around for a little less than a century, but beer was first brewed on this spot in 1328. The cuisine is not for dieters: It's hearty, heavy, and starchy, but it sure soaks up that beer. Hours are daily 9am to midnight.

Waldwirtschaft Grosshesslohe, George-Kalb-Strasse 3 (✆ **089/74-99-4030;** tram no. 7), is a popular summertime rendezvous seating some 2,000 drinkers. The gardens are open daily from 10am to 11pm (they have to close early because neighborhood residents complain). Music ranges from Dixieland to English jazz to Polish bands. Entrance is free and you bring your own food. It's above the Isar River in the vicinity of the zoo.

Set in a huge factory warehouse, **Nachtwerk,** Landesbergerstrasse 185 (✆ **089/578-3800;** S-Bahn: Donnersbergerbrücke), is a cavernous mostly straight dance club that also books bands. It's a festive place that's not nearly as pretentious as other more "exclusive" discos (the doorman won't send you away for wearing the wrong shoes or pants). The club is open Monday to Friday 10:30pm to 4am; Saturday 10:30pm to 6am. Cover is 6€ to 12€ ($8.70–$17).

Parkcafé, Sophienstrasse 7 (✆ **089/59-83-13;** www.parkcafe089.de; U-Bahn: Lebachplatz), contains three distinct subdivisions, each catering to the food, beverage, and socializing needs of the young, the restless, and the occasionally cutting-edge residents of Munich. Come here for a drink, snack, or coffee at the **Parkcafé,** and perhaps extend the venue into a full meal at the immediately adjacent premises of the **Parkcafé Kitchen.** Both establishments are open daily 10am to midnight for food (until 1am for drinks). And if you're in the mood to dance, surrounded by nocturnal denizens of Munich who might be dressed in Teutonic punk or leather and perhaps heavily pierced, come here every night of the week from 11pm to 4am for access to the **Parkcafé Club,** where hipster music blares and entrance costs from 10€ ($15).

THE BAR & CAFE SCENE

Once a literary cafe, **Alter Simpl,** Türkenstrasse 57 (✆ **089/272-30-83;** www.egger-lokale.de; U-Bahn: University), attracts a diverse crowd of locals, including young people. The real fun begins after 11pm, when the iconoclastic artistic ferment becomes more reminiscent of Berlin than Bavaria. It's open Sunday to Thursday 11am to 3am, Friday and Saturday 11am to 4am.

Nachtcafé, Maximilianplatz 5 (✆ **089/59-59-00;** tram no. 19), hums, thrives, and captures the nocturnal imagination of everyone—no other nightspot in Munich attracts such an array of soccer stars, film celebrities, literary figures, and, as one employee put it, "ordinary people, but only the most sympathetically crazy ones." The club features lots of American bands. Waves of patrons appear at different times of the evening: at 11pm, when live concerts begin; at 2am, when the restaurants close; and at 4am, when die-hard revelers seek a final drink in the predawn hours. The music is jazz, blues, funk, and soul, and the decor is updated 1950s. There's a cover only rarely and for special entertainment. It's open daily 9pm to 6am.

Schumann's, Odensplatz 6–7 (✆ **089/22-90-60**), doesn't waste any money on decor—it depends on the local beau monde to keep it looking chic. In warm weather the terrace spills onto the street. Schumann's is known as a "thinking man's bar." Charles Schumann, author of three bar books, wanted a bar that would be an artistic, literary, and communicative social focus of the metropolis. Popular with the film, advertising, and publishing worlds, his place is said to have contributed to a remarkable renaissance of bar culture in the city. It's open Sunday 6pm to 3am, Monday to Friday 9am to 3am; closed on Saturday.

GAY & LESBIAN CLUBS

Much of Munich's gay and lesbian scene takes place in the blocks between the Viktualienmarkt and Gärtnerplatz, particularly on Hans-Sachs-Strasse.

A virtual communications center of hip Munich, the **Stadtcafe,** St. Jakobsplatz 1 (✆ **089/266-949;** www.stadtcafe-muenchen.de; U-Bahn: Marienplatz), attracts creative people, often in the arts. By Munich nightlife standards, it closes relatively early; night owls drift on to other late-night venues. Expect lots of chitchat from table to table, and there's sure to be someone scribbling away at his or her unfinished story (or unfinished novel). It's open Monday to Saturday 11am to midnight, and Sunday 10:30am to midnight.

DAY TRIPS FROM MUNICH

HERRENCHIEMSEE ★ & NEUES SCHLOSS ★★ Known as the "Bavarian Sea," Chiemsee is one of the Bavarian Alps' most beautiful lakes in a serene landscape. Its main attraction lies on the island of Herrenchiemsee, where "Mad" King Ludwig II built one of his fantastic castles.

Neues Schloss, begun in 1878, was never completed because of the king's death in 1886. The castle was to have been a replica of the grand palace of Versailles that Ludwig so admired. One of the architects was Julius Hofmann, whom the king had also employed for the construction of his alpine castle, Neuschwanstein. When work was halted in 1886, only the center of the enormous palace had been completed. The palace and its formal gardens remain one of the most fascinating of Ludwig's adventures, in spite of their unfinished state.

The splendid Great Hall of Mirrors most authentically replicates Versailles. The 17 door panels contain enormous mirrors reflecting the 33 crystal chandeliers and the 44 gilded candelabra. The vaulted ceiling is covered with 25 paintings depicting the life of Louis XIV. The dining room is a popular attraction because of "the little table that lays itself." A mechanism in the floor permitted the table to go down to the room below to be cleared and relaid between courses.

You can visit Herrenchiemsee at any time of the year. April to September, tours are given daily from 9am to 6pm; off season, daily 10am to 4:15pm. Admission—in addition to the boat fare—is 7€ ($10) adults, 6€ ($8.70) students, and free for ages 18 and under.

Getting There Take the train to Prien am Chiemsee (trip time: 1 hr.). For information, call ✆ **08001/50-70-90.** There's also regional bus service offered by **RVO Regionalverkehr Oberbayern** (✆ **089/55-164-0**). Access by car is via A-8 Autobahn.

From Prien, lake steamers make the trip to Herrenchiemsee. They are operated by **Chiemsee-Schiffahrt Ludwig Fessler** (✆ **08051/60-90**). The round-trip fare is 7.30€ ($11). For visitor information, contact the **Kur und Verkehrsamt,** Alte Rathausstrasse 11, in Prien am Chiemsee (✆ **08051/69050**), open September to March Monday to Friday 8:30am to 5pm. April to August, the office is also open on Saturday 8:30am to 6pm.

GARMISCH-PARTENKIRCHEN ★★★

In spite of its urban flair, Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany's top alpine resort, has maintained the charm of an ancient village. Even today, you occasionally see country folk in traditional costumes, and you may be held up in traffic while the cattle are led from their mountain grazing grounds down through the streets of town. Garmisch is about 88km (55 miles) southwest of Munich.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **By Train** The **Garmisch-Partenkirchen Bahnhof** lies on the major Munich-Weilheim-Garmisch-Mittenwald-Innsbruck rail line with frequent connections in all directions. Twenty trains per day arrive from Munich (trip time: 1 hr., 22 min.). For rail information and schedules, call ✆ **0800/1-50-70-90.**

By Bus Both long-distance and regional buses through the Bavarian Alps are provided by **RVO Regionalverkehr Oberbayern** in Garmisch-Partenkirchen (✆ **08821/948-274** for information).

By Car Access is via A-95 Autobahn from Munich; exit at Eschenlohe.

VISITOR INFORMATION For tourist information, contact the **Kurverwaltung und Verkehrsamt,** Richard-Strauss-Platz (✆ **08821/180-700**), open Monday to Saturday 8am to 6pm, Sunday 10am to noon.

GETTING AROUND An unnumbered municipal bus services the town, depositing passengers at Marienplatz or the Bahnhof, from where you can walk to all central hotels. This free bus runs every 15 minutes.

WHERE TO STAY

Gästehaus Trenkler *Value* For a number of years, Frau Trenkler has made travelers feel well cared for in her quiet, centrally located guesthouse. She rents four doubles, each with shower and sink. Each duvet-covered bed is equipped with a good mattress. Rooms range from small to medium, and corridor bathrooms are adequate and tidily maintained.

Kreuzstrasse 20, 82467 Garmisch-Partenkirchen. ✆ **08821/34-39.** Fax 08821/15-67. www.gaestehaus-trenkler.de. 4 units, all with shower. 65€ ($94) double. Rates include continental breakfast. No credit cards. Free parking. Bus: Eibsee no. 1. *In room:* No phone.

Outdoors in the Bavarian Alps

HITTING THE SLOPES & OTHER WINTER ACTIVITIES The winter **skiing** here is the best in Germany. A regular winter snowfall in January and February measures 30 to 50 centimeters (12–20 in.), which in practical terms means about 2m (6½ ft.) of snow in the areas served by ski lifts. The great **Zugspitzplatt** snowfield can be reached in spring or autumn by a rack railway. The Zugspitze, at 2,960m (9,710 ft.) above sea level, is the tallest mountain peak in Germany. Ski slopes begin at a height of 2,650m (8,700 ft.).

The second great ski district in the Alps is **Berchtesgadener Land,** with alpine skiing centered on Jenner, Rossfeld, Götschen, and Hochschwarzeck, and consistently good snow conditions until March. Here you'll find a cross-country skiing center and many miles of tracks kept in first-class condition, natural toboggan runs, one artificial ice run for toboggan and skibob runs, artificial ice-skating, and ice-curling rinks. Call the local "Snow-Telefon" at the Berchtesgaden Tourist Office ✆ **08652/9670** for current snow conditions.

From October to February, you can use the world-class **ice-skating** rink in Berchtesgaden (the Eisstadion). Less reliable, but more evocative of Bavaria's wild open spaces, it involves skating on the surface of the Hintersee Lake once it's sufficiently frozen. Rarer is an ice-skating experience on the Königsee, whose surface freezes to the degree that you can skate on average only once every 10 winters. A particularly cozy way to spend a winter's night is to huddle with a companion in the back of a **horse-drawn sled.** For a fee of 55€ to 85€ ($80–$123) per hour, this can be arranged by calling ✆ **08652/1760.**

HIKING & OTHER SUMMER ACTIVITIES In summer, **alpine hiking** is a major attraction—climbing mountains, enjoying nature, watching animals in the forest. Hikers are able at times to observe endangered species firsthand. One of the best areas for hiking is the 1,237m (4,058-ft.) **Eckbauer** lying on the southern fringe of Partenkirchen (the tourist office at Garmisch-Partenkirchen will supply maps and details). Many visitors come to the Alps in summer just to hike through the **Berchtesgaden National Park,** bordering the Austrian province of Salzburg. The 2,466m (8,091-ft.) Watzmann Mountain, the Königssee (Germany's cleanest, clearest lake), and parts of the Jenner—the pride of Berchtesgaden's four ski areas—are within the boundaries of the national park, which has well-mapped trails cut through protected areas, leading the hiker along spectacular flora and fauna. Information about hiking in the park is provided by the **Nationale Parkhaus,** Franciscanalplatz 7, 83471 Berchtesgaden (✆ **08652/64343**). It's open daily from 9am to 5pm.

From Garmisch-Partenkirchen, serious hikers can embark on full-day or, if they're more ambitious, overnight alpine treks, following clearly marked footpaths and staying in isolated mountain huts maintained by the German Alpine Association (Deutscher Alpenverein/DAV). Some huts are staffed and serve meals. For the truly remote unsupervised huts, you'll be provided with information on how to gain access and your responsibility in leaving them tidy after your visit. For information, inquire at the local tourist office or write to the **German Alpine Association,** Am Franciscanalplatz 7, 83471, Berchtesgaden (✆ **08652/64343**). At the same address and phone number, you'll also be routed to staff members of a privately owned tour operator, the **Summit Club,** an outfit devoted to the organization of high-altitude expeditions throughout Europe and the world.

If you're a true outdoors person, you'll briefly savor the somewhat touristy facilities of Garmisch-Partenkirchen, and then use it as a base for exploring the rugged **Berchtesgaden National Park,** which is within an easy commute of Garmisch. You can also stay at one of the inns in Mittenwald or Oberammergau and take advantage of a wide roster of sporting diversions within the wide-open spaces. Any of the outfitters below will provide directions and linkups with their sports programs from wherever you decide to stay. Street maps of Berchtesgaden and its environs are usually available for free from the **Kurdirektion** (the local tourist office) at Berchtesgaden (✆ **08652/967-0**), and more intricately detailed maps of the surrounding alpine topography are available for a fee.

In addition to hill climbing and rock climbing, activities include **ballooning,** which, weather permitting, can be arranged through **Outdoor Club Berchtesgaden,** Am Gmundberg (✆ **08652/9776-0**), open Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm. Local enthusiasts warn that ballooning is not a sport for the timid or anyone who suffers unduly in the cold: Warm thermal currents that prevail around Berchtesgaden in summer limit the sport to the cold-weather months.

Cycling and **mountain biking,** available through the rental facilities of **Para-Taxi,** Maximilianstrasse 16 (✆ **08652/948450**), give outdoor enthusiasts an opportunity to enjoy the outdoors and exercise their leg muscles simultaneously. It's open Monday to Friday 9am to 12:30pm and 2 to 6pm, Saturday 9am to 12:30pm.

Anglers will find plenty of **fishing** opportunities (especially salmon, pikeperch, and trout) at Lake Hintersee and the rivers Ramsauer Ache and Königsseer Ache. To acquire a fishing permit, contact the Kurdirektion (tourist office) at Berchtesgaden, which will direct you to any of four different authorities, based on where you want to fish. For fishing specifically within the Hintersee, contact officials at the **Kurverwaltung,** Im Tal 2 (✆ **08657/98-89-20**) at Ramsau, 12km (7½ miles) from Berchtesgaden.

Despite its obvious dangers, **hang gliding** or **paragliding** from the vertiginous slopes of Mount Jenner can be thrilling. To arrange it, contact **Para-Taxi,** Maximilianstrasse 15 (✆ **08652/948450**). The headquarters for a loosely allied group of parasailing enthusiasts, the **Berchtesgaden Gleitschirmflieger** (✆ **08652/23-63**) sometimes arranges communal paragliding excursions to which qualified newcomers are invited. Practice your **kayaking** or **white-water rafting** techniques on one of the many rivers in the area, such as the Ramsauer, Königisser, Bischofswiesener, and Berchtesgadener Aches. For information and options, contact the above-mentioned **Outdoor Club Berchtesgaden.**

Post-Hotel Partenkirchen ★ This is one of the town's most prestigious hotels, especially with the asset of its unusually fine restaurant (see "Where to Dine," below). The U-shaped and handsomely furnished rooms are generally medium size. Duvets rest on comfortable beds, mostly doubles or twins. Bathrooms are handsomely maintained with tub/shower combos and deluxe toiletries. The balconies overlook a garden and offer a view of the Alps.

Ludwigstrasse 49, 82467 Garmisch-Partenkirchen. ✆ **08821/9363-0.** Fax 08821/9363-2222. www.post-hotel.de. 59 units. 120€–170€ ($174–$247) double; 180€ ($261) suite. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; 4 dining rooms; bar; laundry/dry cleaning service. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Reindl's Partenkirchner Hof ★★ This special Bavarian retreat maintains a high level of luxury and hospitality. The annexes have balconies, and the main building has wraparound verandas, giving each room an unobstructed view of the mountains and town. All rooms have a cozy charm. The best are suites opening onto panoramic views of mountains or the garden. Rustic pine furniture adds to the allure of this place. Bathrooms are spacious with a tub/shower combo.

Bahnhofstrasse 15, 82467 Garmisch-Partenkirchen. ✆ **08821/943870.** Fax 08821/9438-7250. www.reindls.de. 63 units. 120€–140€ ($174–$203) double; 180€–220€ ($261–$319) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 9€ ($13). Closed Nov 15–Dec 15. **Amenities:** Restaurant (see "Where to Dine," below); 2 bars; indoor pool; health club; Jacuzzi; sauna; massage; room service; laundry service; solarium. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Romantik-Hotel Clausing's Posthotel ★ This hotel in the heart of town was originally built in 1512 as a tavern and has retained its *gemütlich* antique charm. In the early 1990s, it was radically upgraded. Rooms range from rather small and cozy Bavarian nests to spacious retreats. The owners have installed comfortable furnishings, and bathrooms are beautifully kept and have tub/shower combos.

Marienplatz 12, 82467 Garmisch-Partenkirchen. ✆ **08821/7090.** Fax 08821/70-92-05. www.clausings-posthotel.de. 44 units. 90€ ($131) double. DC, MC, V. Free parking. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; historic tavern; bar; room service. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer.

WHERE TO DINE

Flösserstuben INTERNATIONAL Regardless of the season, a bit of the Bavarian Alps always seems to flower amid the wood-trimmed nostalgia of this intimate restaurant close to the town center. You can select a seat at a colorful wooden table or on an ox yoke–inspired stool in front of the spliced saplings that decorate the bar. Moussaka and souvlakia, as well as sauerbraten and all kinds of Bavarian dishes, are abundantly available. You can also order Mexican tacos and tortillas or even *Tafelspitz* (boiled beef) from the Austrian kitchen. The menu isn't imaginative but is soul satisfying, especially on a cold night.

Schmiedstrasse 2. ✆ **08821/28-88.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 8€–23€ ($12–$33). AE, MC, V. Daily 11:30am–2:30pm and 5–11pm. Town bus.

Post-Hotel Partenkirchen ★ BAVARIAN This hotel dining room is renowned for its distinguished cuisine. The interior rooms are rustic, with lots of mellow, old-fashioned atmosphere. You could imagine meeting Dürer here. Everything seems comfortably subdued, including the guests. The best way to dine is to order one of the fixed-price menus, which change daily, depending on the availability of seasonal produce. The a la carte menu is extensive, featuring game in the autumn. The Wiener schnitzel served with a large salad is the best we've had in the resort.

Ludwigstrasse 49. ✆ **08821/5-93-630.** www.post-hotel.de. Reservations required. Main courses 15€–40€ ($22–$58); fixed-price menus 45€ ($65). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily noon–2pm and 6–10pm.

Reindl's Restaurant ★ CONTINENTAL Reindl's is first class all the way. Chic, charming, cozy, and alpine, it's filled with Teutonic antiques and the scent of sophisticated, freshly cooked food. It has aquariums for both salt- and freshwater fish, for the storage of live lobsters, and for live freshwater alpine fish, including trout. Menu items change seasonally and to some extent daily, but enduring specialties include roasted rack of venison with forest mushrooms; zander with Riesling; and roasted saddle of lamb with garlic and herbs, and green beans and potatoes dauphnoise. About two-thirds of the 80-or-so seats are in an elegant main dining room; the remainder are within a richly paneled and very cozy *stube* that evokes alpine and Bavarian *Gemütlichkeit.*

In the Partenkirchner Hof, Bahnhofstrasse 15. ✆ **08821/943-870.** Reservations required. Main courses 15€–30€ ($22–$44); fixed-price menus 16€–45€ ($23–$65). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily noon–2:30pm and 6:30–11pm. Closed Nov 10–Dec 15.

SEEING THE SIGHTS IN TOWN

The symbol of the city's growth and modernity is the **Olympic Ice Stadium,** Spiridon-Louis-Ring (✆ **089/30-67-21-50;** U-Bahn: 3 to Olympia-Zentrum), built for the 1936 Winter Olympics and capable of holding nearly 12,000 people. On the slopes at the edge of town is the much larger **Ski Stadium,** with two ski jumps and a slalom course. In 1936 more than 100,000 people watched the events in this stadium. Today it's still an integral part of winter life in Garmisch—the World Cup Ski Jump is held here every New Year.

Garmisch-Partenkirchen is a center for winter sports, summer hiking, and mountain climbing. In addition, the town environs offer some of the most panoramic views and colorful buildings in Bavaria. The **Philosopher's Walk** in the park surrounding the pink-and-silver 18th-century pilgrimage **Chapel of St. Anton** is a delightful spot to enjoy the views of the mountains around the low-lying town.

EXPLORING THE ENVIRONS

One of the most beautiful of the alpine regions around Garmisch is the **Alpspitz region,** which hikers and hill climbers consider uplifting and healing for both body and soul. Here, you'll find alpine meadows, masses of seasonal wildflowers, and a rocky and primordial geology whose savage panoramas might strike you as Wagnerian. Ranging in altitude from 1,200 to 1,800m (3,900–5,900 ft.) above sea level, the Alps around Garmisch-Partenkirchen are accessible via more than 30 ski lifts and funiculars, many of which run year-round.

The most appealing and panoramic of the lot includes the Alpspitz (Osterfelderkopf) cable car that runs uphill from the center of Garmisch to the top of the Osterfelderkopf peak, at a height of 1,980m (6,500 ft.). It makes its 9-minute ascent at least every hour, year-round, from 8am to 5pm. The round-trip cost for nonskiers is 24€ ($35) adults, 17€ ($25) persons ages 16 to 18, and 15€ ($22) children ages 6 to 15. After admiring the view at the top, you can either return directly to Garmisch, or continue your journey into the mountains via other cable cars. If you opt to continue, take the Hochalm cable car across the high-altitude plateaus above Garmisch. At its terminus, you'll have two options, both across clearly marked alpine trails. The 20-minute trek will take you to the uppermost station of the Kreuzbergbahn, which will carry you back to Garmisch. The 75-minute trek will carry you to the upper terminus of the Hausbergbahn, which will also carry you back to Garmisch.

Another of the many cable-car options within Garmisch involves an eastward ascent from the center of Partenkirchen to the top of the 1,780m (5,840-ft.) Wank via the

Wankbahn, for a round-trip price of 17€ ($25) adults, 12€ ($17) persons ages 16 to 18, and 10€ ($15) children. From here, you'll get a sweeping view of the plateau upon which the twin villages of Garmisch and Partenkirchen sit. With minor exceptions, the Wankbahn is open only between mid-April and early October. But during clement weather, the top of the Wank is a favorite with the patrons of Garmisch's spa facilities because the plentiful sunshine makes it ideal for the *Liegekur* (deck-chair cure).

If you plan on pursuing any of these options, it's to your advantage to invest in a day pass, the **Classic Garmisch Pass,** with which you'll be able to ride most of the cable cars in the region (including those to the above-recommended Alpspitz, Kreuzeck, and Wank, as well as several others that fan out over the Eckbauer and the Ausberg) as many times as you like within the same day. Priced at 35€ ($51) per person, the pass is available from any of the town's cable car stations. For information on all the cable car schedules and itineraries within the region, call ✆ **08821/7970.**

Another option for exploring the environs of Garmisch involves an ascent to the top of the **Zugspitze,** at 2,960m (9,710 ft.) the tallest mountain in Germany, with a base set astride the Austrian frontier. Ski slopes begin at 2,650m (8,700 ft.). For a panoramic view over both the Bavarian and Tyrolean Alps, go to the summit. The first stage begins in the center of Garmisch by taking the cog railway to an intermediary alpine plateau (Zugspitzplatz). Trains depart hourly throughout the year from 7:39am to 2:15pm, although we recommend that you begin by 1:15pm (and preferably earlier) and not wait until the cog railway's final ascent from Garmisch. At Zugspitzplatz, you can continue uphill on the same cog railway to the debut of a high-speed, 4-minute ride aboard the Gletscherbahn cable car, the high-altitude conveyance you'll ride to the top of the Zugspitz peak. For more information, call ✆ **08821/720-688** or click on www.zugspitze.de.

MITTENWALD ★

Seeming straight out of *The Sound of Music,* the year-round resort of Mittenwald lies in a pass in the Karwendel Range, 18km (11 miles) southeast of Garmisch-Partenkirchen. Especially noteworthy and photogenic are the painted Bavarian houses with overhanging eaves. Even the baroque church tower is covered with frescoes. On the square stands a monument to Mathias Klotz, who introduced violin making to Mittenwald in 1684. The town is a major international center for this highly specialized craft.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **By Train** Mittenwald lies on the express rail line between Munich and Innsbruck and can be reached by almost hourly train service from Munich (trip time: 1½–2 hr.). Call ✆ **0800/1-50-70-90** for information.

By Bus Regional bus service from Garmisch-Partenkirchen and nearby towns is frequent; call **RVO Regionalverkehr Oberbayern** at Garmisch (✆ **08821/94-82-74** for information).

By Car Access by car is via A-95 Autobahn from Munich.

VISITOR INFORMATION Contact the **Kurverwaltung und Verkehrsamt,** Dammkarstrasse 3 (✆ **08823/3-39-81**), open Monday to Friday from 8:30am to noon and 1 to 5pm, Saturday 9am to noon.

WHERE TO STAY

Die Alpenrose In the village center at the foot of a rugged mountain, this inn is covered with decorative designs and window boxes holding flowering vines. The main building, a former 14th-century monastery, is much more desirable than the more functionally furnished annex, the Bichlerhof. Rooms in the main building are very charming, with their old-fashioned farmhouse cupboards and dark wood paneling. The private bathrooms are well kept but a bit small, with shower stalls.

Obermarkt 1, 82481 Mittenwald. ☎ **08823/92-700.** Fax 08823/37-20. www.hotel-alpenrose-mittenwald.de. 19 units. 66€–85€ ($96–$123) double. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; room service. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer.

Gästehaus Franziska *Value* The Kuffler family labors to make this the most personalized guesthouse in town. Each small room is comfortably furnished and beautifully maintained—first-rate beds feature crisp linen duvets. All have balconies with mountain views. Bathrooms are a bit small but inviting and tidy, with shower stalls. Breakfast is the only meal served. It's extremely difficult to obtain bookings from June 20 to October 2.

Innsbrucker-Strasse 24, 82481 Mittenwald. ☎ **08823/92030.** Fax 08823/920-349. www.franziska-tourismus.de. 19 units. 75€–82€ ($109–$119) double; 84€–94€ ($122–$136) suite. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, MC, V. Free parking. Closed Nov 3–Dec 15. *In room:* TV, minibar, tea/coffeemaker (suites only), hair dryer, safe.

Hotel Post ★ Dating from 1632, this hotel remains Mittenwald's finest address. A delightful breakfast is served on the sun terrace, with a view of the Alps; in cool weather you can enjoy a beer in the snug lounge-bar with its open fireplace. Rooms are comfortable but standard. Beds (twin or double) and mattresses are among the best in town. Bathrooms are small and contain shower stalls. The maids are especially helpful if you need something extra.

Obermarkt 9, 82481 Mittenwald. ☎ **08823/938-2333.** Fax 08823/938-2999. www.posthotel-mittenwald.de. 90 units. 86€–140€ ($125–$203) double; 116€–170€ ($168–$247) suite. Rates include buffet breakfast. MC, V. Free parking. **Amenities:** Wine tavern/restaurant; bar/lounge; indoor pool; sauna; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

WHERE TO DINE

Restaurant Arnspitze BAVARIAN Housed in a modern chalet hotel on the outskirts, this is the finest dining room in town. The restaurant is decorated in the old style; the cuisine is solid, satisfying, and wholesome. You might order sole with homemade noodles or veal steak in creamy smooth sauce, and then finish with one of the freshly made desserts. There's an excellent fixed-price lunch.

Innsbruckerstrasse 68. ☎ **08823/24-25.** Reservations required. Main courses 16€–25€ ($23–$36). AE. Thurs–Mon noon–2pm; Wed–Mon 6–9pm; closed Tues all day and Wed for lunch. Closed Apr.

SEEING THE SIGHTS

The town's museum has exhibits devoted to the evolution of violins and other string instruments. The **Geigenbau-und Heimatmuseum,** Ballenhausgasse 3 (☎ **08823/25-11**), is open Tuesday to Friday 10am to noon and 1 to 5pm, Saturday and Sunday from 10am to noon. Admission is 4€ ($5.80) adults, 3€ ($4.35) students, 2€ ($2.90) children 7 to 14, free for kids 6 and under. The museum is closed from November 6 to December 16, and Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

In the countryside, you are constantly exposed to the changing scenery of the Wetterstein and Karwendel ranges. Horse and carriage trips are available as well as coach tours from Mittenwald to nearby villages. In the evening there's typical Bavarian entertainment, often consisting of folk dancing and singing, zither playing, and yodeling, but you also have your choice of concerts, dance bands, discos, and bars. Mittenwald has good spa facilities, in large gardens landscaped with tree-lined streams and trout pools. Concerts during the summer are held in the music pavilion.

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

In winter, the town is a skiing center, but it remains equally active throughout the summer. Some 130km (81 miles) of paths wind up and down the mountains around the village, with chairlifts making the hiking trails readily accessible. Of course, where there are trails, there's mountain biking. A biking map is available from the tourist office (see "Visitor Information," above), and mountain-climbing expeditions are also available. You can always go swimming to cool off on a hot summer's day—the Lautersee and Ferchensee are brisk waters that, even in summer, might be forfeited by the fainthearted for the heated adventure pool in Mittenwald.

OBERAMMERGAU ★

A visit to Oberammergau, 19km (12 miles) north of Garmisch-Partenkirchen, is ideal in summer or winter. It stands in a wide valley surrounded by forests and mountains, with sunny slopes and meadows. The world-famous **Passion Play** is presented here, usually every 10 years; the next one is scheduled for 2010. The area has also long been known for the skill of its woodcarvers. Here in this village right under the Kofel, farms are still intact, and tradition prevails.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **By Train** The Oberammergau Bahnhof is on the Murnau–Bad Kohlgrum–Oberammergau rail line, with frequent connections in all directions. Murnau has connections to all major German cities. Daily trains from Munich take 2 hours. For information, call ✆ **0800/1-50-70-90.**

By Bus Regional bus service to nearby towns is offered by **RVO Regionalverkehr Oberbayern** in Garmisch-Partenkirchen (✆ **08821/948-274**). An unnumbered bus travels between Oberammergau and Garmisch-Partenkirchen.

By Car Take A-95 Munich-Garmisch-Partenkirchen Autobahn and exit at Eschenlohe (trip time: 1½ hr.).

VISITOR INFORMATION Contact the **Oberammergau Tourist Information Office,** Eugen-Papst-Strasse 9A (✆ **08822/92310;** www.oberammergau.de), open Monday to Friday 8:30am to 6pm, Saturday 9am to noon; June to September also open Saturday and Sunday 1 to 5pm.

WHERE TO STAY & DINE

Alte Post This provincial inn in the village center with a wide overhanging roof, green-shuttered windows, and tables set on a sidewalk under a long awning is the village social hub. The interior has storybook charm, with a ceiling-high green ceramic stove, alpine chairs, and shelves of pewter plates. Most of the rustic rooms have views. Wide, comfortable beds with giant posts range in size from cozy to spacious. Bathrooms are medium-size with a shower stall. Nonresidents are welcome to visit the thriving and excellent Bavarian restaurant.

Dorfstrasse 19, 82487 Oberammergau. ✆ **08822/91-00.** Fax 08822/910-100. www.ogau.de. 32 units. 65€–105€ ($94–$152) double. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. **Amenities:** Restaurant; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV, fridge, hair dryer.

Hotel Café–Restaurant Friedenshöhe *Value* This 1906 villa enjoys a beautiful location and is among the town's best bargains. Well-maintained rooms range from rather small singles to spacious doubles. Corner rooms are bigger, but bathrooms tend to be small, each with a shower stall. Even nonresidents join the townspeople who head for one of the four dining rooms, which has both indoor and outdoor terraces opening onto panoramic views, and serves Bavarian favorites.

König-Ludwig-Strasse 31, 82487 Oberammergau. ✆ **08822/35-98.** Fax 08822/43-45. www.friedenshoehe.com. 16 units. 65€–95€ ($94–$138) double. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. Closed Nov–Dec 14. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar. *In room:* TV on request.

Hotel Restaurant Böld A stone's throw from the river, this well-designed chalet hotel is one of the town's premier choices. Rooms in both the main building and the annex have equally good beds, usually doubles or twins. Most rooms open onto balconies. The spotless bathrooms are medium-size with shower stalls. A tranquil atmosphere and attentive service await you here. The restaurant serves Bavarian and international fare.

König-Ludwig-Strasse 10, 82487 Oberammergau. ✆ **08822/91-22-00.** Fax 08822/71-02. www.hotel-boeld.de. 57 units. 79€–155€ ($115–$225) double. Rates include continental breakfast. AE, MC, V. Free outside parking; 6€ ($8.70) in the garage. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; whirlpool; sauna; room service; laundry service; nonsmoking rooms; solarium; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer.

SEEING THE SIGHTS

Oberammergau's most respected citizens include an unusual group, the woodcarvers, many of whom have been trained in the village's woodcarver's school. In the **Pilatushaus,** Ludwigthomstrasse (✆ **08822/92310**), you can watch local artists at work, including woodcarvers, painters, sculptors, and potters. Hours are May through October, Monday to Friday from 1 to 6pm. You'll see many examples of these art forms throughout the town, on the painted cottages and inns and in the churchyard. Also worth seeing when strolling through the village are the houses with 18th-century frescoes by Franz Zwink that are named after fairy-tale characters, such as "Hansel and Gretel House" and the "Little Red Riding Hood House."

Heimatmuseum, Dorfstrasse 8 (✆ **08822/94136**), has a notable collection of Christmas crèches, all hand-carved and painted, dating from the 18th century through the 20th century. It's open April to mid-October, Tuesday to Sunday 10am to 5pm. Admission is 3€ ($4.35) adults and 1€ ($1.45) children.

NEARBY ATTRACTIONS The Ammer Valley, with Oberammergau in the (almost) center, offers easy access to many nearby attractions. **Schloss Linderhof** ★★ (✆ **08822/92-03-0;** www.linderhof.de), designed as a French rococo palace, the smallest of Ludwig II's constructions, is open year-round. This is in many ways the most successful of his palaces. The gardens and smaller buildings here are even more elaborate than the two-story main structure. Especially outstanding is a Hall of Mirrors, set in white and gold panels, decorated with gilded woodcarvings. The king's bedchamber overlooks a Fountain of Neptune and the cascades of the garden. The palace is open daily April to September 9am to 6pm, October to March 10am to 4pm. Admission is 6€ to 7€ ($8.70–$10), free for children 16 and under. Buses arrive from Garmisch-Partenkirchen throughout the day. Motorists can leave Oberammergau following the road signs to Ettal, 5km (3 miles) away. From Ettal, follow the signs for another 5km (3 miles) to Draswang, at which point the road into Schloss Linderhof is signposted.

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Numerous **hiking trails** lead through the mountains around Oberammergau to hikers' inns such as the **Kolbenalm** and the **Romanshohe.** You can, however, simply go up to the mountaintops on the Laber cable railway or the Kolben chairlift. Oberammergau also offers opportunities to tennis buffs, minigolf players, cyclists, swimmers, hang-gliding enthusiasts, and canoeists. The recreation center **Wellenberg,** with its large alpine swimming complex with open-air pools, hot water and fountains, sauna, solarium, and restaurant, is one of the Alps' most beautiful recreation centers.

3 The Romantic Road ★★

No area of Germany is more aptly named than the Romantische Strasse. Stretching 290km (180 miles) from Würzburg to Füssen in the foothills of the Bavarian Alps, it passes through untouched medieval villages and 2,000-year-old towns.

The best way to see the Romantic Road is by car, stopping whenever the mood strikes you and then driving on through vineyards and over streams until you arrive at the alpine passes in the south. Frankfurt and Munich are convenient gateways. Access is by A-7 Autobahn from north and south, or A-3 Autobahn from east and west; A-81 Autobahn has links from the southwest. You can also explore the Romantic Road by train or bus, or by organized tour.

ROTHENBURG OB DER TAUBER ★★★

This city was first mentioned in written records in 804 as Rotinbure, a settlement above *(ob)* the Tauber River that grew to be a free imperial city, reaching its apex of prosperity under a famous Burgermeister, Heinrich Toppler, in the 14th century.

The place is such a gem and so well known that its popularity is its chief disadvantage—tourist hordes march through here, especially in summer, and the concomitant souvenir peddlers hawk kitsch. Even so, if your time is limited and you can visit only one town on the Romantic Road, make it Rothenburg.

Contemporary life and industry have made an impact, and if you arrive at the railroad station, the first things you'll see are factories and office buildings. But don't be discouraged. Inside those undamaged 13th-century city walls is a completely preserved medieval town, relatively untouched by the passage of time.

ESSENTIALS

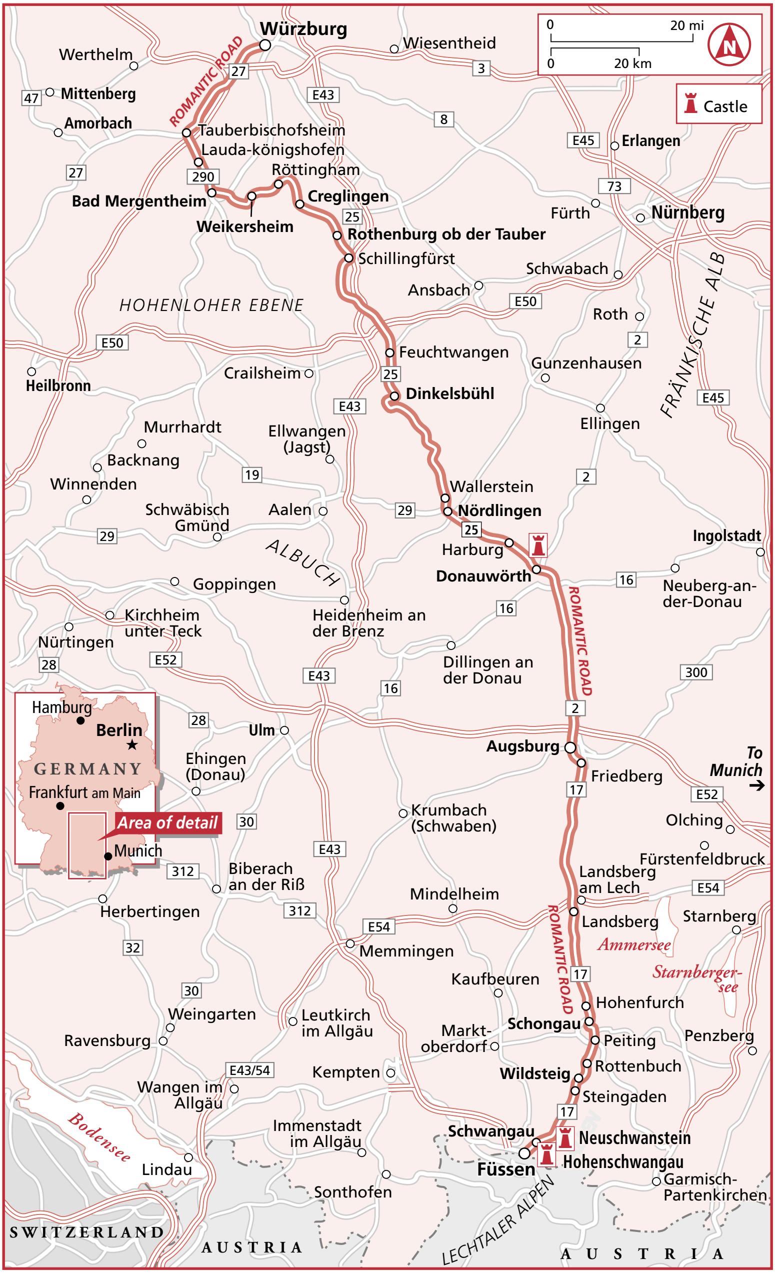
GETTING THERE **By Train** Rothenburg lies on the Steinach-Rothenburg rail line, with frequent connections to all major German cities, including Nürnberg and Stuttgart. Daily trains arrive from Frankfurt (trip time: 3 hr.), Hamburg (5½ hr.), or Berlin (7 hr.). For information, call ✆ **0800/1-50-70-90.**

By Bus The bus that traverses the length of the Romantic Road is EB189 or EB189E, operated by **Deutsche Touring Frankfurt** (✆ **069/790-3261**). Two buses operate along this route every day, but only from April to October. Know in advance that although you'll see a lot of romantic color en route, travel time to Rothenburg from Frankfurt via these buses is 5 hours because of frequent stops en route. Any travel agent in Germany or abroad can book you a seat on any of these buses, each of which stops at Würzburg, Augsburg, Füssen, and Munich.

Regional bus service that's limited to towns and hamlets within the vicinity of Rothenburg and the rest of the Romantic Road is provided by **OVF Omnibusverkehr Franken GmbH,** Kopernikusplatz 5, 90459 Nürnberg (✆ **0911/43-90-60**).

VISITOR INFORMATION Contact **Stadt Verkehrsamt,** Marktplatz (✆ **09861/40-480**), open Monday to Friday 9am to noon and 1 to 6pm, Saturday and Sunday 10am to 3pm (Nov–Mar it closes at 5pm weekdays).

The Romantic Road


Würzburg
Wiesentheid
Werthelm
Mittenberg
Amorbach
ROMANTIC ROAD
Tauberbischofsheim
Lauda-königshofen
Röttingham
Bad Mergentheim
Creglingen
Weikersheim
Rothenburg ob der Tauber
Schillingfürst
Ansbach
HOHENLOHER EBENE
Feuchtwangen
Crailsheim
Dinkelsbühl
Heilbronn
Murrhardt
Ellwangen (Jagst)
Backnang
Winnenden
Wallerstein
Nördlingen
Schwäbisch Gmünd
Aalen
ALBUCH
Harburg
Donauwörth
Goppingen
Kirchheim unter Teck
Nürtingen
Heidenheim an der Brenz
Dillingen an der Donau
Ulm
Ehingen (Donau)
Augsburg
Friedberg
Krumbach (Schwaben)
Biberach an der Riß
Herbertingen
Mindelheim
Memmingen
Kaufbeuren
Weingarten
Ravensburg
Leutkirch im Allgäu
Marktoberdorf
Schongau
Peiting
Wildsteig
Rottenbuch
Steingaden
Kempten
Wangen im Allgäu
Bodensee
Lindau
Immenstadt im Allgäu
Sonthofen
Schwangau
Füssen
Neuschwanstein
Hohenschwangau
LECHTALER ALPEN
SWITZERLAND
AUSTRIA
A U S T R I A
Erlangen
Fürth
Nürnberg
Schwabach
Roth
Gunzenhausen
Ellingen
FRÄNKISCHE ALB
Ingolstadt
Neuberg-an-der-Donau
To Munich →
Olching
Fürstenfeldbruck
Landsberg am Lech
Landsberg
Ammersee
Starnberg
Starnbergersee
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WHERE TO STAY

Expensive

Burg Hotel ★ This old-fashioned timbered house at the end of a cul-de-sac is out of the Brothers Grimm. Its Tauber Valley view, picket fences, and window boxes exude German charm. Rooms are spread across three floors (no elevator). Extras include spacious bathrooms with tub/shower combos and large mirrors. Any room is likely to please, but if you want a view, ask for no. 7, 12, or 25.

Klostergasse 1–3, 91541 Rothenburg o.d.T. ✆ **09861/94-89-0.** Fax 09861/94-89-40. www.burghotel.rothenburg.de. 15 units. 95€–170€ ($138–$247) double; from 180€ ($261) suite. Rates include buffet breakfast. MC, V. Parking 8€ ($12). **Amenities:** Nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

Eisenhut ★★ The most celebrated inn on the Romantic Road, Eisenhut is also one of the finest small hotels in Germany. Four medieval patrician houses were joined to make this distinctive inn. Demand for rooms is great, and the staff appears forever overworked. No two rooms are alike—yours may contain hand-carved, monumental pieces or have a 1940s Hollywood touch with a tufted satin headboard. All are enhanced by comforters and pillows piled high on state-of-the-art German beds. Extras include bedside controls, and spacious bathrooms outfitted with tub/shower combos and twin basins. The three-story galleried dining hall is one of the most distinctive in Germany, with a multitiered flagstone terrace on the Tauber.

Herrngasse 3–5, 91541 Rothenburg o.d.T. ✆ **09861/70-50.** Fax 09861/70-545. www.eisenhut-rothenburg.com. 79 units. 155€–210€ ($225–$305) double; 290€–381€ ($421–$552) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 10€ ($15). Closed Jan 3–Feb 28. **Amenities:** Restaurant; piano bar; Bavarian beer garden; room service; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer.

Hotel Tilman Riemenschneider ★ This hotel's half-timbered facade rises directly above one of Rothenburg's busy historic streets. Its rear courtyard, adorned with geraniums, offers a cool and calm oasis from the heavy pedestrian traffic in front. Most rooms are medium-size though a few are small. All have well-kept bathrooms with tub/shower combos.

Georgengasse 11–13, 91541, Rothenburg o.d.T. ✆ **09861/9790.** Fax 09861/29-79. www.tilman-riemenschneider.de. 60 units. 110€–210€ ($160–$305) double. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 6€ ($8.70). **Amenities:** Restaurant; lounge; 2 whirlpools; fitness center; sauna; room service; laundry/dry cleaning service; solarium; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* TV, hair dryer.

Romantik Hotel Markusturm ★★ This is one of the charming nuggets of Rothenburg, without the facilities and physical plant of the Eisenhut, but a winner in its own right. When this hotel was constructed in 1264, one of Rothenburg's defensive walls was incorporated into the building. Some rooms have four-poster beds, and about half the bathrooms have tubs and showers. Many guests request room no. 30, a cozy attic retreat. The hotel employs one of the most helpful staffs in town.

Rödergasse 1, 91541 Rothenburg o.d.T. ✆ **09861/9-42-80.** Fax 09861/9-42-81-13. www.markusturm.de. 25 units. 130€–195€ ($189–$283) double. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. **Amenities:** Room service; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV, hair dryer.

Moderate

Hotel Reichs-Küchenmeister ★ We consider this hotel, one of Rothenburg's oldest structures, near St. Jakobskirche, comparable with Tilman Riemenschneider. The owners take special care with the guests' comfort. Rooms are nicely furnished with painted wooden furniture. Bathrooms are a bit small, each with a shower stall. An extra 25 rooms are available in the duller annex across the street.

Kirchplatz 8, 91541 Rothenburg o.d.T. ✆ **09861/9700.** Fax 09861/970-409. www.reichskuechenmeister.com. 45 units. 85€–135€ ($123–$196) double; 135€–215€ ($196–$312) suite for 2; 160€–225€ ($232–$326) suite for 5. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 6.50€ ($9.40) in garage. **Amenities:** Restaurant (see "Where to Dine," below); wine bar; whirlpool; sauna; Turkish bath; nonsmoking rooms; solarium. *In room:* TV, minibar in some, hair dryer, safe.

Ringhotel Glocke *Value* South of the town center off Wenggasse, this hotel does not have the charm and style of the premier inns, but it's a good choice for those who want plain, simple, affordable rooms; a family atmosphere; and good food. The small rooms, though a bit institutional, are nonetheless comfortable and a good value for pricey Rothenburg. Bathrooms are exceedingly small, each with a shower stall.

Am Plönlein 1, 91541 Rothenburg o.d.T. ✆ **09861/95899-0.** Fax 09861/95899-22. www.glocke-rothenburg.de. 24 units. 89€–109€ ($129–$158) double. Rates include continental breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 5€ ($7.25). Closed Dec 23–Jan 7. **Amenities:** Restaurant; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV.

Inexpensive

Bayerischer Hof This little place, midway between the Bahnhof and the medieval walled city, doesn't even try to compete with the grand inns. And why should it? It's found a niche as a B&B, and although the outside looks rather sterile, many cozy, warm Bavarian touches grace the interior. Beds are comfortable, and rooms are small; bathrooms come with shower stalls. Housekeeping is excellent, and the staff is most hospitable.

Ansbacherstrasse 21, 91541 Rothenburg o.d.T. ✆ **09861/60-63.** Fax 09861/86-56-1. www.bayerischerhof.com. 9 units. 65€–110€ ($94–$160) double. Rates include breakfast. MC, V. Free parking. Closed Jan. **Amenities:** Restaurant/bar. *In room:* TV.

WHERE TO DINE

Expensive

Louvre ★ GERMAN Chef Bernhard Reiser is a man of multiple talents, and he has brought a lighter touch to the kitchens of Rothenburg with his *Neuer Küche* (new cuisine) style of cookery. His appetizers are dazzling, especially savory roasted cheesecake with spinach and red-wine sauce, or our favorite, orange-flavored pumpkin soup with grilled mussels. For a main course, try the perfectly cooked halibut with a potato sauce or else the roulade of guinea fowl with herb-infused cabbage and white-flour dumplings. The elegant cuisine is served against a mainly black decor with high-tech lighting and paintings on display. The wine list, for the most part, is good and fairly priced.

Klingengasse 15. ✆ **09861/87809.** www.louvre.rothenburg.de. Reservations required. Main courses 25€–42€ ($36–$61); fixed-price menu 50€–95€ ($73–$138). AE, MC, V. Daily 6pm–1am.

Moderate

Baumeisterhaus ★ FRANCONIAN Right off Marktplatz, the Baumeisterhaus is housed in an antique patrician residence, built in 1596. It has Rothenburg's most beautiful courtyard (which only guests can visit), with colorful murals, serenely draped by vines. Frankly, although the menu is good, the romantic setting is better. The food, for the most part, is rib-sticking fare beloved of Bavarians, including roast suckling pig with potato dumplings, and one of the chef's best dishes, sauerbraten, served with spaetzle.

Obere Schmiedgasse 3. ✆ **09861/94-700.** Reservations required for courtyard tables. Main courses 12€–26€ ($17–$38). AE, DC, MC, V. Wed–Mon 11am–7:30pm. Closed mid-Nov and mid-Mar.

Ratsstube FRANCONIAN This restaurant enjoys a position right on the market square, one of the most photographed spots in Germany. It's a bustling center of activity throughout the day—a day that begins when practically every Rothenburger stops by for coffee. Inside, a true tavern atmosphere prevails with hardwood chairs and tables, vaulted ceilings, and pierced copper lanterns. Downstairs you'll find a wine bar offering live music nightly. The a la carte menu of Franconian wines and dishes includes sauerbraten and venison, both served with fresh vegetables and potatoes. For dessert, you can order homemade Italian ice cream and espresso. This is a longtime favorite of those who prefer typical Franconian cookery without a lot of fuss and bother. If you arrive at 9am, the staff will serve you an American breakfast.

Marktplatz 6. ✆ **09861/55-11.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 10€–20€ ($15–$29). MC, V. Mon–Sat 9am–10pm; Sun 9am–6pm.

Reichs-Küchenmeister FRANCONIAN The main dishes served here are the type Bavarians have loved for years, including sauerbraten, or pork tenderloin; white herring and broiled salmon are also available. The *Lebensknodel* (liver dumpling) or goulash soup is perfect for cold days. The chef makes one of the best Wiener schnitzels in town. The restaurant is near St. Jakobskirche and has a typical Weinstube decor, along with a garden terrace and a *Konditorei* (cake shop). Service is warm and efficient.

Kirchplatz 8. ✆ **09861/9700.** Reservations required. Main courses 15€–28€ ($22–$41). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 7:30am–10pm.

Inexpensive

Ringhotel Glocke FRANCONIAN This traditional hotel and guesthouse serves good-tasting regional specialties along with a vast selection of local wine. Meals emphasize seasonal dishes and range from a simple vegetarian plate to lobster. If your expectations aren't too high, you'll probably enjoy this good regional cookery. Service is polite and attentive.

Am Plönlein 1. ✆ **09861/958-990.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 8€–22€ ($12–$32). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 11am–2pm; Mon–Sat 6–9:30pm. Closed Dec 24–Jan 6.

Tilman Riemenschneider FRANCONIAN This traditional old Weinstube is housed in one of Rothenburg's finest hotels. The old-fashioned cookery is served in generous portions. You might begin with air-dried beef or smoked filet of trout, and then follow it with poached eel, halibut steak, or loin of pork. Everything is served in generous portions with good results.

Georgengasse 11. ✆ **09861/9790.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 9.50€–25€ ($14–$36); fixed-price menu 20€–28€ ($29-$41). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 11:30am–2pm and 6–9pm.

EXPLORING THE MEDIEVAL TOWN

The **Rathaus (Town Hall)** ★ on the Marktplatz (✆ **09861/404-92**), along with the Jakobskirche, are the outstanding attractions, along with the medieval walls. The town hall consists of two sections; the older, Gothic section dates from 1240. From the 50m (164-ft.) tower of the Gothic hall, you get an overview of the town. The belfry has quite a history—in 1501, fire destroyed part of the building, and after that the belfry became a fire watchtower. Guards had to ring the bell every quarter-hour to prove they were awake and on the job. The newer Renaissance section, built in 1572, is decorated with intricate friezes, an oriel extending the building's full height, and a large stone portico opening onto the square. The octagonal tower at the center of the side facing the square contains a grand staircase leading to the upper hall. On the main floor is the large courtroom.

Admission to the tower is 1€ ($1.45) adults, .50€ (75¢) children. The Rathaus is open Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm. The tower is open April to October, daily 9:30am to 12:30pm and 1 to 5pm; November to March, Saturday, Sunday, and holidays only, from noon to 3pm.

St. Jakobskirche (Church of St. James), Klostergasse 15 (✆ **09861/404-92**), contains the famous ***Altar of the Holy Blood*** ★★ (west gallery), a masterpiece of the Würzburg sculptor and woodcarver Tilman Riemenschneider (1460–1531). The Rothenburg Council commissioned the work in 1499 to provide a worthy setting for the *Reliquary of the Holy Blood.* The relic is contained in a rock-crystal capsule set in the reliquary cross in the center of the shrine, and beneath it the scene of *The Last Supper* makes an immediate impact on the viewer—Jesus is giving Judas the morsel of bread, marking him as the traitor. The altar wings show (left) the *Entry of Christ into Jerusalem* and (right) *Christ Praying in the Garden of Gethsemane.*

The vertical Gothic church has three naves. The choir, dating from 1336, is the oldest section and has fine late-Gothic painted-glass windows. To the left is the tabernacle (1390–1400), which was recognized as a "free place," a sanctuary for condemned criminals where they could not be touched. It's open April to October, Monday to Saturday 9am to 5:30pm, Sunday 11am to 5:30pm. In December, it's open daily 10am to 5pm. In November and January to March, it's open daily 10am to noon and 2 to 4pm. Admission costs 1.50€ ($2.20) adults, and .50€ (75¢) children 5 and under and students of any age.

Also of interest is the **Reichsstadtmuseum** ★, Klosterhof 5 (✆ **09861/939-043**). This is Rothenburg's historical collection, housed in a 13th-century Dominican nunnery with well-preserved cloisters. You'll find on display here an enormous tankard that holds 3.5 liters (3⅔ qt.), whose story has echoes all over the city. In 1631, during the Thirty Years' War, the Protestant city of Rothenburg was captured by General Tilly, commander of the armies of the Catholic League. He promised to spare the town from destruction if one of the town burghers would drink the huge tankard full of wine in one draft. Burgermeister Nusch accepted the challenge and succeeded, and so saved Rothenburg. There's a festival every spring at Whitsuntide to celebrate this event. Among the exhibits is the 1494 *Rothenburg Passion* series, 12 pictures by Martinus Schwartz, and works by English painter Arthur Wasse (1854–1930), whose pictures managed to capture in a romantic way the many moods of the city. Admission to the museum is 3€ ($4.35) adults, 2€ ($2.90) students, 1.50€ ($2.20) ages 6 to 18. The museum is open daily April to October 10am to 5pm, November to March 1 to 4pm.

Kriminal Museum, Burggasse 3 (✆ **09861/53-59;** www.kriminalmuseum.rothenburg.de), is the only one of its kind in Europe. The museum's four floors display 10 centuries of legal history and provide insight into the life, laws, and punishments of medieval days. You'll see chastity belts, shame masks, a shame flute for bad musicians, and a cage for bakers who baked bread too small or too light. It's open daily April to October 9:30am to 6pm; November and January to February 2 to 4pm; and December and March 10am to 4pm. Admission is 4€ ($5.80) adults, 2.60€ ($3.80) students, 2.20€ ($3.20) children 6 and older.

DINKELSBÜHL ★

Still surrounded by medieval walls and towers, Dinkelsbühl is straight out of a Brothers Grimm story, even down to the gingerbread, which is one of its main products. Behind the ancient 10th-century walls is a town that retains its quiet, provincial ambience in spite of the many tourists who come here. The cobblestone streets are lined with fine 16th-century houses, many with carvings and paintings depicting biblical and mythological themes. In the center of town, on Marktplatz, is the late Gothic **Georgenkirche** (1448–99). It contains a carved Holy Cross Altar and pillar sculptures.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **By Train** The nearest train station is in Ansbach, which has several trains arriving daily from Munich and Frankfurt (trip time: 2½–3 hr.), Nürnberg, and Stuttgart. From Ansbach, Dinkelsbühl can be reached by bus. For information, call ✆ **0800/1-50-70-90.**

By Bus For long-distance bus service along the Romantic Road, see "Rothenburg ob der Tauber," earlier in this chapter. Regional buses link Dinkelsbühl with local towns. There are three to five buses a day to Rothenburg and five or six to Nördlingen.

By Car Take B-25 south from Rothenburg.

VISITOR INFORMATION Contact **Stadt Verkehrsamt,** Marktplatz (✆ **09851/9-02-70**). May to October, hours are Monday to Friday 9am to 6pm, Saturday 10am to 4pm, and Sunday 10am to 1pm and 2 to 4pm. November to April, it's open Monday to Friday 10am to 1pm and 2 to 5pm, Saturday 10am to noon.

SPECIAL EVENTS The **Kinderzeche (Children's Festival),** held for 10 days in July, commemorates the saving of the village by its children in 1632. According to the story, the children pleaded with conquering Swedish troops to leave their town without pillaging and destroying it—and got their wish. The pageant includes concerts given by the local boys' band dressed in historic military costumes.

WHERE TO STAY & DINE

Blauer Hecht The inn is the best of a lackluster lot. The elegant pale beige facade 17th-century building was once a brewery tavern, and the owners still brew in the backyard. The midsize rooms are tranquil and sunny. Most rooms have bedside controls. Bathrooms are routine but well maintained, each with a shower stall. Good regional meals are served in the hotel restaurant/bar open to nonresidents.

Schweinemarkt 1, 91150 Dinkelsbühl. ✆ **09851/5810.** Fax 09851/581170. www.blauer-hecht.de. 46 units. 80€–140€ ($116–$203) double. Rates include continental breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. **Amenities:** Restaurant/bar; indoor pool; sauna; steam bath; laundry service; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Deutsches Haus The facade of Deutsches Haus, which dates from 1440, is rich in painted designs and festive woodcarvings. Rooms are unique; you may find yourself in one with a ceramic stove or in another with a Biedermeier desk. For the tradition minded, there are no finer rooms in town. Bathrooms are spotless, often with a tub/shower combo. The Altdeutsches Restaurant, one of the finest in Dinkelsbühl, is intimate and convivial, serving regional dishes.

Weinmarkt 3, 91550 Dinkelsbühl. ✆ **09851/60-58.** Fax 09851/79-11. www.deutsches-haus-dkb.de. 18 units. 115€ ($167) double; 135€ ($196) suite. Rates include continental breakfast. AE, MC, V. Parking 8€ ($12). Closed Jan 8–Feb 1. **Amenities:** Restaurant. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer.

Eisenkrug This is a hit-or-miss choice, letting you stay in traditional style or sterile modernity. The stylish rooms are filled with engaging old furniture. A newer wing contains the most contemporary rooms, all rather standard and modern, each medium in size. The older rooms offer more charm, although some tend to be smaller. Some beds are canopied, and housekeeping and maintenance are top-notch. Bathrooms vary from small to spacious; all but one have a shower instead of a tub. Consider Mediterrano for your dining choice even if you're a nonresident. The chef invents his own recipes and carefully selects ingredients that go into his market-fresh cuisine. His is an indigenous Franconian-Swabian approach, with many innovative touches. The superior wine cellar has some really unusual vintages.

Dr.-Martin-Luther-Strasse 1, 91550 Dinkelsbühl. ✆ **09851/57700.** Fax 09851/577070. www.hotel-eisenkrug.de. 13 units. 95€ ($138) double. Rates include continental breakfast. MC, V. Free parking. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer.

Goldene Rose *Value* A landmark in the heart of this village since 1450, the intricately timbered Goldene Rose rises three stories, with a steeply pitched roof and overflowing window boxes. Although it doesn't match the impressive standards of the Eisenkrug, it is one of Dinkelsbühl's best values. The small to medium-size rooms have been modernized in a style more institutional and functional than traditional Bavarian. The more expensive rooms offer more charm. Bathrooms are rather small, but 10 have full tub and shower. The dining rooms are country-inn style. The a la carte menu (in English) offers such tempting items as tenderloin of wild hare flavored with hazelnuts, and rump steak. This is another good choice to consider even if you're a nonresident.

Marktplatz 4, 91550 Dinkelsbühl. ✆ **09851/57-750.** Fax 09851/57-75-75. www.hotel-goldene-rose.com. 63 units. 72€–126€ ($104–$183) double. Rates include continental breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 4€ ($5.80) in lot, 8€ ($12) in garage. **Amenities:** Restaurant, bar. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer.

NÖRDLINGEN ★

One of the most irresistible and perfectly preserved medieval towns along the Romantic Road, Nördlingen is still completely encircled by its well-preserved 14th- to 15th-century **city fortifications.** You can walk around the town on the covered parapet, which passes 11 towers and five fortified gates set into the walls.

Things are rather peaceful around Nördlingen today, and the city still employs sentries to sound the message *"So G'sell so"* ("All is well"), as they did in the Middle Ages. However, events around here weren't always so peaceful. The valley sits in a gigantic crater, the Ries. The Ries was once thought to be the crater of an extinct volcano; it is now known that a large meteorite was responsible. It hit the ground at more than 100,000 mph, the impact having the destructive force of 250,000 atomic bombs. Debris was hurled as far as Slovakia, and all plant and animal life within a radius of 160km (100 miles) was destroyed. This momentous event took place some 15 million years ago. Today it is the best-preserved and most scientifically researched meteorite crater on earth. The American Apollo 14 and 17 astronauts had their field training in the Ries in 1970.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **By Train** Nördlingen lies on the main Nördlingen-Aalen-Stuttgart line, with frequent connections in all directions (trip time: 2 hr. from Stuttgart and Nürnberg, 1 hr. from Augsburg). Call ✆ **0800/1-50-70-90** for information.

By Bus The long-distance bus that operates along the Romantic Road includes Nördlingen; see "Rothenburg ob der Tauber," p. 434.

By Car Take B-25 south from Dinkelsbühl.

VISITOR INFORMATION Contact the **Verkehrsamt,** Marktplatz 2 (✆ **09081/84-116**). The office is open Easter to October, Monday to Thursday 9am to 5pm and Friday 9am to 3:30pm. The rest of the year, hours are Monday to Thursday 9am to 6pm, Friday 9am to 4:30pm, and Saturday 9:30am to 1pm.

WHERE TO STAY

Astron Hotel Klösterle ★ This is the best place to stay in town. In 1991, this 13th-century former monastery was renovated, a new wing added, and the entire complex transformed into the town's most luxurious hotel. Rated four stars by the government, it offers elevator access and a hardworking, polite staff. Rooms have excellent furnishings, lots of electronic extras, and large bathrooms with tub/shower combos and deluxe toiletries.

Am Klösterle 1, 86720 Nördlingen. ✆ **09081/81-870-80.** Fax 09081/870-8100. 97 units. 128€–145€ ($186–$210) double; 180€ ($261) suite. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 8€ ($12). **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; fitness center; sauna; room service; laundry service; solarium. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

Kaiser Hotel Sonne ★ Next to the cathedral and the Rathaus is the Sonne, an inn since 1405. Among its guests have been Frederick III, Maximilian I, Charles V, and, in more recent times, the American Apollo astronauts. Many of the midsize rooms contain hand-painted four-posters to bring out the romantic in you. Others are regular doubles or twins. Goethe may have complained of the lack of comfort he found here, but you'll fare well. Bathrooms are fresh and immaculate, with tub/shower combos.

Marktplatz 3, 86720 Nördlingen. ✆ **09081/50-67.** Fax 09081/23-999. www.kaiserhof-hotel-sonne.de. 43 units, 35 with bathroom. 86€ ($125) double without bathroom; 120€ ($174) double with bathroom; 160€ ($232) suite. Rates include breakfast. Free parking. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; room service; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer, Wi-Fi.

WHERE TO DINE

Meyer's Keller CONTINENTAL The conservative, modern decor here seems a suitable setting for the restrained *neue Küche* of talented chef and owner Joachim Kaiser, adroit with both rustic and refined cuisine. The menu changes according to availability of ingredients and the chef's inspiration; typical selections are likely to include roulade of sea wolf and salmon with baby spinach and wild rice, or—a perfect delight—John Dory with champagne-flavored tomato sauce. The wine list is impressive, with many bottles quite reasonably priced.

Marienhöhe 8. ✆ **09081/44-93.** Reservations required. Main courses 18€–28€ ($26–$41); fixed-price meals 75€–119€ ($109–$173). AE, MC, V. Wed–Sun 11am–2pm; Tues–Sun 6–10pm. Local bus to Marktplatz.

SEEING THE SIGHTS

At the center of the circular Altstadt within the walls is **Rübenmarkt.** If you stand in this square on market day, you'll be swept into a world of the past—the country people have preserved many traditional customs and costumes here, which, along with the ancient houses, create a living medieval city. Around the square stand a number of buildings, including the Gothic **Rathaus.** An antiquities collection is displayed in the **Stadtmuseum,** Vordere Gerbergasse 1 (✆ **09081/273-8230**), open Tuesday to Sunday 1:30 to 4:30pm; closed November through February. Admission is 2.55€ ($3.70) adults and 1.55€ ($2.25) children.

The 15th-century Hallenkirche, the **Church of St. George,** on the square's northern side, is the town's most interesting sight and one of its oldest buildings. Plaques and epitaphs commemorating the town's more illustrious 16th- and 17th-century residents decorate the fan-vaulted interior. Although the original Gothic altarpiece by Friedrich Herlin (1470) is now in the Reichsstadt Museum, a portion of it, depicting the crucifixion, remains in the church. Above the high altar today stands a more elaborate baroque altarpiece. The church's most prominent feature, however, is the 90m (295-ft.) French Gothic tower, called the "Daniel." At night, the town watchman calls out from the steeple, his voice ringing through the streets. The tower is open daily April to October 9am to 8pm. Admission is 1.55€ ($2.25) adults and 1€ ($1.45) children.

Rieskrater-Museum, Hintere Gerbergasse (✆ **09081/273-8220**), documents the impact of the stone meteorite that created the Ries. Examine fossils from Ries Lake deposits and learn about the fascinating evolution of this geological wonder. Hours are Tuesday through Sunday from 10am to noon and from 1:30 to 4:30pm. Admission is 3€ ($4.35) adults; 1.50€ ($2.20) students, seniors, and large groups. Tours of the crater are possible through the museum.

EN ROUTE TO AUGSBURG

After Nördlingen, B-25 heads south to Augsburg. After a 19km (12-mile) ride you can stop to visit **Schloss Harburg** ★ (it's signposted), one of the best-preserved medieval castles in Germany. It once belonged to the Hohenstaufen emperors and contains treasures collected by the family over the centuries. It is open mid-March to October, Tuesday to Sunday 9am to 5pm; November, Tuesday to Sunday from 10am to 4pm. Admission is 4.50€ ($6.50) adults and 3€ ($4.35) children, including a guided tour. For information call ✆ **09080/96860.**

After exploring the castle, continue 11km (6¾ miles) south to the walled town of **Donauwörth** ★, where you can stop to walk through the oldest part of the town, on an island in the river, connected by a wooden bridge. Here the Danube is only a narrow, placid stream. The town's original walls overlook its second river, the Woernitz.

After a brief stopover, continue your southward trek for 48km (30 miles) to Augsburg, the largest city on the Romantic Road.

AUGSBURG ★★

Augsburg is near the center of the Romantic Road and the gateway to the Alps and the south. Founded 2,000 years ago by the Roman emperor Augustus, for whom it was named, it once was the richest city in Europe. Little remains from the early Roman period. However, the wealth of Renaissance art and architecture is staggering. Over the years, Augsburg has boasted an array of famous native sons, including painters Hans Holbein the Elder and Hans Holbein the Younger, and playwright Bertolt Brecht. It was here in 1518 that Martin Luther was summoned to recant his 95 theses before a papal emissary. Only 15% of the city was left standing after World War II, but there's still much here to intrigue. Today, Augsburg is an important industrial center on the Frankfurt-Salzburg Autobahn, and Bavaria's third-largest city after Munich and Nürnberg.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **By Train** About 90 Euro and InterCity trains arrive here daily from all major German cities. For information, call ✆ **0800/1-50-70-90.** There are 60 trains a day from Munich (trip time: 30–50 min.), and 35 from Frankfurt (3–4½ hr.).

By Bus Long-distance buses (lines EB190 and 190A, plus line 189) service the Romantic Road. The buses are operated by **Deutsche Touring GmbH** at Am Römerhof in Frankfurt (✆ **069/790-350** for reservations and information).

VISITOR INFORMATION Contact **Tourist-Information,** Schiessgrabenstrasse (✆ **0821/50-20-70**), Monday to Friday 9am to 6pm, Saturday at Rathausplatz from 10am to 1pm; closed Sunday.

GETTING AROUND The public transportation system in Augsburg consists of 4 tram and 31 bus lines covering the inner city and reaching into the suburbs. Public transportation operates daily from 5am to midnight.

WHERE TO STAY

Very Expensive

Steigenberger Drei Mohren ★★ This is one of the premier choices for a stopover along the Romantic Road and one of the top inns if you didn't book into the Eisenhut at Rothenburg. The original hotel, dating from 1723, was renowned in Germany before its destruction in an air raid. In 1956, it was rebuilt in a modern style. Decorators worked hard to create a decor that was both comfortable and inviting, with thick carpets, subdued lighting, and double-glazing at the windows. Rooms vary in size and appointments, however, ranging from some economy specials that are a bit small with narrow twin beds and showers (no tubs) to spacious, luxurious rooms with full shower and tub. Many rooms are smoke free, and most bathrooms are fairly spacious.

Maximilianstrasse 40, 86150 Augsburg. ✆ **800/223-5652** in the U.S. and Canada, or 0821/5-03-60. Fax 0821/15-78-64. www.augsburg.steigenberger.de. 106 units. 145€–184€ ($210–$267) double; 223€–674€ ($323–$977) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 14€ ($20). Tram: 1. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; golf by arrangement; sauna (in suites only); room service; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer, trouser press (in suites only), Wi-Fi.

Moderate

Dom Hotel Although it may not have the decorative flair of the more expensive hotels such as Drei Mohren, the low rates and an indoor pool make this one of the most appealing choices in town. The hotel is a half-timbered structure, next to Augsburg's famous cathedral, and was built in the 15th century. Rooms on most floors are medium-size and nicely appointed, although we prefer the smaller attic accommodations where you can rest under a beamed ceiling and enjoy a panoramic sweep of the rooftops of the city. Bathrooms are small, with tub/shower combos. Only breakfast is served, but it's a treat in a garden beside the town's medieval fortifications.

Frauentorstrasse 8, 86152 Augsburg. ✆ **0821/34-39-30.** Fax 0821/34-39-32-00. www.domhotel-augsburg.de. 52 units. 91€–130€ ($132–$189) double; 109€–140€ ($158–$203) suite. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Free street parking or 8€ ($12) garage. Tram: 2. **Amenities:** Indoor pool; sauna; laundry service; nonsmoking rooms; solarium. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

Hotel Am Rathaus *Value* Many repeat guests consider this hotel's location just behind the town hall to be its best asset. Built in a three-story contemporary format in 1986, it offers comfortable, midsize rooms but small bathrooms with well-maintained showers. The hotel serves a very generous breakfast buffet. It may be short on style but it's long on value.

Am Hinteren Perlachberg 1, 86150 Augsburg. ✆ **0821/34-64-90.** Fax 0821/346-49-99. www.hotel-am-rathaus-augsburg.de. 32 units. 99€–140€ ($144–$203) double. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 9€ ($13). Tram: 1. **Amenities:** Bar; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer.

Romantik Hotel Augsburger Hof ★★ Its main competitor, the Drei Mohren, still has more flair, but this hotel enjoys a comfortable runner-up slot. Originally built in 1767 in a solid, thick-walled design with exposed beams and timbers, the hotel was carefully restored in 1988. In the town center, it's a favorite for its traditional atmosphere and excellent food. In spite of the Renaissance interior, the rooms are completely up-to-date and not as romantic as the name of the hotel suggests. They range from cozy to spacious, each with a fine bed. Those overlooking the calm inner courtyard are more expensive than ones facing the street. Some bathrooms are tiny, but each is beautifully maintained, containing a shower stall.

Auf dem Kreuz 2, 86152 Augsburg. ☎ **0821/34-30-50.** Fax 0821/343-0555. www.augsburger-hof.de. 36 units. 99€–140€ ($144–$203) double. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 8€ ($12). Tram: 2. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; sauna; room service; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer.

Inexpensive

Hotel Garni Weinberger *Value* One of the best budget accommodations in the area lies about 3km (1¾ miles) from the center along Augsburgerstrasse in the western sector. Rooms are small but well kept with good beds. The bathrooms are rather cramped with shower stalls, but housekeeping is excellent. The place is well patronized by bargain-hunting Germans.

Bismarckstrasse 55, 86391 Stadtbergen. ☎ **0821/24-39-10.** Fax 0821/43-88-31. 31 units. 70€ ($102) double. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, MC, V. Closed Aug 15–30. Tram: 3. **Amenities:** Nonsmoking rooms.

WHERE TO DINE

Die Ecke ★ FRENCH/SWABIAN Dripping with atmosphere, this place seemingly dates from the Last Supper. Well, almost. At least it was founded in the year Columbus sighted the New World, and its guests have included Hans Holbein the Elder, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, and, in more contemporary times, Bertolt Brecht, whose sharp-tongued irreverence tended to irritate diners of more conservative political leanings. The Weinstube ambience belies the skilled cuisine of the chef, which wins us over year after year. Breast of duckling might be preceded by pâté, and the filet of sole in Riesling is deservedly a classic. Venison dishes in season are a specialty—the best in town.

Elias-Holl-Platz 2. ☎ **0821/51-06-00.** Reservations required. Main courses 20€–40€ ($29–$58); fixed-price dinner 50€ ($73) for 4 courses, 70€ ($102) for 6 courses. AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 11am–2pm and 5:30–10pm. Tram: 2.

Fuggerei Stube GERMAN/SWABIAN Not as atmospheric as Die Ecke, this is nonetheless a local and enduring favorite with good food and decent prices. The large dining room, suitable for 60 persons, has welcomed diners since 1946, with very little change in the menu, the decor, or the ambience. Expect generous portions of well-prepared food such as sauerbraten, roasted pork, and pork schnitzel; game dishes such as venison, pheasant, and rabbit; and fish such as filet of sole served with boiled potatoes and parsley. The beer foaming out of the taps here is Storchenbräu, and most visitors find that it goes wonderfully with the conservative German specialties.

Jakoberstrasse 26. ☎ **0821/3-08-70.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 15€–22€ ($22–$32); set-price menu 24€ ($35). AE, MC, V. Tues–Sun 12:30–2:30pm; Tues–Sat 5:30–11pm.

SEEING THE SIGHTS IN TOWN

Church of St. Ulrich and St. Afra ★ This is the most attractive church in Augsburg. It was constructed between 1476 and 1500 on the site of a Roman temple. The church stands immediately adjacent to St. Ulrich's Evangelical Lutheran Church, a tribute to the 1555 Peace of Augsburg, which recognized the two denominations, Roman Catholic and Lutheran. Many of the church's furnishings, including the three altars representing the birth and resurrection of Christ and the baptism of the church by the Holy Spirit, are baroque. In the crypt are the tombs of the Swabian saints, Ulrich and Afra.

Ulrichplatz 19. ✆ **0821/34-55-60.** Free admission. Daily 9am–5pm. Tram: 1.

Dom St. Maria The cathedral of Augsburg has the distinction of containing the oldest stained-glass windows in the world. Those in the south transept, dating from the 12th century, depict Old Testament prophets in a severe but colorful style. They are younger than the cathedral itself, which was begun in 944. You'll find the ruins of the original basilica in the crypt beneath the west chancel. Partially Gothicized in the 14th century, the church stands on the edge of the park, which also fronts the **Episcopal Palace,** where the basic Lutheran creed was presented at the Diet of Augsburg in 1530. The 11th-century bronze doors, leading into the three-aisle nave, are adorned with bas-reliefs of biblical and mythological characters. The cathedral's interior, restored in 1934, contains side altars with altarpieces by Hans Holbein the Elder and Christoph Amberger.

Hoher Weg. ✆ **0821/31-66-353.** Free admission. Mon–Sat 7am–5pm; Sun noon–5pm. Tram: 1.

Rathaus In 1805 and 1809, Napoleon visited the Rathaus, built by Elias Holl in 1620. Regrettably, it was also visited by an air raid in 1944, leaving a mere shell of the building that had once been a palatial eight-story monument to the glory of the Renaissance. Its celebrated "golden chamber" was left in shambles. Now, after costly restoration, the Rathaus is open to the public.

Am Rathausplatz 2. ✆ **0821/3249-2120.** Admission 2€ ($2.90) adults, 1€ ($1.45) children 7–14. Daily 10am–6pm. Tram: 1.

Schaezlerpalais Facing the Hercules Fountain is the Schaezlerpalais, home to the city's art galleries. Constructed as a 60-room mansion between 1765 and 1770, it was willed to Augsburg after World War II. Most of the paintings are Renaissance and baroque. One of the most famous is Dürer's portrait of Jakob Fugger the Rich, founder of the dynasty that was once powerful enough to influence the elections of the Holy Roman emperors. Other works are by local artists Hans Burgkmair and Hans Holbein the Elder; Rubens, Veronese, and Tiepolo are also represented.

Maximilianstrasse 46. ✆ **0821/324-4102.** Admission 7€ ($10) adults, 5.50€ ($8) children. Wed–Sun 10am–4pm. Tram: 1.

NEUSCHWANSTEIN ★★★ & HOHENSCHWANGAU ★★: THE ROYAL CASTLES

The 19th century saw a great classical revival in Germany, especially in Bavaria, mainly because of the enthusiasm of Bavarian kings for ancient art forms. Beginning with Ludwig I (1786–1868), who was responsible for many Greek Revival buildings in Munich, this royal house ran the gamut of ancient architecture in just 3 short decades. It culminated in the remarkable flights of fancy of "Mad" King Ludwig II, who died under mysterious circumstances in 1886. In spite of his rather lonely life and controversial alliances, both personal and political, he was a great patron of the arts.

Although the name "Royal Castles" is limited to Hohenschwangau (built by Ludwig's father, Maximilian II) and Neuschwanstein, the extravagant king was responsible for the creation of two other magnificent castles, Linderhof (near Oberammergau) and Herrenchiemsee (on an island in Chiemsee).

In 1868, after a visit to the great castle of Wartburg, Ludwig wrote to his good friend, composer Richard Wagner: "I have the intention to rebuild the ancient castle ruins of Hohenschwangau in the true style of the ancient German knight's castle." The following year, construction began on the first of a series of fantastic edifices, a series that stopped only with Ludwig's death in 1886, only 5 days after he was deposed because of alleged insanity.

The nearest towns to the castles are **Füssen,** 3km (1¾ miles) away at the very end of the Romantic Road, and **Schwangau,** where accommodations can be found.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **By Train** There are frequent trains from Munich (trip time: 2½ hr.) and Augsburg (3 hr.) to Füssen. For information, call ✆ **01805/99-66-33.** Frequent buses travel to the castles.

By Bus Long-distance bus service into Füssen from other parts of the Romantic Road, including Würzburg, Augsburg, and Munich, is provided by the **Deutsche Touring GmbH** bus no. EB189 or EB190A. For information and reservations, call ✆ **069/790-268** in Frankfurt, or look on the Web at www.deutsche-touring.com. Regional service to villages around Füssen is provided by **RVA Regionalverkehr Allgau GmbH** in Füssen (✆ **08362/939-0505**). Its most important routing, at least for visitors to Füssen, includes about 14 orange, yellow, or white-sided buses that depart every day from Füssen's railway station for the village of Hohenschwangau, site of both Hohenschwangau Palace and Neuschwanstein Palace, a 10-minute ride. The cost of a one-way ticket to the village or to either of the two palaces is 2€ ($2.90). For more information, contact the Füssen tourist office, or Kurverwaltung (see below).

By Car Take B-17 south to Füssen; then head east from Füssen on B-17.

VISITOR INFORMATION For information about the castles and the region in general, contact the **Kurverwaltung,** Kaiser-Maximilian-Platz 1, Füssen (✆ **08362/938-50**), open in summer Monday to Friday 8:30am to 6:30pm, Saturday 9am to 2:30pm; winter hours are Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm, Saturday 10am to noon. Information is also available at the Kurverwaltung, Rathaus, Münchenerstrasse 2, Schwangau (✆ **08362/8-19-80**). Hours vary so call ahead.

WHERE TO STAY

In Hohenschwangau

Hotel Müller Hohenschwangau As if the yellow walls, green shutters, and gabled alpine detailing of this hospitable inn weren't incentive enough, its location near the foundation of Neuschwanstein Castle makes it even more alluring. Midsize rooms are inviting and have a bit of Bavarian charm, each with a good bed. The shower-only bathrooms are spotless. Nature lovers usually enjoy hiking the short distance to nearby Hohenschwangau Castle. All rooms are nonsmoking.

Alpseestrasse 16, 87645 Hohenschwangau. ✆ **08362/8-19-90.** Fax 08362/81-99-13. www.hotel-mueller.de. 41 units. 140€–170€ ($203–$247) double; 250€ ($363) suite. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. Closed Jan–Feb. **Amenities:** 5 restaurants; bar; limited room service. *In room:* TV, minibar (in some), hair dryer.

Schlosshotel Lisl and Jägerhaus ★★ This graciously styled villa and its annex in a historic building across the street are among the better addresses in the area. Most rooms have a view of one or both castles. If you're assigned to the annex, never fear, as its rooms are just as fine as—or in some cases, even better than—those in the main building. Some of the bathrooms in the Jägerhaus are larger than some hotel rooms, and come complete with a large tub and shower. Both for charm and price, this one is a winner.

Neuschwansteinstrasse 1–3, 87645 Hohenschwangau. ☎ **08362/88-70.** Fax 08362/81-107. www.neuschwanstein-hotels.de. 47 units. 120€–170€ ($174–$247) double; 180€–220€ ($261–$319) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. Closed Dec 21–26. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV, minibar, safe (in some).

In or Near Füssen

AlstadHotel Zum Hechten Family owners have maintained this impeccable guesthouse for generations—it's one of the oldest (and most comfortable) in town. In spring, you'll open your window to a flower box of geraniums, and feel like Gretel (or Hansel) getting ready to milk the cows. Rooms are small to medium size; the bathrooms are spotless but a bit cramped, containing shower stalls. Corridor bathrooms are adequate and well maintained.

Ritterstrasse 6, 87629 Füssen. ☎ **08362/91-600.** Fax 08362/91-6099. www.hotel-hechten.com. 35 units, 33 with bathroom. 75€–85€ ($109–$123) double. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, V. Free parking. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants. *In room:* TV.

Hotel Christine The Christine, 5 minutes by taxi from the train station in Füssen, is one of the best local choices for accommodations. The staff spends the winter months refurbishing the rooms so they'll be fresh and sparkling for spring visitors. A Bavarian charm pervades the hotel, and rooms are cozy, though hardly fit for King Ludwig. Each is well maintained and supplied with decent furnishings. The shower-only bathrooms are a bit cramped. Breakfast, the only meal offered, is served on beautiful regional china as classical music plays in the background.

Weidachstrasse 31, 87629 Füssen. ☎ **08362/72-29.** Fax 08362/94-05-54. 13 units. 100€–140€ ($145–$203) double. Rates include breakfast. V. Free parking. Closed Jan 15–Feb 15. *In room:* TV, minibar.

Steig Mühle ★ *Value* Owners and hosts Gunter and Nedwig Buhmann like things to be cozy, and their chaletlike guesthouse is almost a cliché of Bavarian charm. The rooms open onto views of the lake or the mountains, and many have their own balconies. Each room has been outfitted with double or twin beds. Private bathrooms (shower only) are well kept. There aren't a lot of frills, but the place offers one of the most exceptional hotel values in the area.

Alte Steige 3, 87629 Weissensee-Oberkirch. ☎ **08362/91-76-0.** Fax 08362/31-48. www.steigmuehle.de. 24 units. 56€–64€ ($81–$93) double. Rates include buffet breakfast. No credit cards. Free outside parking; 3€ ($4.35) in garage. From Füssen, take Rte. B310 north toward Kempten, a 5-min. drive. *In room:* TV.

WHERE TO DINE

Fischerhütte SEAFOOD In Hopfen am See, at the edge of the lake within sight of dramatic mountain scenery 5km (3 miles) northwest of Füssen, lie four old-fashioned dining rooms, plus a terrace in summer. As the name "Fisherman's Cottage" suggests, the establishment specializes in an array of international fish dishes: half an Alaskan salmon (for two); a garlicky version of French bouillabaisse; fresh alpine trout, pan-fried or with aromatic herbs in the style of Provence; North Atlantic lobster; and grilled halibut. A few meat dishes are also offered, as well as tempting desserts. The food is well prepared and top rate.

Uferstrasse 16, Hopfen am See. ☎ **08362/91-97-0.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 14€–40€ ($20–$58). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 10am–10:30pm.

Zum Schwanen SWABIAN/BAVARIAN This small, old-fashioned restaurant serves a conservative yet flavor-filled blend of Swabian and Bavarian specialties. Good-tasting and hearty specialties include homemade sausage, roast pork, lamb, and venison. Expect robust flavors and a crowd of cheery diners who don't believe in low-cal packaged dinners.

Brotmarkt 4, Füssen. ✆ **08362/61-74.** Reservations required. Main courses 8€–20€ ($12–$29). MC, V. Tues–Sun 11:30am–2:30pm; Tues–Sat 5:30–11pm. Closed Nov.

VISITING THE ROYAL CASTLES

There are often very long lines in summer, especially in August. With 25,000 people a day visiting, the wait in peak summer months can be as long as 4 or 5 hours for a 20-minute tour. For more information on Neuschwanstein, call ✆ **08362/9-39-88-0** or visit the website at **www.neuschwanstein.de**. For information on Hohenschwangau, call ✆ **08362/8-11-27** or visit the website at **www.hohenschwangau.de**.

Neuschwanstein ★★★

This is the fairy-tale castle of Ludwig II. Construction went on for 17 years, until the king's death, when all work stopped, leaving a part of the interior uncompleted. Ludwig lived here on and off for about 6 months from 1884 to 1886.

The doorway off the left side of the vestibule leads to the king's apartments. The study, like most of the rooms, is decorated with wall paintings showing scenes from the Nordic legends (which inspired Wagner's operas). The theme of the study is the Tannhäuser saga, painted by J. Aigner. The curtains and chair coverings are in hand-embroidered silk, designed with the Bavarian coat of arms.

From the vestibule, you enter the throne room through the doorway at the opposite end. This hall, designed in Byzantine style by J. Hofmann, was never completed. The floor, a mosaic design, depicts the animals of the world. The columns in the main hall are the deep copper red of porphyry.

The king's bedroom is the most richly carved and decorated in the entire castle—it took 4½ years to complete. Aside from the mural showing the legend of Tristan and Isolde, the walls are decorated with panels carved to look like Gothic windows. In the center is a large wooden pillar completely encircled with gilded brass sconces. The ornate bed is on a raised platform with an elaborately carved canopy.

The fourth floor of the castle is almost entirely given over to the **Singer's Hall,** the pride of Ludwig II and all of Bavaria. Modeled after the hall at Wartburg, where the legendary song contest of Tannhäuser supposedly took place, this hall is decorated with marble columns and elaborately painted designs interspersed with frescoes depicting the life of Parsifal.

The castle is open year-round, and in September, visitors have the additional treat of hearing Wagnerian concerts and other music in the Singer's Hall. For information and reservations, contact the tourist office in Schwangau, **Verkehrsamt,** at the Rathaus (✆ **08362/93-85-23**). The castle, which is seen by guided tour, is open daily April to September 9am to 6pm, October to March 10am to 4pm. Admission is 9€ ($13) adults, 8€ ($12) students and seniors over 65, free for children 13 and under.

Reaching Neuschwanstein involves a steep 1km (⅔-mile) climb from the parking lot of Hohenschwangau Castle—about a 25-minute walk for the energetic, an eternity for anybody else. To cut down on the climb, you can take a bus to Marienbrücke, a bridge that crosses over the Pollat Gorge at a height of 93m (305 ft.). From that vantage you, like Ludwig, can stand and meditate on the glories of the castle and its panoramic surroundings. If you want to photograph the castle, don't wait until you reach the top, where you'll be too close. It costs 1.80€ ($2.60) for the bus ride up to the bridge or 1€ ($1.45) if you'd like to take the bus back down the hill. From the Marienbrücke Bridge it's a 10-minute walk to Neuschwanstein over a very steep footpath that is not easy to negotiate for anyone who has trouble walking up or down precipitous hills.

The most colorful way to reach Neuschwanstein is by horse-drawn carriage, costing 5€ ($7.30) for the ascent, 2.50€ ($3.60) for the descent. However, some readers have objected to the rides, complaining that too many people are crowded in.

Hohenschwangau ★★

Not as glamorous or spectacular as Neuschwanstein, the neo-Gothic Hohenschwangau Castle nevertheless has a much richer history. The original structure dates from the 12th-century knights of Schwangau. When the knights faded away, the castle began to do so, too, helped along by the Napoleonic Wars. When Ludwig II's father, Crown Prince Maximilian (later Maximilian II), saw the castle in 1832, he purchased it and 4 years later had completely restored it. Ludwig II spent the first 17 years of his life here and later received Richard Wagner in its chambers, although Wagner never visited Neuschwanstein on the hill above.

The rooms of Hohenschwangau are styled and furnished in a much heavier Gothic mode than those in Ludwig's castle and are typical of the halls of medieval knights' castles. Also unlike Neuschwanstein, this castle has a comfortable look about it, as if it actually were a home, not just a museum. The small chapel, once a reception hall, still hosts Sunday Mass. The suits of armor and the Gothic arches set the stage. Among the most attractive chambers is the **Hall of the Swan Knight,** named for the wall paintings that tell the saga of Lohengrin.

Hohenschwangau is open April 1 to September from 8am to 5:30pm daily, off season from 9am to 3:30pm daily. Admission is 9€ ($13) adults, 8€ ($12) children 12 to 15 and seniors over 65, free for children 11 and under. Several parking lots nearby enable you to leave your car while visiting both castles. For ticket information for either castle, call ✆ **08362/930-830.**

9

Greece

by Sherry Marker

The 2004 Summer Olympics brought lots of visitors to Athens that year—and lots of lasting changes throughout Greece. Excellent roads link major destinations throughout the country and the swift Metro (subway) makes it easy to dart around Athens itself. The pedestrianized walkways through Athens's "Archaeological Park" makes strolling beneath the Acropolis and beside the Ancient Agora a delight. Athens has lots of stylish new hotels and in places where it was once easy to single out the one really good hotel, chic new boutique hotels (many with spa facilities) are opening. In addition to all that is new, the "glory that was Greece" continues to lure visitors here, to attractions such as Olympia, where the games began; Delphi, with the magnificent temple of Apollo; Mycenae, where Agamemnon met his bloody death when he returned home from Troy; Epidaurus, with its astonishingly well-preserved ancient theater—and the best-known symbol of Greece: the Acropolis in Athens. There's also a profusion of less-well-known ancient sites such as Nemea, home to a carefully restored stadium and a handsome 4th-century-B.C. temple, several of whose columns were recently restored and re-erected. But myths and monuments are only one aspect of the country's allure: Greece is also the quintessential vacationland of glorious beaches and towering mountain ranges. After sightseeing, you can laze the day away on a perfect beach—and then dance the night away in a cafe at the foot of the Acropolis or on one of the breathtakingly beautiful "isles of Greece."

This is a sophisticated, modern country—with, alas, rising prices to prove it! The days of luxuriating in absurdly cheap holidays in Greece may be gone, but the vibrant combination of ancient and modern remains priceless. And no matter where you go, you can still experience the Greek *philoxenia*—the kind welcome offered to strangers that leaves visitors determined to return as soon as possible.

1 Athens ★★★

Athens is the city that Greeks love to hate, complaining that it's too expensive, too crowded, and too polluted. More than five million people—some 40% of Greece's population—live here, and streets are so congested you'll suspect that every Athenian has at least one car or motorcycle! The new Metro (subway) has significantly diminished Athens's endemic gridlock and *nefos* (smog). Still, traffic in central Athens can be fierce. Forever the city of a thousand contradictions, Athens is one of the few ancient cities in the world where the cutting edge, the hip, and the modern coexist harmoniously with the classical, and old and new complement each other to near perfection.

The 2004 Olympics brought a number of welcome changes to Athens. The city now boasts an Archaeological Park—a network of walkways linking major archaeological sites including Hadrian's Gate, the Acropolis, the Ancient Agora, and Kerameikos cemetery. Frequent exhibits are held along the walkways in the shadow of the Acropolis and new cafes, restaurants and galleries (populated by chic young Athenians) have sprung up nearby.

Still, visitors momentarily overwhelmed by Athens's round-the-clock hustle and bustle (which sometimes includes motorcycles barreling along sidewalks) may be forgiven for sometimes wondering if Athens, even with all its recent updates and fabled glories, is the ideal holiday destination. Don't despair. You'll almost certainly develop your own love-hate relationship with the city, snarling at the traffic and gasping in wonder at the Acropolis; fuming at the taxi driver who tries to overcharge you and marveling at the stranger who realizes that you're lost and walks several blocks out of his way to take you where you're going.

And if you do get caught in an Athenian gridlock, remember what it was like when the Parthenon was built: Teams of mules dragged carts laden with 12-ton blocks of marble from Mount Pendeli along today's Queen Sophia Avenue to the Acropolis. If an axle broke, traffic stopped for several days until the damage was repaired.

ESSENTIALS

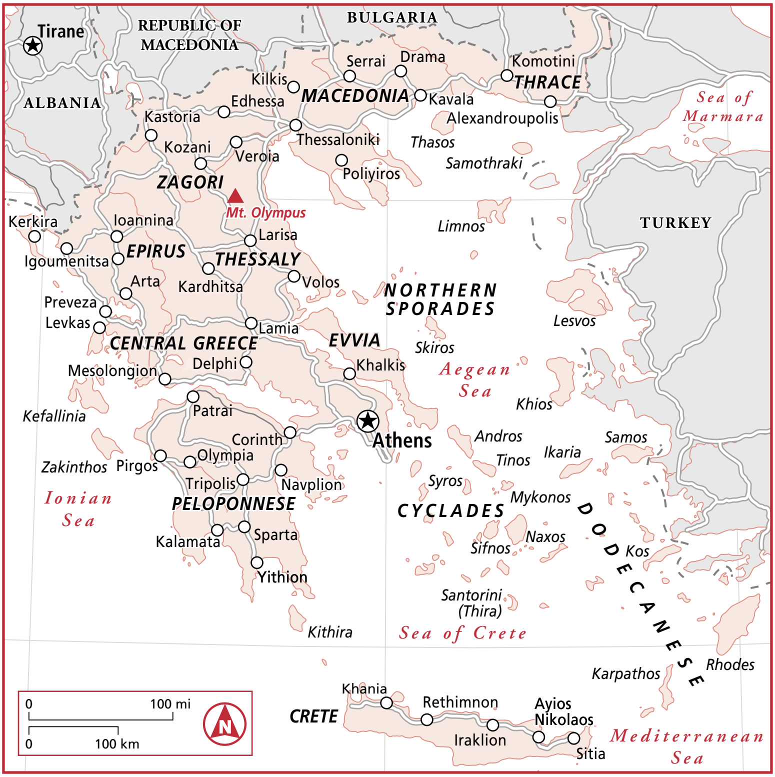
GETTING THERE **By Plane** **Athens International Airport Eleftherios Venizelos** (✆ **210/353-0000;** www.aia.gr), 27km (17 miles) northeast of Athens at Sparta, opened in 2001. Allow at least an hour for the journey from the airport to Athens (and vice versa). The Metro now runs all the way from the airport to central Athens (6€/$8.70 one-way; 10€/$15 round-trip). Trains run from 6am to midnight, though there is talk of initiating 24-hour service. If you don't have too much luggage, the Metro is now a cheap and efficient option for reaching central Athens and the Piraeus, especially since buses run on erratic schedules and taxis can be costly. A taxi into central Athens usually costs from 20€ to 30€ ($29–$44), depending on the time of day and traffic. Bus service to Syntagma Square or to Piraeus costs about 4€ ($5.80). Officially, there's one bus to Syntagma and one to Piraeus every 20 minutes. Bus and taxi stations are signposted at the airport. Keep in mind that the airport's website and official publications cannot always be relied on for up-to-date information.

When planning your carry-on luggage for the Athens airport, keep in mind that you may have quite a trek from your arrival point to the baggage-claim area. Tourist information, currency exchange, a post office, baggage storage (left luggage), and car rentals are available at the Arrivals level of the Main Terminal. ATMs, telephones, toilets, and luggage carts (1€/$1.45) are available at the baggage-claim area. There are

Tips Taxi Savvy

If you decide to take a taxi, ask an airline official or a policeman what the fare should be, and let the taxi driver know you've been told the official rate before you begin your journey. If you're taking a taxi to the airport, try to have the desk clerk at your hotel order it for you well in advance of your departure. Many taxis refuse to go to the airport, fearing that they'll have a long wait before they get a return fare.

Greece


Tirane
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BULGARIA
ALBANIA
Serrai
Drama
Komotini
Kilkis
MACEDONIA
Kavala
THRACE
Edhessa
Kastoria
Alexandroupolis
Sea of Marmara
Thessaloniki
Kozani
Veroia
Thasos
Samothraki
Poliyiros
ZAGORI
Mt. Olympus
Kerkira
Ioannina
Larisa
Limnos
TURKEY
Igoumenitsa
EPIRUS
THESSALY
Arta
Kardhitsa
Volos
NORTHERN SPORADES
Preveza
Levkas
Lamia
Lesvos
CENTRAL GREECE
EVVIA
Skiros
Delphi
Khalkis
Aegean Sea
Mesolongion
Patrai
Khios
Kefallinia
Athens
Andros
Samos
Corinth
Tinos
Ikaria
Zakinthos
Pirgos
Olympia
Syros
Tripolis
Navplion
Mykonos
Ionian Sea
PELOPONNESE
CYCLADES
DODECANESE
Kalamata
Sparta
Naxos
Sifnos
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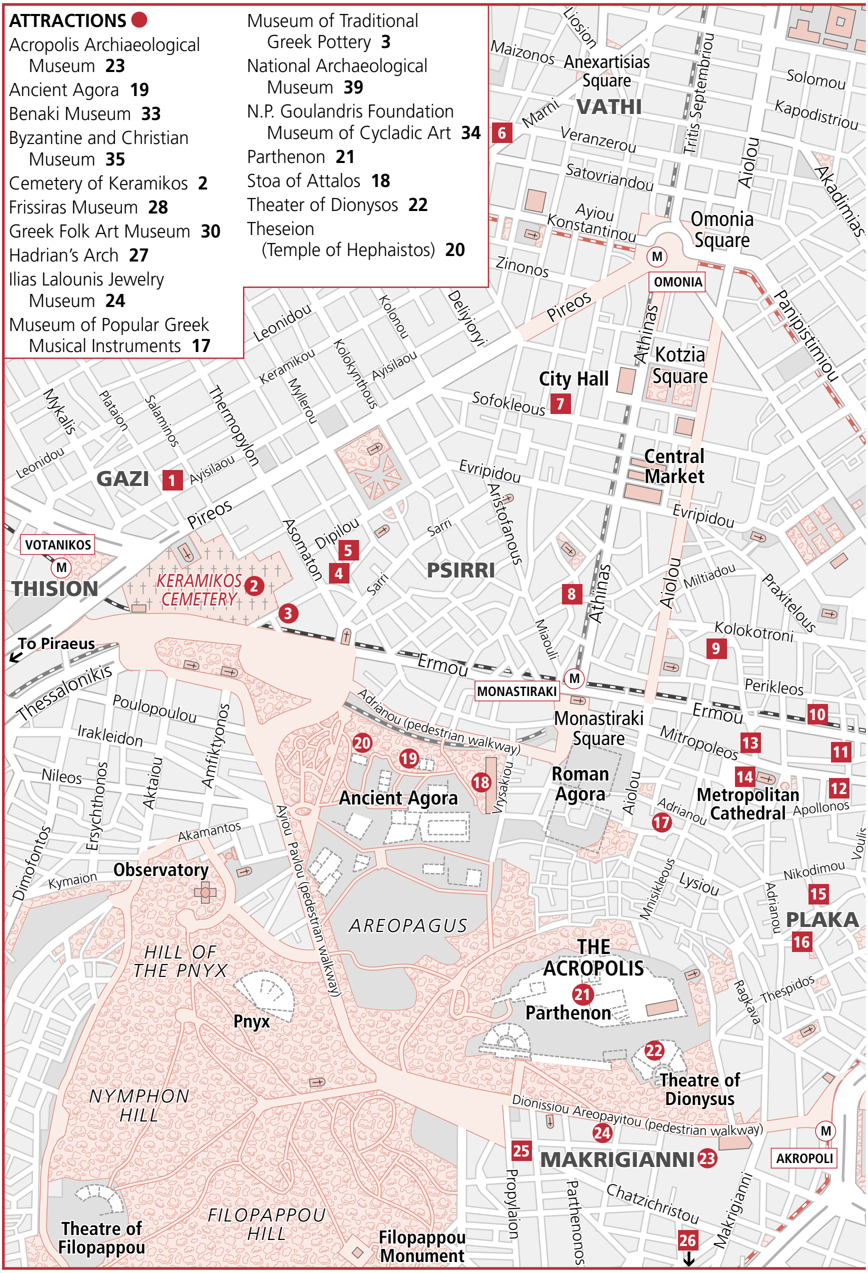
also several free phones from which you can call for a porter. ***Note:*** Porters' fees are highly negotiable. Departures has some 35 shops and about a dozen cafes and restaurants, including the inevitable McDonalds.

There have been frequent complaints that adequate information on arrivals, departures, cancellations, delays, and gate changes is not always posted on the flight information screens. Nonetheless, it is important to check these screens and at the information desks, as there are currently **no** flight announcements. Arrive at your gate as early as possible; gates are sometimes changed at the last minute, necessitating a considerable scramble to reach the new gate in time.

Note: Rumors continue to circulate that the Greek national carrier, Olympic Airways, will go out of business. Olympic has managed to pull itself back from the brink thus far, but it has had to cut back significantly on scheduled flights. Virgin Atlantic Airways has closed its Athens office, which has led to increased fares by other carriers, such as British Air and EasyJet, that fly the London-Athens route.

By Train Central Athens has two train stations, both about 1.5km (1 mile) northwest of Omonia Square. Trains from the west, including Eurail connections via Patra, arrive at the **Stathmos Peloponnissou (Peloponnese Station; ✆ 210/513-1601).** Trains from the north arrive 3 blocks north of (and on the opposite side of the tracks

Athens



ATTRACTIONS ●

Acropolis Archiaeological Museum	23
Ancient Agora	19
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Solomou
Kapodistriou
Marni
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Veranzerou
Satovriandou
Aiolou
Akadimias
Ayiou Konstantinou
Omonia Square
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Zinonos
Pireos
Leonidou
Kolonou
Deliyioryi
Keramikou
Kolokynthous
Ayisilaou
Athinas
Kotzia Square
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Plataion
Salaminos
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Evripidou
Aristofanous
Central Market
Evripidou
Pireos
Dipilou
Asomaton
5
4
Sarri
PSIRRI
VOTANIKOS
M
THISION
KERAMIKOS CEMETERY
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3
Sarri
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Aiolou
Miltiadou
Praxitelous
Kolokotroni
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To Piraeus
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M
MONASTIRAKI
Perikleos
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Adrianou (pedestrian walkway)
Monastiraki Square
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Mitropoleos
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Irakleidon
Amfiktyonos
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Ancient Agora
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HILL OF THE PNYX
THE ACROPOLIS
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Ragkava
Thespidos
Pnyx
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Theatre of Dionysus
NYMPHON HILL
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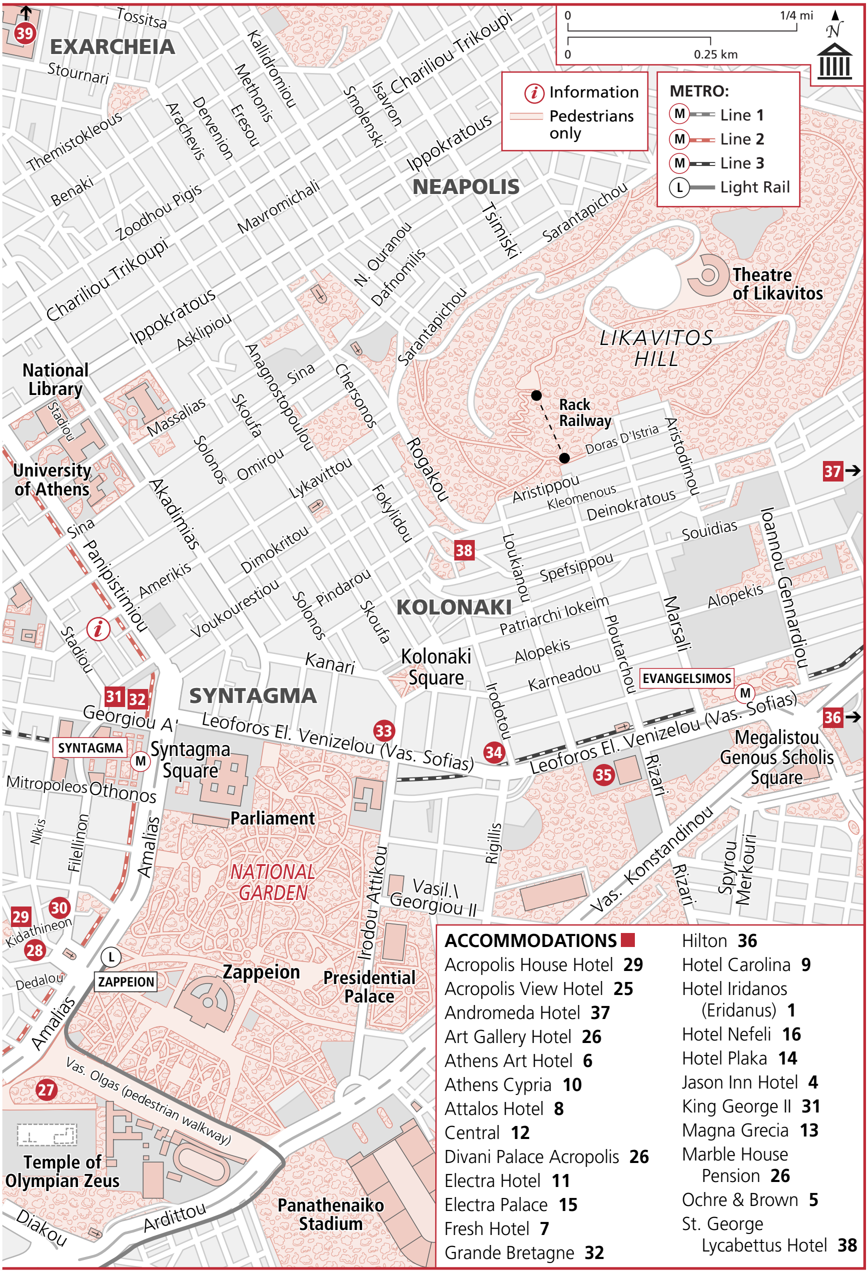
EXARCHEIA
NEAPOLIS
KOLONAKI
SYNTAGMA
LIKAVITOS HILL
NATIONAL GARDEN
Theatre of Likavitos
Rack Railway
National Library
University of Athens
Kolonaki Square
Syntagma Square
Parliament
Zappeion
Presidential Palace
Temple of Olympian Zeus
Panathenaiko Stadium
Megalistou Genous Scholis Square
SYNTAGMA
EVANGELISMOS
ZAPPEION
Tossitsa
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Charilliou Trikoupi
Ippokratous
Asklipiou
Kallidromiou
Methonis
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Dervenion
Arachevis
Smolenski
Isavron
Mavromichali
N. Ouranou
Dafnomilis
Tsimiski
Sarantapichou
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Anagnostopoulou
Chersonos
Solonos
Omirou
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Akadimias
Rogakou
Fokylidou
Doras D'Istria
Aristodimou
Aristippou
Kleomenous
Deinokratous
Souidias
Ioannou Gennardiou
Loukianou
Spefsippou
Patriarchi Iokeim
Alopekis
Marsali
Ploutarchou
Karneadou
Irodotou
Stadiou
Panepistimiou
Amerikis
Dimokritou
Voukourestiou
Pindarou
Kanari
Georgiou A'
Leoforos El. Venizelou (Vas. Sofias)
Mitropoleos
Othonos
Nikis
Filellinon
Amalias
Kidathineon
Dedalou
Irodou Attikou
Vasil. Georgiou II
Rigillis
Rizari
Vas. Konstandinou
Spyrou Merkouri
Vas. Olgas (pedestrian walkway)
Arditou
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Information
Pedestrians only
METRO:
Line 1
Line 2
Line 3
Light Rail

ACCOMMODATIONS 🟥

Acropolis House Hotel	29
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Andromeda Hotel	37
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from) the Peloponnese Station at the **Stathmos Larissis (Larissa Station; ✆ 210/529-8837).** If you are making connections from one station to the other, allow 15 minutes for the walk. Both stations have currency-exchange offices usually open daily from 8am to 9:15pm, and luggage-storage offices charging 5€ ($7.25) per bag per day, open daily from 6:30am to 9:30pm. The cafe and waiting room are sometimes closed. A **taxi** into the center of town should cost about 5€ ($7.25). You can purchase train tickets just before your journey at the train station (running the risk that all seats may be sold); at the Omonia Square ticket office, 1 Karolou (✆ **210/524-0647**); at 17 Filellinon, off Syntagma Square (✆ **210/323-6747**); or from most travel agents. Information (in theory in English) on timetables is available by dialing ✆ **145** or 147 and at www.ose.gr, the website of the **Greek Railroad Company (OSE).**

By Boat **Piraeus,** the main harbor of Athens's main seaport, 11km (6¾ miles) southwest of central Athens, is a 15-minute subway (Metro) ride from Monastiraki and Omonia squares. The subway runs from about 5am to midnight and costs 2€ ($2.90). The far-slower bus no. 040 runs from Piraeus to central Athens (with a stop at Filellinon off Syntagma Sq.) every 15 minutes between 5am and 1am and hourly from 1am to 5am, for .70€ ($1).

You might prefer to take a **taxi** to avoid what can be a long hike from your boat to the bus stop or subway terminal. Be prepared for some serious bargaining. The normal fare on the meter from Piraeus to Syntagma should be about 8€ to 13€ ($12–$19), but many drivers simply offer a flat fare, which can be as much as 20€ ($29). Pay it if you're desperate, or walk to a nearby street, hail another taxi, and insist that the meter be turned on.

If you travel to Piraeus by hydrofoil *(Flying Dolphin),* you'll probably arrive at the **Zea Marina** harbor, about a dozen blocks south across the peninsula from the main harbor. Getting a taxi from Zea Marina into Athens can involve a wait of an hour or more—and that drivers usually drive a hard (and exorbitant) bargain. To avoid both the wait and the big fare, walk up the hill from the hydrofoil station and catch bus no. 905 for 1€ ($1.45); it connects Zea to the Piraeus subway station, where you can complete your journey into Athens. You must buy a ticket at the small ticket stand near the bus stop or at a newsstand before boarding the bus. ***Warning:*** If you arrive late at night, both the newsstand and the ticket stand may be closed.

VISITOR INFORMATION **Tourist Office** The main office of the **Greek National Tourism Organization** (EOT or GNTO) is located at 24 Tsochas St., Ambelokipi (✆ **210/870-0000;** www.gnto.gr), well out of central Athens. The office is officially open Monday through Friday from 8am to 3pm and is closed on weekends. Information about Athens, free city maps, transportation schedules, hotel lists, and other booklets on many regions of Greece are available at the office in Greek, English, French, and German—although when we stop by, many publications we ask for are described as "all gone"—even when we can see them on display just out of reach. The staff members often appear bored with their jobs and irritated by questions; be persistent. At press time it was unclear whether the convenient GNTO branch office at 26 Amalias, in central Athens, which was open weekdays and Saturdays in 2007, would remain open.

Available 24 hours a day, the **tourist police** (✆ **210/171**) speak English, as well as other languages, and will help you with problems or emergencies.

Websites Websites are in constant flux. At present, helpful sites for Greece include **www.culture.gr**, **www.phantis.com**, and **www.ellada.com** for Athens and Greece in general; **www.athensnews.gr** (*The Athens News,* Greece's English-language newspaper); **www.eKathimerini.com** (an insert of translations from the Greek press sold with the *International Herald Tribune*); **www.dilos.com** (travel information, including discounted hotel prices); **www.gtp.gr** (information on ferry service); **www.greek islands.gr** (information on the islands); **www.windmills.gr (**information on both the islands and mainland**)** **www.greektravel.com** (a helpful site on all aspects of Greece run by American Matt Barrett); and **www.ancientgreece.com** and **www.perseus.tufts.edu** (excellent sources on ancient Greece).

CITY LAYOUT If you, like the Greek mathematician Euclid, find it easy to imagine geometric forms, it will help you to think of central Athens as an almost perfect equilateral triangle, with its points at **Syntagma (Constitution) Square, Omonia (Harmony) Square,** and **Monastiraki (Little Monastery) Square,** near the **Acropolis.** In government jargon, the area bounded by Syntagma, Omonia, and Monastiraki squares is defined as the commercial center—a name no one uses and that appears on no map. Most Greeks consider Omonia the city center, but visitors usually get their bearings from Syntagma, where the House of Parliament stands beside the National Gardens, facing the distinguished Grande Bretagne Hotel and a Metro stop. Syntagma Square was redesigned in honor of the Olympics, losing several lanes of traffic, but gaining several fountains, cafes, and some greenery. This was more of a success than the "face-lift" that Omonia Square had in honor of the Olympics. Admittedly, some buildings flanking the square had their neoclassical facades restored, but a grim expanse of concrete has replaced the central fountain and the promised greenery has yet to appear. Omonia and Syngagma squares are connected by the parallel **Stadiou Street** and **Panepistimiou Street,** also called **Eleftheriou Venizelou.** West from Syntagma Square, ancient **Ermou Street** and broader **Mitropoleos Street** lead slightly downhill to **Monastiraki Square.** Fingers crossed that the current renovation of Monastiraki Square does not transform its bustling chaos into an Omonia-like concrete wasteland. Monastiraki is flanked by the **flea market,** the **Ancient Agora (Market)** below the Acropolis, and the **Plaka,** the oldest neighborhood, with many street names and a scattering of monuments from antiquity. A special bonus: **Adrianou,** the main drag in Plaka, which once teemed with traffic, is now pedestrianized, as are the walkways connecting the "Archaeological Park," which sweeps from the Temple of Olympian Zeus past the Acropolis to the Ancient Agora and Monastiraki. From Monastiraki Square, **Athinas Street** leads north to Omonia Square past the modern market (the Central Market); this is *the* place to buy everything from buttons and bird seed to herbs and sheeps' heads. Bustling with shoppers in the daytime, Athinas Street was once considerably less savory at night; the ongoing gentrification of the area means that prostitutes and drug dealers are now scarce. Between Athinas and Hermou Streets the increasingly chic former industrial wasteland of **Psirri,** along with the neighboring **Gazi** district, are giving the long-time posh haven of **Kolonaki,** on the slopes of Mt. Lykabettus, a run for the money as the place to see and be seen. Still low key by day, the night time scene in Gazi and Psirri's wall-to-wall art galleries, cafes, and restaurants (many housed in restored warehouses and factories) makes Kolonaki seem suddenly sedate.

In general, finding your way around Athens is not too difficult, except in the Plaka, at the foot of the Acropolis. This labyrinth of narrow, winding streets can challenge even the best navigators. Don't panic: The area is small enough that you can't go far astray, and its side streets, with small houses and neighborhood churches, are so

Tips Ride the Metro & View Artifacts & Antiquities

Allow a little extra time when you catch the Metro in central Athens. Several stations—notably **Syntagma Square** and **Acropolis**—handsomely display finds from the subway excavations. And, if you take the Metro to Piraeus, don't miss the spectacular view of the Acropolis as the metro comes aboveground by the Agora. For more on the Athens Metro, go to **www.ametro.gr**.

charming that you won't mind being lost. One excellent map may help: the Greek Archaeological Service's **Historical Map of Athens,** which includes the Plaka and the city center and shows the major archaeological sites. The map costs about 5€ ($7.25) and is sold at many bookstores, museums, ancient sites, and newspaper kiosks.

GETTING AROUND **By Public Transportation** First of all, here's a tip: In central Athens, keep an eye out for minibuses nos. 60 and 150, which offer free service. As for other service, **blue-and-white buses** run regular routes in Athens and its suburbs every 15 minutes daily from 5am to midnight. The **orange electric trolley buses** serve areas in the city center daily from 5am to midnight. The **green buses** run between the city center and Piraeus every 20 minutes daily from 6am to midnight, and then hourly to 6am. At press time, tickets cost.50€ (75¢) and must be bought in advance, usually in groups of 10, from any news kiosk or special bus ticket kiosks at the main stations. When you board, validate your ticket in the automatic machine. Hold onto it: Uniformed and plainclothes inspectors periodically check tickets and can levy a basic fine of 5€ ($7.25) or a more punitive fine of 20€ ($29), on the spot.

The major bus stations in Athens are **Suburban bus terminal** at Areos Park; **Long Distance Bus Terminal A,** 100 Kiffissou (reached by bus no. 051 from Zinonos and Menandrou sts., off Omonia Sq.); and **Long Distance Bus Terminal B,** 260 Liossion (reached by bus no. 024 from Amalias Ave., Syntagma Sq.).

The original **Metro** line links Piraeus, Athens's seaport; central Athens itself; and Kifissia, an upscale northern suburb. The new lines now crisscross central Athens and run as far out of town as the international airport to the east and Daphni to the southwest. Free maps of the entire metro system are often available at the information booths in metro stations. In the city center, the main stops are **Syntagma, Acropolis, Monastiraki, Omonia,** and **Viktorias (Victoria).** Trains run about every 5 to 15 minutes daily from 5am to midnight. At present, single journey tickets cost .75€ ($1.10), and a day pass costs 4€ ($5.80)—but don't be surprised if these prices have gone up by the time you arrive. Validate your ticket in the machine as you enter the waiting platform, or risk a fine. Metro and bus tickets are not interchangeable, but it is possible to purchase a special 1€ ($1.45) ticket that is valid on all forms public transportation for 90 minutes after purchase.

By Taxi Supposedly there are 17,000 taxis in Athens, but finding one empty is rarely easy. Especially if you have travel connections to make, it's a good idea to pay the 2€ ($2.90) surcharge and reserve a radio taxi. The minimum fare in a taxi is 2€ ($2.90). Some radio taxi companies and phone numbers are **Athina** (✆ **210/921-7942**); **Express** (✆ **210/993-4812**); **Parthenon** (✆ **210/532-3300**); and **Piraeus** (✆ **210/418-2333**). Most hotels and restaurants will call a radio taxi for you without charge.

When you get into a taxi, check to see that the meter is turned on and set on "1" rather than "2"; it should be set on "2" (double fare) only from midnight to 5am or if you take a taxi outside the city limits. (If you plan to take a cab out of town, it is best to negotiate a flat rate in advance.) Don't be surprised if your driver picks up other passengers en route; he'll work out everyone's share, and probably the worst that will happen is you'll get less of a break on the shared fare than you would if you spoke Greek. Most Greek passengers round out the fare to the nearest euro as a modest tip.

If you suspect you've been overcharged, ask for help at your hotel or other destination before you pay the fare. Keep in mind that your driver may have difficulty understanding your pronunciation of your destination. If you are taking a taxi from your hotel, a staff member can tell the driver your destination or write down the address for you to show to the driver. If you carry a business card from your hotel, you can show it to the driver when you return.

By Car Parking is so difficult and traffic so heavy in Athens that you should use a car only for trips outside the city. Keep in mind that on any day trip (to Sounion or Daphni, for example), you'll spend at least several hours leaving and reentering central Athens.

If you do decide on the spur of the moment to rent a car in Athens, you'll find many rental agencies south of Syntagma Square. Some of the better agencies include **Athens Cars,** 10 Filellinon (✆ 210/323-3783 or 210/324-8870); **Autorental,** 11 Leoforos Syngrou (✆ 210/923-2514); **Avis,** 46–48 Leoforos Amalias (✆ 210/322-4951 to -4957); **Budget Rent A Car,** 8 Leoforos Syngrou (✆ 210/921-4771 to -4773); **Eurodollar Rent A Car,** 29 Leoforos Syngrou (✆ 210/922-9672 or 210/923-0548); **Hellascars,** 148 Leoforos Syngrou (✆ 210/923-5353 to -5359); **Hertz,** 12 Leoforos Syngrou (✆ 210/922-0102 to -0104), and 71 Leoforos Vas. Sofias (✆ 210/724-7071 or 210/722-7391); **Interrent-Europcar/Batek SA,** 4 Leoforos Syngrou (✆ 210/921-5789); and **Thrifty Hellas Rent A Car,** 24 Leoforos Syngrou (✆ 210/922-1211 to -1213). Prices for rentals range from 45€ to as much as 100€ ($65–$145) per day. ***Warning:*** Be sure to take full insurance and ask if the price you are quoted includes everything—taxes, drop-off fee, gasoline charges, and other fees.

By Foot Most of what you probably want to see and do in Athens is in the city center, allowing you to sightsee mostly on foot. The pedestrian zones in sections of the Plaka, the commercial center, and Kolonaki make strolling, window-shopping, and sightseeing infinitely more pleasant than on other, traffic-clogged streets. Nonetheless, visitors should keep in mind that here, as in many busy cities, a red traffic light or stop sign is no guarantee that cars will stop for pedestrians.

Tips A Taxi Warning

Increasing numbers of unlicensed cabdrivers ply their trade in Athens and Piraeus. Usually, these pirate cabbies (many from eastern Europe) drive not the standard gray Athens taxi but a gray car you might mistake for an Athens cab. It's always a good idea to make sure your cabdriver has a meter and a photo ID. Many of the unlicensed cabdrivers are uninsured and unfamiliar with the metropolitan area.

FAST FACTS: Athens

Business Hours **Banks** are generally open Monday through Thursday from 8am to 2pm and Friday from 8am to 1:30pm. In winter, **shops** are generally open Monday and Wednesday from 9am to 5pm; Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday from 10am to 7pm; and Saturday from 8:30am to 3:30pm. In summer, shops are generally open Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday from 8am to 3pm; and Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday from 8am to 1:30pm and 5:30 to 10pm. Note that many shops geared to visitors stay open throughout the day. Most **food stores** and the **Central Market** are open Monday and Wednesday from 9am to 4:30pm, Tuesday from 9am to 6pm, Thursday from 9:30am to 6:30pm, Friday from 9:30am to 7pm, and Saturday from 8:30am to 4:30pm. Many urban supermarkets are open 9am to 8pm, Monday to Saturday.

Currency On January 1, 2002, the monetary unit in Greece became the euro €. At press time, 1€ = US$1.45; up-to-date exchange rates are posted in most banks in Greece and available from the currency-converter website **www.xe.com/ucc**.

Currency Exchange Most banks have currency-exchange counters that use the rates set daily by the government, which are usually more favorable than those offered at unofficial exchange bureaus. It's worth doing a little comparison shopping for the best rate of exchange; for example, many hotels offer rates (usually only for cash) that are better than the official bank rates. ATM cash dispensers are increasingly common in Athens, and the National Bank of Greece operates a 24-hour ATM next to the tourist information office on Syntagma Square. It's not a good idea to rely on ATMs exclusively in Athens because the machines are sometimes out of service on holidays or during bank strikes.

Dentists & Doctors If you need an English-speaking doctor or dentist, call your embassy for advice, or try **SOS Doctor** (✆ **210/331-0310** or 210/331-0311). There are two medical hot lines for foreigners: ✆ **210/721-2951** (day) and 210/729-4301 (night) for U.S. citizens; and ✆ **210/723-6211** (day) and 210/723-7727 (night) for British citizens. The English-language *Athens News* lists some American- and British-trained doctors and hospitals offering emergency services. Most of the larger hotels have doctors whom they can call for you in an emergency.

Drugstores *Pharmakia,* identified by green crosses, are scattered throughout Athens. Hours are usually from 8am to 2pm on weekdays. In the evening and on weekends most are closed, but they usually post a notice listing the names and addresses of pharmacies that are open or will open in an emergency. The English-language *Athens News* (published on Fri) often lists pharmacies open outside regular hours.

Embassies & Consulates Locations are **Australia,** 37 Leoforos Dimitriou Soutsou (✆ 210/870-4000); **Canada,** 4 Ioannou Yenadiou (✆ 210/727-3400 or 210/725-4011); **Ireland,** 7 Vas. Konstantinou (✆ 210/723-2771); **New Zealand,** Xenias 24, Ambelokipi (✆ 210/771-0112); **South Africa,** 60 Kifissias, Maroussi (✆ 210/680-6645); **United Kingdom,** 1 Ploutarchou (✆ 210/723-6211); **United States,** 91 Leoforos Vas. Sofias (✆ 210/721-2951, or emergency number 210/729-4301). Be sure to phone ahead before you go to any embassy; most keep limited hours and are usually closed on their own holidays as well as Greek ones.

Emergencies In an emergency, dial ✆ **100** for fast police assistance and ✆ **171** for the **Tourist Police.** Dial ✆ **199** to report a **fire** and ✆ **166** for an **ambulance** and **hospital. KAT,** the emergency hospital in Kifissia (✆ **210/801-4411** to -4419), and **Asklepion Voulas,** the emergency hospital in Voula (✆ **210/895-3416** to -3418), both have emergency rooms open 24 hours a day. **Evangelismos,** a respected centrally located hospital below the Kolonaki district on 9 Vas. Sophias (✆ **210/722-0101**), usually has English-speaking staff on duty. If you need medical attention fast, don't waste time trying to call these hospitals, just go. Their doors are open and they will see to you as soon as possible.

Internet Access Internet cafes are proliferating in Athens almost as fast as cellular telephones. For a current list of Athenian cybercafes, check out **www.athensinfoguide.com/geninternet.htm**. As a general rule, most cybercafes charge about 5€ ($7.25) an hour. The efficient **Sofokleous.com Internet C@fe,** 5 Stadiou, a block off Syntagma Square (✆/fax **210/324-8105**), is open daily from 10am to 10pm. **Astor Internet Cafés,** 17 Patission, a block off Omonia Square (✆ **210/523-8546**), is open Monday through Saturday from 10am to 10pm and Sunday from 10am to 4pm. Across from the National Archaeological Museum is the **Central Music Coffee Shop,** 28 Octobriou (also called Patission) (✆ **210/883-3418**), with daily hours from 9am to 11pm. In Plaka, **Plaka Internet World** (✆ **210/331-6056**), 29 Pandrossou, offers air-conditioned chat rooms and an Acropolis view!

Post Office The main **post offices** in central Athens are at 100 Eolou, just south of Omonia Square, and in Syntagma Square on the corner of Mitropoleos Street. They're open Monday through Friday from 7:30am to 8pm, Saturday from 7:30am to 2pm, and Sunday from 9am to 1pm. All the post offices can accept small parcels. The **parcel post office,** 4 Stadiou, inside the arcade (✆ **210/322-8940**), is open Monday through Friday from 7:30am to 8pm. Parcels must be open for inspection before you seal them (bring your own tape and string) at the post office.

Telephone, Telegrams & Faxes The country code for Greece is **30.** The city code for Athens is **210.** To dial a number in Athens from outside Greece, dial 011-30 (Greece) plus 210 (Athens) and then the 7-digit Athens number. To dial Athens from within Greece, dial 210 plus the 7-digit Athens number. ***Remember:*** When you are in Greece, you must use the area code even if you are phoning within the same area—even if you are just phoning across the street!

Many of the city's public phones now accept only **phone cards,** available at newsstands and OTE offices in several denominations starting at 4€ ($5.80). Some kiosks still have **metered phones;** you pay what the meter records. North Americans can phone home directly by contacting **AT&T** at ✆ 00-800-1311, **MCI** at ✆ 00-800-1211, or **Sprint** at ✆ 00-800-1411; calls can be collect or billed to your phone charge card. You can send a telegram or fax from offices of the **Telecommunications Organization of Greece (OTE).** The three main OTE offices in central Athens are at 15 Stadiou, near Syntagma; Omonia Square; and Victoria Square at 85 Patission.

Tipping Restaurants include a service charge in the bill, but many visitors add a 10% tip. Most Greeks don't give a percentage tip to taxi drivers but round most fares up to the nearest euro, adding more for a higher fare.

WHERE TO STAY

In the years since the 2004 Olympics, some very cozy boutique hotels, chic ultramodern hotels, and sybaritic resorts have opened in Greece. Some have spas, terrific restaurants and trendy bars; quite a few have country house posh or ultra modern cutting-edge bedrooms—and some even have good reading lamps! This trend represents a very welcome change from the once standard all-too-monotonous Greek hotel room (bed, table, chair, dim lighting, minuscule bathroom), which had few if any individual touches to warm the traveler's heart. Still, remember that in the absence of clearly distinguishing characteristics, location is often the most important factor in choosing your hotel. Whenever a hotel is distinctive and charming, we are sure to point it out to you.

A few suggestions: If shower and tub facilities are particularly important to you, be sure to have a look at the bathroom. Many Greek tubs are small by American standards, and the showers are hand-held. Don't assume that just because a hotel says it has air-conditioning, the air-conditioning is working—and check to see if the hotel has adequately functioning central heating in the winter.

Although many guidebooks do, we don't recommend staying in any of the luxury hotels on Syngrou Avenue. Sure, the Metropolitan, the Leda Marriott, and the Athenaem-Intercontinental have all the creature comforts, but Syngrou Avenue is ugly, noisy, and away from everything you want to see in Athens. In short, the Syngrou hotels are just fine for the businesspeople here for conferences who never leave their hotels—but not for visitors here to see the sights and stroll the streets.

Warning: Greek hotel prices were steeply increased for the 2004 Olympics. When the following years proved to be among the best years on record for tourism here, many of the elevated prices were retained and some were raised even higher. If Greece continues to be a very popular destination, you will probably find that the prices we give (which were accurate at press time) have again been raised. If price is important to you, always ask for the least expensive room available, always ask for the discount usually given for stays of more than 3 nights, and be sure to ask if the rates vary on different days of the week. Weekend hotel rates are sometimes cheaper in Athens, but usually *more* expensive out of Athens (especially in the islands) as Greeks increasingly add a number of short year-round weekend breaks to their beloved August summer holiday. Winter rate reductions are not uncommon in many small Athenian hotels and some Athenian hotels offer reductions in August, when savvy travelers tend to avoid Athens and its heat.

IN PLAKA

Expensive

Electra Palace ★★ The Electra, just a few blocks southwest of Syntagma Square on a relatively quiet side street, is the most stylish Plaka hotel. The rooms on the fifth, sixth, and seventh floors are smaller than those on lower floors, but a top-floor room is where you want to be, both for the terrific view of the Acropolis and to escape traffic noise. (Ask for a top-floor unit when you make your reservation. Your request will be honored "subject to availability.") Guest rooms here are far from elegant, but they are pleasantly decorated in soft pastels. Don't miss the rooftop pool. The hotel restaurant has become one of the best and most sought after restaurants in town with a view as sublime as the food. Note that the restaurant is closed Sunday.

18 Nikodimou, Plaka, 105 57 Athens. ☎ **210/324-1401** or 210/324-1407. Fax 210/324-1975. www.electrahotels.gr. 106 units. 180€–250€ ($261–$363) double. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 12€ ($17) a day.

The Electra is about 2 blocks down on the left as you walk along Ermou with Syntagma Sq. behind you. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; rooftop pool; indoor heated pool; gym; spa. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, dataport, hair dryer.

Moderate

Central ★★ Completely refurbished, this stylish, elegant hotel off Mitropoleos Square features wonderful seagrass or wooden floors, marble bathrooms, and excellent soundproofing. Family and interconnecting rooms are also available and the large roof has superb Acropolis views and a hot tub. If the Central is full, try the neighboring similarly priced Hermes (✆ **210/323-5514;** www.hermes-athens.com) at 19 Apollonos.

21 Apollonos, 105 57 Athens. ✆ **210/323-4357** www.centralhotel.gr. 84 units. 77€–120€ ($112–$174) double. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Bar; rooftop terrace; hot tub; conference and meeting facilities; private parking; nonsmoking rooms available upon request. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer, Internet.

Hotel Plaka ★★ This hotel is popular with Greeks, who prefer its modern conveniences to the old-fashioned charms of most other hotels in the Plaka area. It has fair prices and a terrific location just off Syntagma Square and the Plaka. Many rooms have balconies. Fifth- and sixth-floor rooms in the rear (where it's usually quieter) have views of the Plaka and the Acropolis, also splendidly visible from the roof-garden bar (open in summer). Friends who stayed here recently weren't charmed by the service but loved the Plaka's central and relatively quiet location. Rates here are usually considerably cheaper off season.

Mitropoleos and 7 Kapnikareas, 105 56 Athens. ✆ **210/322-2096.** Fax 210/322-2412. www.plakahotel.gr. 67 units, 38 with shower only. 145€–165€ ($210–$239) double. Rates include breakfast. AE, MC, V. Follow Mitropoleos out of Syntagma Sq. past the cathedral and turn left onto Kapnikareas. **Amenities:** Bar; roof garden. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer.

Magna Grecia ★★ In a hard-to-beat location (right on Mitropoleos Sq.), located inside a beautiful 19th-century neoclassical building with high ceilings, French doors, and hardwood floors, this is easily one of the best hotels in the Plaka. All front rooms have sweeping Acropolis views, and there is a pleasant and relaxing rooftop bar as well (also with Acropolis views) that has so far gone by rather unnoticed by glamour-seeking Athenians. Rooms are named after Ionian and Aegean islands.

54 Mitropoleos, 105 63 Plaka. ✆ **210/324-0314.** Fax 210/324-0317. www.magnagreciahotel.com. 12 rooms. 145€ ($210) double. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Cafe/bar; room service; rooftop garden. *In room:* A/C, TV/DVD, CD player, safe, Internet.

Inexpensive

Acropolis House Hotel ★ Location is the big plus in this venerable small hotel in the heart of Plaka, a 5 minute walk from Syntagma Square. Kodrou is a relatively quiet largely pedestrianized Plaka side street, although motorcycles can be a problem. Bedrooms are small, with minimalist furnishings, but the 150-year-old villa has been nicely renovated. Try to get room no. 401 or 402 for an Acropolis view. The newer wing (only 65 years old) isn't architecturally special, and the toilets (one for each room) are across the hall.

If the Acropolis House is full, try **Adonis Hotel,** on the same street at 3 Kodrou (✆ **210/324-9737**); it's architecturally undistinguished and somewhat haphazard, but it does have an appealing location and a rooftop garden cafe with a view of the Acropolis.

6–8 Kodrou, 105 58 Athens. ✆ **210/322-2344.** Fax 210/324-4143.www.acropolishouse.gr. 25 units, 15 with bathroom. 70€ ($102) double without bathroom; 80€ ($116) double with bathroom. 10€ ($15) surcharge for A/C. Rates include continental breakfast. V. Walk 2 blocks out of Syntagma Sq. on Mitropoleos and turn left on Voulis, which becomes Kodrou. **Amenities:** Internet; laundry facilities (small fee; free after 4-day stay). *In room:* A/C, TV.

Hotel Nefeli ★ The little Nefeli is just steps from the main Plaka shopping and restaurant streets. The rooms are small but comfortable, the quietest overlooking pedestrianized Angelikis Hatzimihali Street (although illegal motorcycle traffic can be a problem at night). I've found the staff courteous and helpful, and friends who've stayed here say the same; one visitor's report of curt service and a grubby bathroom surprised me.

16 Iperidou, 105 58 Athens. ✆ **210/322-8044.** Fax 210/322-5800. 18 units, 13 with shower only. 90€ ($131) double. Rates include continental breakfast. AE, V. Walk 2 blocks west from Syntagma Sq. on Mitropoleos, turn left on Voulis, cross Nikodimou, and turn right on Iperidou. **Amenities:** Breakfast room. *In room:* A/C, TV.

NEAR MONASTIRAKI SQUARE

Moderate

Attalos Hotel ★ *Value* The six-story Attalos is well situated for those wanting to take in the exuberant daytime street life of the nearby Central Market and the equally exuberant nighttime scene at the cafes and restaurants of the Psirri district. The rooms here are very plain, but 40 have balconies, 12 have Acropolis views, and a number will sleep three or four. The roof garden offers fine views of the city and the Acropolis. The Attalos—whose staff is usually very helpful—often gives a 10% discount to Frommer's readers.

29 Athinas, 105 54 Athens. ✆ **210/391-2801.** Fax 210/324-3124. ww.attalos.gr. 80 units. 100€ ($145) double. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, MC, V. From Monastiraki Sq., walk about 1½ blocks north on Athinas. **Amenities:** Breakfast room; bar, Internet. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer (in most), safe.

Jason Inn Hotel ★ *Value* On a dull street, but just a few blocks from the Agora, the Plaka, and the Psirri district, this renovated hotel offers comfortable rooms (decent beds and reading lights) with double-paned windows for extra quiet. If you don't mind walking a few extra blocks to Syntagma, this is currently one of the best values in Athens, with a characteristically eager-to-help staff. If the Jason Inn is full, the staff may be able to find you a room in one of their other hotels: the similarly priced **Adrian Hotel,** on busy Hadrian in the Plaka; or the slightly less expensive **King Jason** or **Jason** hotels, both a few blocks from Omonia Square.

12 Ayion Assomaton, 105 53 Athens. ✆ **210/325-1106.** Fax 210/523-4786. www.douros-hotels.com. 57 units. 110€–135€ ($160–$196) double. Rates include American buffet breakfast. AE, MC, V. From Monastiraki Sq., head west on Ermou, turn right at Thisio Metro station, pass small belowground church, and bear left. **Amenities:** Breakfast room; bar, Internet. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer (most rooms).

PSIRRI

EXPENSIVE

Ochre & Brown ★★ This trendy, stylish, and small boutique hotel in the heart of Psirri opened in 2006 and has already found its niche for fashion-conscious and experienced travelers looking for style, highly personalized service, high-tech comforts, and a chic urban experience. Some rooms have Thissio views but the finest room by far is the junior suite with Acropolis views from its terrace. Rooms have stylish furnishings, large work desks with Internet access, and marble bathrooms with custom-designed glass-enclosed showers. The hotel's lounge/bar and restaurant has quickly become one of the city's favorite haunts.

7 Leokoriou, 105 54 Athens. ✆ **210/331-2950.** Fax 210-331-2942. www.ochreandbrown.com. 11 units. 170€–190€ ($247–$276) double; 300€ ($435) junior suite. AE, MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant; lounge bar. *In room:* A/C, TV, safe, Wi-Fi.

GAZI/KERAMEIKOS

EXPENSIVE

Hotel Iridanos (Eridanus) ★★ Calling itself a "Luxury Art Hotel," this new boutique hotel has a lot going for it: The neoclassical building is filled with original artwork, many rooms have stunning Acropolis views, and the city's best fish restaurant, Varouko, is just next door. The bedrooms (many with that Acropolis view) have views huge beds, enormous bathrooms and large flatscreen TVs. This may not be the place to stay on your first trip to Athens, when you may wish to be closer to the center and in a neighborhood not in the process of being gentrified, but you are within a short walking distance of the city's best nightlife in Gazi, Thissio, and Psirri. The new line 3 (airport line) Metro stop at Kerameikos virtually next door to the hotel, making this an easy trip to and from the airport.

80 Piraeus, 105 51 Athens. ☎ **210/520-5360.** www.eridanus.gr. 38 units. 150€–200€ ($218–$290) double. AE, MC, V. From Syntagma Sq., take the Archaeological Park walkway to Piraeus Ave. **Amenities:** Restaurant; breakfast room; bar; business center. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, Internet.

OMONIA

Moderate/Expensive

Fresh Hotel ★★ Once an undistinguished hotel from the late 1970s, the redone rooms are now bold and bright with minimalist furnishings. The location is one of Athens's liveliest—trendy young Athenians flock to the in-house bar, Orange, and the rooftop Air Lounge bar by the pool. The nearby Athens Central Market opens before dawn, and neighborhood nightlife ends after breakfast. Athens's growing little Chinatown and little Bangladesh (lots of bargain shopping possibilities) are a few blocks away.

6 Sofokleus, 105 64 Athens. ☎ **210/524-8511.** www.freshhotel.gr. 133 units. 150€–200€ ($218–$290) double. AE, MC, V. From Omonia Sq., head south along Athinas until you reach Sofokleus. From Monastiraki Sq., head north along Athinas until you reach Sofokleus. **Amenities:** Restaurant; breakfast room; bar; rooftop pool. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, Wi-Fi.

INEXPENSIVE

Athens Art Hotel ★★ *Value* Opened in 2004, the Athens Art Hotel has been booked solid ever since, despite its somewhat out-of-the-way location. It's in a strikingly beautiful neoclassical building, dramatically lit at night. The interior will not disappoint either. Modern and colorful, yet classic, this stylish boutique hotel features individually designed rooms with pinewood floors, well-designed features and spacious, marble bathrooms. It is a great value for your money, plus the staff is very friendly and knowledgeable about the city. One of the best deals in the city—but, again, not as central as most of our suggestions.

27 Marni, 104 32 Athens. ☎ **210/524-0501.** Fax 210/524-3384. www.arthotelathens.gr. 30 units. 85€–105€ ($123–$152) double. AE, MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant; cafe/bar; business center. *In room:* A/C, TV, safe, Internet.

ON & AROUND SYNTAGMA SQUARE

Very Expensive

Grande Bretagne ★★★ The legendary Grande Bretagne, one of Athens's most distinguished 19th-century buildings, had a 2-year $70-million renovation for the Olympics and has touch-ups since then. The major renovations preserved the exquisite Beaux Arts lobby, made dingy rooms grand once more, and added indoor and outdoor swimming pools. The Grande Bretagne prides itself on its service: From Winston Churchill to Sting, GB guests expect the highest level of attention—and get it, except, possibly, when a tour group is checking in. Ask for a room with a balcony overlooking Syntagma Square, the Parliament building, and the Acropolis—and if you are in Athens off-season, check for discounted rates.

Syntagma Sq., 105 64 Athens. ✆ **210/333-000.** Fax 210/333-0160. www.grandebretagne.gr. 328 units. 290€–350€ ($421–$508) double. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; 2 bars; 2 pools (indoor and outdoor); health club and spa w/Jacuzzi; concierge; tour desk; car-rental desk; courtesy car or airport pickup arranged; business center; 24-hr. room service; laundry/dry-cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms; 1 room for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, dataport, minibar, hair dryer, iron, safe.

King George II ★★★ Right next door to the strikingly beautiful Hotel Grande Bretagne, the King George II is one of Athens's great historical hotels, opulent and classy—and also redone for the 2004 Olympics. Although it looks extremely opulent, the hotel has only 102 rooms, which can also make it feel like a personalized boutique hotel rather than an Athenian landmark, like its next door neighbor, the GB. The rooms are individually designed with handmade furniture, silk and satin upholstery, and spacious, gray marbled bathrooms with sunken tubs and glass-encased showers. The Tudor Bar on the rooftop has excellent views of the city and its landmarks while the power Greek-dining Tudor restaurant is sublime.

Syntagma Sq., 105 64 Athens. ✆ **210/322-2210** or 210/728-0350. Fax 210/325-0564 or 210/728-0351. www.grecohotel.gr. 240€–300€ ($348–$435) double. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Rooftop bar/restaurant; bar; indoor swimming pool; health club; spa; pool; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those with limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, Internet.

Expensive

Electra Hotel ★ *Value* If Ermou remains a pedestrian street, the Electra can boast a location that is quiet and central—steps from Syntagma Square. Most of the guest rooms have comfortable armchairs, large windows, and modern bathrooms with hair dryers. Take a look at your room before you accept it: Although most are large, some are quite tiny. The front desk is sometimes understaffed but the service is generally acceptable.

5 Ermou, 105 63 Athens. ✆ **210/322-3223.** Fax 210/322-0310. electrahotels@ath.forthnet.gr. 110 units. 175€–200€ ($254–$290) double. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. The Electra is about 2 blocks down on the left as you walk along Ermou with Syntagma Sq. behind you. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, Internet.

Moderate

Athens Cypria ★★ In a convenient central location on a (usually) quiet street, the renovated Cypria overlooks the Acropolis from room nos. 603 to 607. With bright white halls and rooms, cheerful floral bedspreads and curtains, and freshly tiled bathrooms with new fixtures, the Cypria is a welcome addition to the city's moderately priced hotels. The hotel can be infuriatingly slow in responding to reservation requests.

5 Diomias, 105 62 Athens. ✆ **210/323-8034.** Fax 210/324-8792. www.athenscypria.gr. 115 units. 130€–150€ ($189–$218) double. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, MC, V. Take Karayioryi Servias out of Syntagma Sq.; Diomias is on the left, after Lekka. **Amenities:** Breakfast room; bar; snack bar. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer.

Inexpensive

Hotel Carolina ★★ The friendly, family-owned and -operated Carolina, on the outskirts of Plaka, is a brisk 5-minute walk from Syntagma and has always been popular with students. In the last few years, the Carolina has undertaken extensive remodeling and now attracts a wide range of frugal travelers. Double-glazed windows and air-conditioning make the guest rooms especially comfortable. Many rooms have large balconies, and several (such as no. 308) with four or five beds are popular with families and students. The congenial atmosphere may be a bit too noisy for some.

55 Kolokotroni, 105 60 Athens. ✆ **210/324-3551.** Fax 210/324-3350. www.hotelcarolina.gr. 31 units. 75€–100€ ($109–$145) double. MC, V. Take Stadiou out of Syntagma Sq. to Kolokotroni (on left). **Amenities:** Breakfast room; bar. *In room:* A/C, TV.

IN KOLONAKI

Very Expensive

St. George Lycabettus Hotel ★★★ As yet, the distinctive, classy St. George does not get many tour groups, which contributes to its tranquil tone. The rooftop pool is a real plus, as are the two excellent restaurants: the rooftop Le Grand Balcon is much favored by wealthy Greeks for private events—if you are lucky you may get to glimpse an elegant wedding reception. The Frame lounge in the lobby also attracts a seriously chic Athenian crowd. Floors have differing decorative motifs, from baroque to modern Italian. Most rooms look toward Mount Likavitos; some have views of the Acropolis; others overlook a small park or have interior views. The hotel is just steps from chic Kolonaki restaurants and shops.

2 Kleomenous, 106 75 Athens. ✆ **210/729-0711.** Fax 210/721-0439. www.sglycabettus.gr. 167 units. 150€–225€ ($218–$326) double. Compulsory breakfast 20€ ($29). AE, DC, MC, V. From Kolonaki Sq., take Patriarchou Ioachim to Loukianou and follow Loukianou uphill to Kleomenous. Turn left on Kleomenous; the hotel overlooks Dexamini Park. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; 2 bars; rooftop pool; concierge; business center; 24-hr. room service; laundry/dry-cleaning services; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, Internet.

IN THE EMBASSY DISTRICT

Expensive/Very Expensive

Andromeda Hotel ★★★ The city's first boutique hotel is easily the most charming in Athens, with a staff that makes you feel that this is your ideal home away from home, on a quiet residential street by the American ambassador's garden, not far from the Megaron Musikis (Athens Concert Hall). Most rooms are quite large, all are elegantly decorated, the service is superb, and the breakfast buffets are lavish. The only drawbacks: It's a serious hike (20–30 min.) or a 10-minute taxi ride to Syntagma; and there are relatively few restaurants in this residential neighborhood, although the superb Vlassis is just around the corner and 48 and The Park are short taxi rides away.

22 Timoleontos Vassou (off Plateia Mavili), 115 21 Athens. ✆ **210/641-5000.** Fax 210/646-6361. www.andromedahotels.gr. 42 units. 435€–580€ ($631–$841) double. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant; breakfast room; bar. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Internet.

Hilton ★★★ When the Hilton opened in 1963, it was the tallest building on the horizon—and the most modern hotel in town. In 2001, it closed for a long-overdue renovation, and 3 years and 96€ million later, it reopened. Everything that was tired is now spanking-new and fresh. As before, small shops, a salon, and cafes and restaurants surround the glitzy glass-and-marble lobby. The guest rooms (looking toward either the hills outside Athens or the Acropolis) have large marble bathrooms and are decorated in the generic but comfortable international Hilton style, with some Greek touches. The Plaza Executive floor of rooms and suites offers a separate business center and a higher level of service. Facilities include a spa, large outdoor pool, conference rooms, and a handy ATM in the lobby. The Milos restaurant has superb seafood and the rooftop Galaxy bar has amazing views of just about everything there is to see for miles around (including drop-dead elegant Athenians). The Hilton sometimes runs promotions, so ask about special rates before booking.

46 Leoforos Vas. Sofias, 115 28 Athens. ✆ **800/445-8667** in the U.S., or 210/728-1000. Fax 210/728-1111. www.hilton.com. 275€–400€ ($399–$580) double. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 4 restaurants; 3 bars; outdoor freshwater pool; health club and spa w/Jacuzzi; game room; concierge; tour desk; car-rental desk; airport pickup arranged;

business center; shopping arcade; salon; 24-hr. room service; babysitting; laundry/dry-cleaning services; nonsmoking rooms; 1 room for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Internet.

NEAR THE ACROPOLIS (MAKRIYANNI & KOUKAKI DISTRICTS)

Very Expensive

Divani-Palace Acropolis ★★ Just 3 blocks south of the Acropolis, in a quiet residential neighborhood, the Divani Palace Acropolis does a brisk tour business but also welcomes independent travelers. The blandly decorated guest rooms are large and comfortable, and some of the large bathrooms even have two washbasins. The cavernous marble-and-glass lobby contains copies of classical sculpture; a section of Athens's 5th-century-B.C. defense wall is preserved behind glass in the basement by the gift shop. The breakfast buffet is extensive. (There's a handy SPAR supermarket a block away at 4 Parthenos, as well as a shop at 7 Parthenos that sells English-language newspapers.)

19–25 Parthenos, Makriyanni, 117 42 Athens. ✆ **210/922-2945.** Fax 210/921-4993. www.divanis.gr. 253 units. 200€–250€ ($290–$363) double. Rates include breakfast buffet. AE, DC, MC, V. From Syntagma Sq., take Amalias to Dionissiou Areopagitou; turn left onto Parthenos. The hotel is on your left after 3 blocks. **Amenities:** Restaurant; 2 bars; outdoor pool; concierge; business center; 24-hr. room service. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Internet.

Moderate

Acropolis View Hotel ★ A 10- to 15-minute walk from the heart of the Plaka (and the Herodes Atticus theater), the Acropolis view is on a residential side street in a quiet neighborhood at the base of Filopappos Hill (itself a pleasant area to explore). Many of the small but appealing guest rooms are freshly painted each year. All units have good bathrooms as well as balconies. Some, such as room no. 405, overlook Filopappos Hill, while others, such as room no. 407, face the Acropolis.

Rovertou Galli and 10 Webster, 117 42 Athens. ✆ **210/921-7303.** Fax 210/923-0705. www.acropolisview.gr. 32 units. 125€ ($181) double. Rates include buffet breakfast. Substantial reductions Nov–Apr 1. AE, MC, V. From Syntagma Sq. take Amalias to Dionissiou Areopagitou; head west past Herodes Atticus theater to Rovertou Galli. Webster (Gouemster on some maps) is the little street intersecting Rovertou Galli between Propilion and Garabaldi. **Amenities:** Breakfast room; bar. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar.

Art Gallery Hotel ★ Once home to several artists, this small hotel in a half-century-old house maintains an artistic flair (and a nice old-fashioned cage elevator). Rooms are small and plain but comfortable, many with polished hardwood floors and ceiling fans. A nice Victorian-style breakfast room on the fourth floor is furnished with heavy marble-topped tables and old velvet-covered chairs. Things were spruced up in 2000, but happily, the essential ambience remains.

5 Erechthiou, Koukaki, 117 42 Athens. ✆ **210/923-8376.** Fax 210/923-3025. www.artgalleryhotel.gr. 22 units. 100€ ($145) double. Rates include generous breakfast. Hotel sometimes closed Nov–Mar; when open then, prices reduced. AE, MC, V. *In room:* A/C, TV.

Inexpensive

Marble House Pension ★ Named for its marble facade, this small hotel, whose front rooms offer balconies overlooking quiet Zinni Street, is famous among budget travelers (including many teachers) for its friendly staff. We were surprised in early 2006 to receive one stiff complaint about service from a traveler and will be alert for reports of any future problems. Over the last several years, the Pension has been remodeled and redecorated, gaining new bathrooms and guest-room furniture. Most units have small fridges and two have kitchenettes. If you're spending more than a few days in Athens and don't mind being outside the center (and a partly uphill 25-min. walk back and forth to the hotel from many places you'll visit), this is a homey base.

35 A. Zinni, Koukaki, 117 41 Athens. ✆ **210/923-4058.** Fax 210/922-6461. www.marblehouse.gr. 16 units, 12 with bathroom. 50€ ($73) double without bathroom; 60€ ($87) double with bathroom. 9€ ($13) supplement for A/C. Monthly rates available off season. No credit cards. From Syntagma Sq. take Amalias to Syngrou; turn right onto Zinni; the hotel is in the cul-de-sac beside the small church. **Amenities:** Rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C (9 units), TV, minibar.

THE COAST

If you want to stay by the sea while visiting Athens, here are several suggestions. Good beaches, excellent restaurants and open-air clubs and bars, as well as excellent shops, make the coast very appealing during the summer and are a good choice if you don't have time to make it to the islands. You can get into Athens by the hotel shuttles, bus, tram, or taxi.

Astir Palace Resort ★★ Everyone I know who has stayed here wants to go back, soon; most admit that they saw less of Athens than they had intended, because they found it so relaxing on the beach. The Astir Palace is actually a series of secluded bungalows and three hotels with their own private beaches on 30 hectares (75 acres) with plenty of activities—from windsurfing to private Pilates lessons. Seven well-regarded restaurants ranging from the beachside Taverna 37 to the Polynesian Sao Restaurant are on-site. The Arion hotel offers a more classical aesthetic and its sea-view rooms are arranged in such a way that even the bathtubs have prime water views. In 2006 Starwood Hotels and Resorts raised its luxury flag on the Arion, while the Westin was formerly known as the Nafsika. All rooms in the Westin have sea views and elegant, modern rooms.

40 Apollonos, 16671 Vouliagmeni. ✆ **210/890-2000.** Fax 210/896-2582. www.astir.gr. 526 units. Arion: 380€–460€ ($551–$667) double. Westin: 340€–410€ ($493–$595) double. AE, DC, MC, V. Tram to Glyfada, then either taxi or bus 114. Free parking. **Amenities:** 7 restaurants; 7 bars; 3 pools; 3 tennis courts. *In room:* A/C, TV, Internet.

Divani Apollon Palace & Spa ★★ In a prime location on Kavouri beach with towering palm trees, picturesque gardens, and two large swimming pools, this is as close to a secluded island experience as you are likely to get in any large city. With sea views from every room, large balconies and green marble bathrooms, and a private beach, this is perhaps the most romantic of Athens's hotels. Complementing the romantic ambience is the well-regarded on-site seafood restaurant, Mythos tis Thalassas (Legend of the Sea), with seafront tables, accessible for the guests of the hotel via an underground tunnel.

10 Agiou Nikolaou and Iliou, 166 71 Vouliagmeni. ✆ **210/891-1100.** Fax 210/965-8010. www.divaniapollon.gr. 286 units. 220€ ($319) double; 340€ ($493) executive double; 1,600€ ($2,320) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Tram to Glyfada, then either taxi or bus 114. Free parking. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; bar; 2 pools; gym; spa; lighted tennis court; free shuttle bus to Glyfada and/or Syntagma Sq. *In room:* A/C, TV, Internet.

WHERE TO DINE

Athens has an astonishing number of restaurants and tavernas (and a growing number of fast-food joints) offering everything from good, cheap Greek food in bare-bones surroundings to fine Greek, French, Asian, and other international cuisines served in elegant dining rooms. In summer, when the heat soars, many Greeks have lunch inside (while tourists sit outside under the broiling sun) and dinner outside—seldom before 10pm, although you can get served most places from 8pm.

Most restaurants have menus in Greek and English, but many don't keep their printed (or handwritten) menus up-to-date. If a menu is not in English, there's almost always someone working at the restaurant who can either translate or rattle off suggestions for

Tips Don't Count on Credit Cards

One of my most humiliating travel moments happened a number of years ago when I was taking Athenian friends out to dinner—and planning to pay with a credit card. The restaurant took only cash, and my friends ended up having to take me to dinner. Much has changed in Athens since then, but one thing that has not changed is that many Athenian restaurants still do not accept credit cards. Consider yourself warned.

you in English. That may mean you'll be offered some fairly repetitive suggestions because restaurant staff members tend to suggest what most tourists request. In Athens, that means ***moussaka*** (baked eggplant casserole, usually with ground meat), ***souvlakia*** (chunks of beef, chicken, pork, or lamb grilled on a skewer), ***pastitsio*** (baked pasta, usually with ground meat and béchamel sauce), or ***dolmadakia*** (grape leaves, stuffed usually with rice and ground meat). Although all these dishes can be delicious, all too often restaurants catering to tourists serve profoundly dull moussaka and unpleasantly chewy souvlakia.

Mezedes (appetizers served with bread) are one of the great delights of Greek cuisine, and often can be enjoyed in lieu of a main course. Some perennial favorites include ***tzatziki*** (garlic, cucumber, dill, and yogurt dip), ***melitzanosalata*** (eggplant dip), ***skordalia*** (garlic sauce), ***taramosalata*** (fish roe dip), ***keftedes*** (crispy meatballs), ***kalamaria*** (squid), ***gigantes*** (large white beans in tomato sauce), ***loukanika*** (little sausages), and ***oktopodi*** (octopus).

If you're wondering what to drink, the best-known Greek table wine is **retsina.** It's usually white, although sometime rosé or red, and flavored with pine resin. In theory, the European Union now controls the amount of resin added, so you're less likely to come across the harsh retsina that some compare to turpentine. If you don't like the taste of retsina, try ***aretsinato*** (wine without resin).

To find out more about the wide range of excellent Greek wines, pick up a copy of Dimitri Hadjinicolaou's ***The A to Z Guide of Greek Wines*** (Oenos O Agapitos Publisher). This handy pocket-size Greek/English guide has illustrations of labels and information on vintages, and sells for about 10€ ($15).

When it comes time for dessert or a midafternoon infusion of sugar, Greeks usually head to a ***zaharoplastion*** (sweet shop). Consequently, most restaurants don't offer a wide variety of desserts. Almost all do serve fruit (stewed in winter, fresh in season), and, increasingly, many serve sweets such as ***baklava*** (pastry and ground nuts with honey), ***halva*** (sesame, chopped nuts, and honey), and ***kataifi*** (shredded wheat with chopped nuts and lots of honey). All these sweets are seriously sweet. If you want coffee with your dessert, keep in mind that for Greeks, regular coffee usually includes a mere teaspoon of sugar. Sweet coffee seems to be about a fifty-fifty mixture of coffee and sugar. Watch out for the grounds in the bottom of the cup—and try to get a Greek to show you how to tell your fortune from the grounds.

Greek **brandy** is a popular after-dinner drink (although—you guessed it—it's a bit sweet for non-Greek tastes), but the most popular Greek hard drink is ***ouzo.*** The anise-flavored liqueur is taken either straight or with water, which turns it cloudy white. You may see Greeks drinking quarter- and even half-bottles of ouzo with lunch; if you do the same, you'll find out why the after-lunch siesta is so popular. There are many cafes *(ouzeri)* where ouzo, wine, and a selection of mezedes are served from breakfast to bedtime.

IN THE PLAKA

Some of the most charming old restaurants in Athens are in the Plaka—as are some of the worst tourist traps. Here are a few things to keep in mind when you head off for a meal.

Some Plaka restaurants station waiters outside who don't just urge you to come in and sit down, but virtually pursue you down the street with an unrelenting sales pitch. The hard sell is almost always a giveaway that the place caters to tourists. In general, it's a good idea to avoid places with floor shows; many charge outrageous amounts (and levy surcharges not always openly stated on menus) for drinks and food. If you get burned, and the proprietor is insistent, stand your ground, phone the **Tourist Police** (**✆ 171**), and pay nothing before they arrive. Often the mere mention of the Tourist Police has the miraculous effect of causing a bill to be lowered.

Expensive

Daphne's ★★★ ELEGANT GREEK/NOUVELLE Frescoes adorn the walls of this neoclassical 1830s former home, which includes a shady garden courtyard displaying bits of ancient marble found on-site. The courtyard makes it a real oasis in Athens, especially when summer nights are hot. The food here—recommended by the *New York Times, Travel + Leisure,* and just about everywhere else—gives you all the old favorites with new distinction (try the zesty eggplant salad), and combines familiar ingredients in innovative ways (delicious hot pepper and feta cheese dip). We could cheerfully eat the hors d'oeuvres all night. We have also enjoyed the *stifado* (stew) of rabbit in *mavrodaphne* (sweet-wine) sauce and the tasty prawns with toasted almonds. Many nights, there's live music (sometimes Greek, sometimes international). The staff is attentive, endearing, and beyond excellent.

4 Lysikratous. ✆/fax **210/322-7971.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 16€–30€ ($23–$44), with some fish priced by the kilo. AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 7pm–1am. Closed Dec 20–Jan 15.

Moderate

Eden Vegetarian Restaurant ★ VEGETARIAN You can find vegetarian dishes at almost every Greek restaurant, but if you want to experience organically grown products, soy moussaka, mushroom pie with a whole-wheat crust, freshly squeezed juices, and salads with bean sprouts, join the young Athenians and Europeans who patronize the Eden. The prices are reasonable, if not cheap, and the decor is engaging, with 1920s-style prints and mirrors and wrought-iron lamps.

Tips Eating Well

To avoid the ubiquitous favorites-for-foreigners, try some of the trendy new places we suggest. When you are at a restaurant that caters to tourists, tell your waiter you'd like to have a look at the food display case, often positioned just outside the kitchen, and then point to what you'd like to order. Many restaurants are perfectly happy to have you take a look in the kitchen itself, but it's not a good idea to do this without checking first. Not surprisingly, you'll get the best value and the tastiest food at establishments serving a predominantly Greek, rather than a transient tourist, clientele.

12 Lissiou. ✆/fax **210/324-8858.** Main courses 8€–15€ ($12–$22). AE, MC, V. Daily noon–midnight. Closed Tues and usually closed Aug. From Syntagma Sq., head south on Filellinon or Nikis to Kidathineon, which intersects Adrianou; turn right on Adrianou and take Mnissikleos up 2 blocks toward Acropolis to Lissiou.

Platanos Taverna ★★ TRADITIONAL GREEK This taverna on a quiet pedestrian square has tables outdoors in good weather beneath a spreading plane tree (*platanos* means plane tree). Inside, where locals usually congregate to escape the summer sun at midday and where tourists gather in the evening, you can enjoy the old paintings and photos on the walls. The Platanos has been serving good *spitiko fageto* (home cooking) since 1932 and has managed to keep steady customers happy while enchanting visitors. If artichokes or spinach with lamb are on the menu, you're in luck: They're delicious. There's a wide choice of bottled wines from many regions of Greece, although the house wine is tasty. Plan to come here and relax, not rush, through a meal.

4 Diogenous. ✆ **210/322-0666.** Fax 210/322-8624. Main courses 7€–15€ ($10–$22). No credit cards. Mon–Sat noon–4:30pm and 8pm–midnight; Sun in Mar–May and Sept–Oct noon–4:30pm. From Syntagma Sq., head south on Filellinon or Nikis to Kidathineon. Turn right on Adrianou, and take Mnissikleos up 1 block toward the Acropolis; turn right onto Diogenous.

Taverna Xinos ★ TRADITIONAL GREEK In summer, sit at tables in the courtyard; in winter, warm yourself by the coal-burning stove and admire the frescoes while dining on traditional Greek taverna food—often, as is traditional, served room temperature. While the strolling musicians may not be as good as the Three Tenors, they do sing wonderful Greek golden oldies, accompanying themselves on the guitar and bouzouki. (If you're serenaded, you may want to give the musicians a tip. If you want to hear the theme from "Never on Sunday," ask for "Ena Zorbas.") Most evenings, tourists predominate until after 10pm, when locals begin to arrive—as they have since Xinos opened in 1935.

4 Geronta. ✆ **210/322-1065.** Main courses 6€–15€ ($8.70–$22). No credit cards. Daily 8pm to any time from 11pm–1am; sometimes closed Sun. Usually closed part of July and Aug. From Syntagma Sq., head south on Filellinon or Nikis to Kidathineon; turn right on Geronta and look for the XINOS sign in the cul-de-sac.

Inexpensive

Damigos (The Bakaliarakia) ★★★ GREEK/CODFISH This basement taverna, with enormous wine barrels in the back room and an ancient column supporting the roof in the front room, has been serving delicious deep-fried codfish and eggplant, as well as chops and stews, since 1865. The wine comes from the family vineyards. There are few pleasures greater than sipping retsina—if you wish, you can buy a bottle to take away—while you watch the cook turn out unending meals in the absurdly small kitchen. Don't miss the delicious *skordalia* (garlic sauce), equally good with cod, eggplant, fresh tomatoes, bread—well, you get the idea.

41 Kidathineon. ✆ **210/322-5084.** Main courses 6€–10€ ($8.70–$15). No credit cards. Daily 7pm to anytime from 11pm–1am. Usually closed June–Sept. From Syntagma Sq., head south on Filellinon or Nikis to Kidathineon; Damigos is downstairs on the left just before Adrianou.

Kouklis Ouzeri (To Yerani) ★ GREEK/MEZEDES Besides Kouklis Ouzeri and To Yerani, Greeks call this popular old favorite with its winding staircase to the second floor the "Skolario" because of the nearby school. Sit down at one of the small tables and a waiter will present a large tray with about a dozen plates of mezedes—appetizer portions of fried fish, beans, grilled eggplant, taramosalata, cucumber-and-tomato salad, olives, fried cheese, sausages, and other seasonal specialties. Choose the ones that appeal to you. If you don't order all 12, you can enjoy a tasty and inexpensive meal with the house *krasi* (wine). No prices are posted, but the waiter will help you if you ask. Now if only the staff could be a bit more patient when foreigners are trying to decide what to order . . .

14 Tripodon. ✆ **210/324-7605.** Appetizers 5€–15€ ($7.25–$22). No credit cards. Daily 11am–2am. From Syntagma Sq., head south on Filellinon or Nikis to Kidathineon; take Kidathineon across Adrianou to Thespidos and climb toward Acropolis; Tripodon is 1st street on right after Adrianou.

NEAR MONASTIRAKI SQUARE

Moderate

Abyssinia Cafe ★ GREEK This small cafe in a ramshackle building sports a nicely restored interior featuring lots of gleaming dark wood and polished copper. It faces lopsided Abyssinia Square off Ifaistou, where furniture restorers ply their trade and antiques shops sell everything from gramophones to hubcaps. You can sit indoors or out with a coffee, but it's tempting to snack on Cheese Abyssinia (feta scrambled with spices and garlic), mussels and rice pilaf, or *keftedes* (meatballs). Everything is reasonably priced here, but it's easy to run up quite a tab, because everything is so good.

Plateia Abyssinia, Monastiraki. ✆ **210/321-7047.** Appetizers and main courses 5€–15€ ($7.25–$22). No credit cards. Tues–Sun 10:30am–2pm (often open evenings as well). Usually closed for a week at Christmas and Easter; sometimes closed part of Jan and Feb and mid-July to mid-Aug. Abyssinia Sq. is just off Ifaistou (Hephaistos) across from Ancient Agora's entrance on Adrianou.

To Kouti ★★ CONTEMPORARY GREEK To Kouti (The Box) stands head and shoulders above its neighboring restaurants near the Ancient Agora that seem to rely too much on their location. The place looks like children decorated it with bright-colored crayons—even the menu is handwritten in brightly illustrated children's books. Beyond decor, To Kouti is great for people-watching and has an unusual but very tasty menu: Try the beef in garlic and honey or the shrimp in carrots or opt for some of its exceptional vegetarian dishes. The homemade bread is served in (of course!) boxes.

23 Adrianou, Monastiraki. ✆ **210/321-3229.** Main courses 17€–30€ ($25–$44). AE, MC, V. Daily 1pm–1am.

Inexpensive

Diporto ★ GREEK This little place, sandwiched between olive shops, serves salads, stews, and delicious *revithia* (chickpeas) and *gigantes* (butter beans), both popular Greek winter dishes among stall owners, shoppers, and Athenians who make their way to the market for cheap and delicious food.

Central Market, Athinas. No phone. Main courses 4€–8€ ($5.80–$12). No credit cards. Mon–Sat 6am–6pm.

Papandreou ★ GREEK The butcher, the baker, and the office worker duck past the sides of beef hanging in the Meat Hall and head to this hole-in-the-wall for zesty tripe dishes. Don't like tripe? Don't worry: Their menu offers choices that don't involve it. Papandreou has a virtually all-male clientele, but a woman alone need not hesitate to eat here.

Central Market, Athinas. ✆ **210/321-4970.** Main courses 5€–8€ ($7.25–$12). No credit cards. Mon–Sat about 8am–5pm.

Taverna Sigalas ★ GREEK This longtime Plaka taverna, housed in a vintage 1879 commercial building with a newer outdoor pavilion, boasts that it has been run by the same family for a century and is open 365 days a year. Huge old retsina kegs stand piled against the back walls; dozens of black-and-white photos of Greek movie

Quick Bites in & around Syntagma

In general, Syntagma Square is not known for good food, but the area has a number of places where you can grab a quick snack. **Apollonion Bakery,** 10 Nikis, and **Elleniki Gonia,** 10 Karayioryi Servias, make sandwiches to order and sell croissants, both stuffed and plain. **Ariston** is a small chain of *zaharoplastia* (confectioners) with a branch at the corner of Karayioryi Servias and Voulis (just off Syntagma Sq.); it sells snacks as well as pastries.

For the quintessentially Greek *loukoumades* (round doughnut center–like pastries that are deep-fried, then drenched with honey, and topped with powdered sugar and cinnamon), try **Doris,** 30 Praxitelous, a continuation of Lekka, a few blocks from Syntagma Square. If you're still hungry, Doris serves hearty stews and pasta dishes for absurdly low prices Monday through Saturday until 3:30pm. If you're nearer Omonia Square when you feel the need for loukoumades or a soothing dish of rice pudding, try **Aigina** ★, 46 Panepistimiou. A short walk from Syntagma, the **Oraia Ellada (Beautiful Greece)** ★★ cafe at the Center of Hellenic Tradition, opening onto both 36 Pandrossou and 59 Mitropoleos near the flea market, has a spectacular view of the Acropolis. You can revive yourself here with a cappuccino and pastries.

stars are everywhere. After 8pm, Greek Muzak plays. At all hours, both Greeks and tourists wolf down large portions of stews, moussaka, grilled meatballs, baked tomatoes, and gyros, paired with the house red and white retsinas.

2 Plateia Monastiraki. ✆ **210/321-3036.** Main courses 6€–15€ ($9–$22). No credit cards. Daily 7am–2am. Sigalas is across Monastiraki Sq. from the Metro station.

Thanasis ★ GREEK/SOUVLAKI Thanasis serves terrific souvlaki and pita—and exceptionally good french fries—both to go and at its outdoor and indoor tables. As always, prices are higher if you sit down to eat. On weekends, it often takes the strength and determination of an Olympic athlete to get through the door and place an order here. It's worth the effort: This is both a great budget choice and a great place to take in the local scene, which often includes a fair sprinkling of Gypsies.

69 Mitropoleos (just off the northeast corner of Monastiraki Sq.). ✆ **210/324-4705.** Main courses 4€–10€ ($5.80–$15). No credit cards. Daily 9am–2am.

PSIRRI

EXPENSIVE

El Pecado ★★ SPANISH/LATIN AMERICAN "The Sin" came about from the unorthodox union of a medieval Spanish-style church and erotic murals inspired by Bible themes. Confused? Don't be. Follow the fun into the sinfully enjoyable bar-restaurant, enjoy the exceptional Spanish and South American cuisine (the honey-barbecued chicken, empanadas diegito, grilled vegetables, and chocolate soufflé are all excellent), and enjoy the fine wine and the utterly seductive scene. Soon enough you will most likely begin to feel the urge to dance to the outrageously sexy music ranging from flamenco and tango to techno. Only a sin could be this much fun. In summer the fun moves to the even more sinful branch on the island of Mykonos.

11 Tournavitou and Sarri, Psirri. ✆ **210/324-4049.** Main courses 40€–50€ ($58–$73). AE, MC, V. Oct–May Mon–Sat 10pm–3am.

NEAR SYNTAGMA SQUARE

Expensive

Aegli ★★ INTERNATIONAL Chic Athenian families head here, to the cool of the Zappeion Gardens, for the frequently changing menu of chef Jean-Louis Kapsalis. Some of his specialties have included foie gras, oysters, tenderloin with ginger and coffee sauce, profiteroles, fresh sorbets, strawberry soup, and delicious yogurt crème brûlée. Tables indoors or outdoors by the trees offer places to relax with coffee. In the evening, take in a movie at the open-air cinema here before dinner, or have a drink and a snack at one of the nearby cafes. In short, this is a wonderful spot to while away an afternoon or evening—and a definite destination for a special occasion.

Zappeion Gardens (adjacent to the National Gardens fronting Vas. Amalias Blvd.). ✆ **210/336-9363.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 40€–50€ ($58–$73). No credit cards. Daily 10am–midnight. Sometimes closed in Aug.

Inexpensive

Neon ★ *Value* GREEK/INTERNATIONAL You'll find lots of tourists at the mostly self-service Neon, as well as Athenians in a rush to get a bite. This centrally located member of the chain is very convenient, although not as pleasant as the original on Omonia Square. You're sure to find something to your taste—maybe a Mexican omelet, spaghetti Bolognese, the salad bar, or sweets ranging from Black Forest cake to tiramisu. The Neon in Kolonaki Square is a good spot for a cheap snack in pricy Kolonaki.

3 Mitropoleos (on the southwest corner of Syntagma Sq.). ✆ **210/322-8155.** Snacks 5€–8€ ($7.25–$12); sandwiches 5€–10€ ($7.25–$15); main courses 5€–15€ ($7.25–$22). No credit cards. Daily 9am–midnight.

IN KOLONAKI

Moderate

Filipou ★ TRADITIONAL GREEK This longtime Athenian favorite almost never disappoints. The traditional dishes such as stuffed cabbage, stuffed vine leaves, vegetable stews, and fresh salads are consistently good. In the heart of Kolonaki, this is a place to head when you want good home cooking in the company of the Greeks and resident expatriates who prize the food.

19 Xenokratous. ✆ **210/721-6390.** Main courses 6€–20€ ($8.70–$29). No credit cards. Mon–Fri 8:30pm–midnight; Sat lunch. Closed Sun. From Kolonaki Sq., take Patriarch Ioakim to Ploutarchou, turn left on Ploutarchou, and then turn right onto Xenokratous.

Rhodia ★ TRADITIONAL GREEK This respected taverna is located in a handsome old Kolonaki house. In good weather, tables are set up in its small garden—although the interior, with its tile floor and old prints, is equally charming. The Rhodia is a favorite of visiting archaeologists from the nearby British and American Schools of Classical Studies, as well as of Kolonaki residents. The octopus in mustard sauce is terrific, as are the veal and dolmades (stuffed grape leaves) in egg-lemon sauce. The house wine is excellent, as is the halva, which manages to be both creamy and crunchy.

44 Aristipou. ✆ **210/722-9883.** Main courses 8€–18€ ($12–$26). No credit cards. Mon–Sat 8pm–2am. From Kolonaki Sq., take Patriarkou Ioakim uphill to Loukianou; turn left on Loukianou, climb steeply uphill to Aristipou, and turn right.

To Kafeneio ★★ GREEK/INTERNATIONAL This is hardly a typical *kafeneio* (coffee shop/cafe). You can easily run up a substantial tab of 50€ ($73) for lunch or dinner for two, but you can also eat more modestly. If you have something light, like the artichokes *a la polita,* leeks in crème fraîche, or onion pie, washed down with draft

Rising Stars in the Psirri District

These days, it's hard to keep up with the cafes, bars, restaurants, and galleries opening in the increasingly fashionable Psirri district, between Ermou and Athinas. Only a few years ago this was a neighborhood largely noted for its derelict warehouses and tumbledown houses. You'll see lots of bare brick walls, minimalist decor, and lots of wannabe beautiful people here, especially after dark. Here are some suggestions on where to eat, drink, and take in the scene.

At **Taki 13,** 13 Taki (✆ **210/325-4707**), the food is less the thing than the bar, the music, and the stylish young Athenians who gather here. **Zeidoron,** 10 Taki and Ayios Anaryiron (✆ **210/321-5368**), is basically a *mezedopoleio* (hors d'oeuvres place), although it also serves entrees. The mezedes are also delicious at **To Krasopoulio tou Kokkora,** Karaiskaki and 4 Aisopou (✆ **210/321-1565**), where you can dine indoors or out. **Elihrison,** 6 Agion Anargiton (✆ **210/321-5220**), has classic Greek dishes in a lovingly restored 19th-century former Turkish justice hall; there's both a roof garden and a courtyard for outdoor dining. **Oineas,** 9 Aisopou (✆ **210/321-5614**), has an early crowd of tourists and an all-night crowd of locals, all of whom enjoy the wide range of mezedes (try the fried feta in light honey). **Bar Guru Bar,** 10 Plateia Theatrou (✆ **210/324-6530**), usually closed mid-July to mid-August, is a fine Thai restaurant that also offers an infectious good time as a bar/club. Upstairs hosts live jazz and downstairs is reserved for funky dance hits. Another restaurant/bar/club, The **Cubanita,** 28 Karaiskaki, (✆ **210/331-4605**), may close in July and August, but hands down offers one of the most fun

beer or the house wine, you can finish with profiteroles and not put too big a dent in your budget. I've always found this an especially congenial spot when I'm eating alone (perhaps because I love people-watching and profiteroles).

26 Loukianou. ✆ **210/722-9056.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 10€–25€ ($15–$36). No credit cards. Mon–Sat 11am–midnight or later. Closed Sun and most of Aug. From Kolonaki Sq., follow Patriarkou Ioakim several blocks uphill to Loukianou, and turn right.

To Ouzadiko ★★ GREEK/MEZEDES This lively ouzo bar in the rather grim Lermos Shopping Center offers at least 40 kinds of ouzo and as many mezedes, including fluffy *keftedes* (meatballs) that make all others taste leaden. To Ouzadiko is very popular with Athenians young and old (maybe too popular—service can be slow). A serious foodie friend of mine comes here especially for the wide variety of *horta* (greens), which she says are the best she's ever tasted.

25–29 Karneadou (in the Lemos International Shopping Center), Kolonaki. ✆ **210/729-5484.** Reservations recommended. Most mezedes and main courses 8€–20€ ($12–$29). No credit cards. Tues–Sat 1pm–12:30am. Closed Aug. From Kolonaki Sq. take Kapsali across Irodotou into Karneadou. The Lemos Center is on your left.

To Prytaneion ★ GREEK/INTERNATIONAL The trendy bare stone walls here are decorated with movie posters and illuminated by baby spotlights. Waiters serve customers tempting plates of some of Athens's most expensive and eclectic mezedes, including beef carpaccio, smoked salmon, bruschetta, and shrimp in fresh cream, as nights to be had in the city. At this place, Latin beats and excellent Cuban cuisine combine to make a great place to party until the early morning hours. On some nights there's live Cuban music. At **Soul Garden,** 65 Evripidou (✆ **210/331-0907**), the menu offers excellent Thai finger food and great Mohitos, served outdoors in the garden or inside at the bar. And if you want to watch a movie while you eat on a summer night, head for **Couzina Cine-Psyrri,** 40 Sarri (**210/321-5534**), which maintains Athens's long tradition of outdoor cinemas.

Many of Psirri's galleries stay open late, which means that you can eat and browse—or browse and eat. **Epistrofi,** 6–8 Taki (✆ **210/321-8640**), is worth a visit just to see the handsomely restored early-19th-century town house it occupies; it sometimes hosts concerts as well as art exhibitions. **Stigma,** 20–22 Agios Anargyros (✆ **210/322-1675**), features frequent shows of local artists as does **a.antonopoulou.art,** 20 Aristophanous (✆ **210/321-4994**).

When you tire of Psirri, you can strike out for neighboring **Gazi,** a once-desolate wasteland dominated by the gasworks, now another of Athens's newly chic districts. **Mamacas,** 41 Persephonous (✆ **210/346-4984**), an upmarket taverna that was one of the first of the new wave of restaurants here, is still one of the best; the spicy meatballs *(keftedakia)* take standard restaurant fare to a new and exuberant level! If it's sweet, not spicy you're after, head for **Prosopa,** 84 Konstantinoupoleos (✆ **210/341-3433**), famous for its "trio of death" complimentary dessert: cheesecake, chocolate brownie, and banana cream pie.

well as grilled veggies and that international favorite, the hamburger. This place is so drop-dead chic that it's a pleasant surprise to learn that it functioned as a neighborhood hangout during the earthquake of 1999 and the snowstorm that shut down Athens in 2001.

7 Milioni, Kolonaki. ✆ **01-364-3353.** Prytaniou@otenet.gr. Reservations recommended. Mezedes and snacks 8€–30€ ($12–$44). No credit cards. Mon–Sat 10am–3am. From Kolonaki Sq., head downhill a block or 2 until you hit Milioni on your right. To Prytaneion is on your left.

AROUND OMONIA SQUARE & THE NATIONAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM

MODERATE

Athinaikon ★★ GREEK/OUZERIE Not many tourists come to this favorite haunt of lawyers and businesspeople who work in the Omonia Square area. You can stick to appetizers or have a full meal. Appetizers include delicious *loukanika* (sausages) and *keftedes* (meatballs); pass up the more expensive grilled shrimp and the seafood paella. The adventurous can try *ameletita* (lamb's testicles). Whatever you have, you'll enjoy taking in the old photos on the walls, the handsome tiled floor, the marble-topped tables and bentwood chairs, and the regular customers, who combine serious eating with animated conversation.

2 Themistokleous. ✆ **210/383-8485.** Appetizers and main courses 5€–16€ ($7.25–$23). No credit cards. Mon–Sat 11am–midnight. Closed Sun and usually in Aug. From Omonia Sq., take Panepistimiou a block to Themistokleous; the Athinaikon is almost immediately on your right.

Ideal ★ GREEK TRADITIONAL The oldest restaurant in the heart of Athens, today's Ideal has an Art Deco decor and lots of old favorites, from egg-lemon soup to stuffed peppers; from pork with celery to lamb with spinach. Ideal is a favorite of businesspeople, and the service is usually brisk, especially at lunchtime. Not the place for a quiet rendezvous, but definitely the place for good, hearty Greek cooking.

46 Panepistimiou. ✆ **210/330-3000.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 8€–15€ ($12–$22). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat noon–midnight. From Omonia or Syntagma, take Panepistimiou (the Ideal is just outside Omonia Sq.).

Inexpensive

Taygetos ★ *Value* GREEK/SOUVLAKI This is a great place to stop for a quick meal on your way to/from the National Archaeological Museum. The service is swift and the souvlaki and fried potatoes are excellent, as are the chicken and the grilled lamb. The menu sometimes features delicious *kokoretsi* (grilled entrails).

4 Satovriandou. ✆ **210/523-5352.** Grilled lamb and chicken priced by the kilo. No credit cards. Mon–Sat 9am–1am. From Omonia Sq. take Patision toward National Museum; Satovriandou is 3rd major turn on your left.

NEAR THE ACROPOLIS (KOUKAKI & MAKRIGIANNI)

MODERATE

Strofi ★ GREEK The rooftop terrace here has a drop-dead view of the Acropolis and the Herodes Atticus theater. After performances, actors and members of the audience cross the street to Strofi to dine on grills, stews, good salads, and *horta* (greens). The cooking can be a bit rough-and-ready and the waiters a bit rushed, but the Acropolis view makes this place pretty irresistible.

25 Robertou Galli, Makriyianni (across from the Herodes Atticus theater). ✆ **210/921-4130.** Main courses 8€–20€ ($12–$29). DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat 8pm–1am. Closed Sun. From Syntagma Sq., take Amalias Ave. to pedestrianized Dionyssiou Areopagitou, walk away from Temple of Zeus on the side of Dionyssiou Areopagitou across from Acropolis, and turn left onto Mitseon and right onto Robertou Galli.

HERE & THERE

Expensive

48 The Restaurant ★★★ GREEK/INTERNATIONAL One of the most popular places with the in-crowd in Athens, this former art gallery has high ceilings and a big industrial space with fantastic design and lighting. The food here is exceptional—inspired dishes use traditional Greek ingredients in new ways. The menu changes daily according to the find of the day from the local markets. The wine list offers more than 500 labels from the owner's private vault in Paris. You'll probably want to take a cab, as 48 is not easily accessible on foot or by public transportation from central Athens.

Armatolon and 48 Klefton, Ambelokipi. ✆ **210/641-1082.** Main courses 26€–47€ ($38–$68). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat 9pm–1am.

The Park ★★ ELEGANT GREEK The most remarkable thing about this place is that it has managed to remain a secret from tourists for so long. Tucked inside the Eleftherias Park, adjacent to the Athens Music/Concert Hall, The Park is one of the city's more charming places. During the day it functions as a lovely cafe set among the shady plane trees. At night it evolves into a romantic restaurant (with an always exceptional menu that changes daily). The adjoining bar/lounge heats up after 10pm with great music and clientele.

Eleftherias Park, Vassiliss Sofias 11521. ✆ **210/722-3784.** Main courses 25€–35€ ($36–$51). AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Megaro Mousikis.

Spondi ★★★ INTERNATIONAL *Athinorama,* the weekly review of the Athenian scene, has chosen Spondi several years running as the best place in town. The menu features light dishes—the fresh fish, especially the salmon, is superb—as well as dishes that you will find either delightful or a bit cloying (roast pork with myzithra cheese and a fig-and-yogurt sauce). The setting, a handsome 19th-century town house with a courtyard, is lovely; the wine list, extensive; the service, excellent; and the desserts, divine. You'll probably want to take a cab here.

5 Pyrronos, Pangrati. ✆ **210/752-0658.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 30€–80€ ($44–$116). No credit cards. Mon–Sat 8pm–1am. Pyrronos runs between Empedokleous and Dikearchou, behind the Olympic Stadium.

Varoulko ★★★ INTERNATIONAL/SEAFOOD After years in an unlikely location on a Piraeus side street, chef-owner Lefteris Lazarou has moved into central Athens what many already considered the greater Athens area's finest seafood restaurant. I had one of the best meals of my life here—smoked eel; artichokes with fish roe; crayfish with sun-dried tomatoes; monkfish livers with soy sauce, honey, and balsamic vinegar—and the best sea bass and monkfish I have ever eaten. Sweetbreads, goat stew, and tripe soup have joined seafood on the menu—and you can't beat the view of the Acropolis.

80 Piraios, Athens. ✆ **210/522-8400.** www.varoulko.gr. Reservations required several days in advance. Dinner for 2 from about 120€ ($174); fish priced by the kilo. No credit cards. Mon–Sat about 8pm–midnight. Closed Sun. Metro: Kerameikos.

Moderate

Chez Lucien ★★ FRENCH Off pedestrian Apostolou Pavlou and tucked away in one of many of Thissio's charming side streets you will find this very good and very popular French bistro with a small but excellent menu. There are no reservations so be prepared to wait and even share a table if need be. It's definitely worth it.

32 Troon, Thissio. ✆ **210/346-4236.** Main courses 20€–25€ ($29–$36). No credit cards. Tues–Sat 8:30pm–1am.

Meson el Mirador ★★ MEXICAN Finally! After years of pseudo-Mexican fare, here's a place serving genuine Mexican food. The restaurant occupies a beautifully restored mansion by the Kerameikos, Athens's ancient cemetery, which has given the surrounding neighborhood its name. This place is open for lunch, so you can treat yourself to a great meal after visiting the Kerameikos's monuments and excellent museum. Top-notch enchiladas, quesadillas, and pork chops with beans, plus a vegetarian menu, excellent sangria, and margaritas blow the would-be competitors out of the water. In summer there is a beautiful roof terrace with Acropolis views.

88 Agisilaou, corner Salaminas, Kerameikos. ✆ **210-342-0007.** Main courses 20€–30€ ($29–$44). Mon–Sat noon–2am. MC, V. Metro: Thissio/Kerameikos.

Vlassis ★★★ TRADITIONAL GREEK Greeks call this kind of food *paradosiako* (traditional), but paradisiacal is just as good a description. This very reasonably priced food is fit for the gods: delicious fluffy vegetable croquettes, a unique eggplant salad, and hauntingly tender lamb in egg-lemon sauce. A discreet sign announces Vlassis's presence in a small apartment building on hard-to-find Paster.

8 Paster (off Plateia Mavili). ✆ **210/646-3060.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 13€–23€ ($19–$33). No credit cards. Mon–Sat 8pm–1am. Closed much of June–Sept. From Syntagma Sq., take Vas. Sophias Ave. to Plateia Mavili, and follow D. Tsoustou out of Plateia Mavili to Chatzikosta; Paster is the cul-de-sac on the left after you turn right onto Chatzikosta.

SEEING THE SIGHTS

SIGHTSEEING SUGGESTIONS FOR FIRST-TIME VISITORS

If You Have 1 Day Try to be at the **Acropolis** as soon as it opens (or in the hour before it closes) so that you can take in the site and enjoy seeing the **Parthenon** and the **Acropolis Museum** with as few people around as possible. Afterward, walk downhill to visit the **Ancient Agora** and then head into **Monastiraki** and the **Plaka,** where you can window-shop and relax over lunch. Then, take a deep, cleansing breath and head to the **National Archaeological Museum** before a siesta and a fashionably late dinner.

If You Have 2 Days If you didn't make it to the **National Archaeological Museum** on day 1, head there now. Again, try to arrive the minute it opens to beat the crowds; or choose the hours before it closes, when there are fewer visitors. Then, for a change of pace, head up **Mount Likavitos** on the funicular that leaves from the top of Ploutarchou Street (3€/$4.35), 10am to midnight, about every 20 minutes in summer. If the *nefos* (smog) isn't too bad, you'll have a wonderful view of Athens, Piraeus, and the Saronic Gulf. If you have an extra hour, stroll down one of the paths from the summit, enjoying the scent of pine trees and the changing views of the city.

If You Have 3 Days or More For the rest of your stay, visit more of the museums listed below, or consider a day trip to one of the great sights of antiquity, such as Delphi or **Sounion;** or a day excursion to **Corinth, Mycenae,** and **Epidaurus** (best done on a bus tour). If you don't want to go home without seeing one of the "isles of Greece," take a day trip by boat from Piraeus to one of the islands of the Saronic Gulf. **Aegina (Egina), Poros,** and **Hydra (Idra)** are all feasible day trips—but they are best not done the day before you leave Athens, lest bad weather strand you on an island.

THE TREASURES OF ANTIQUITY

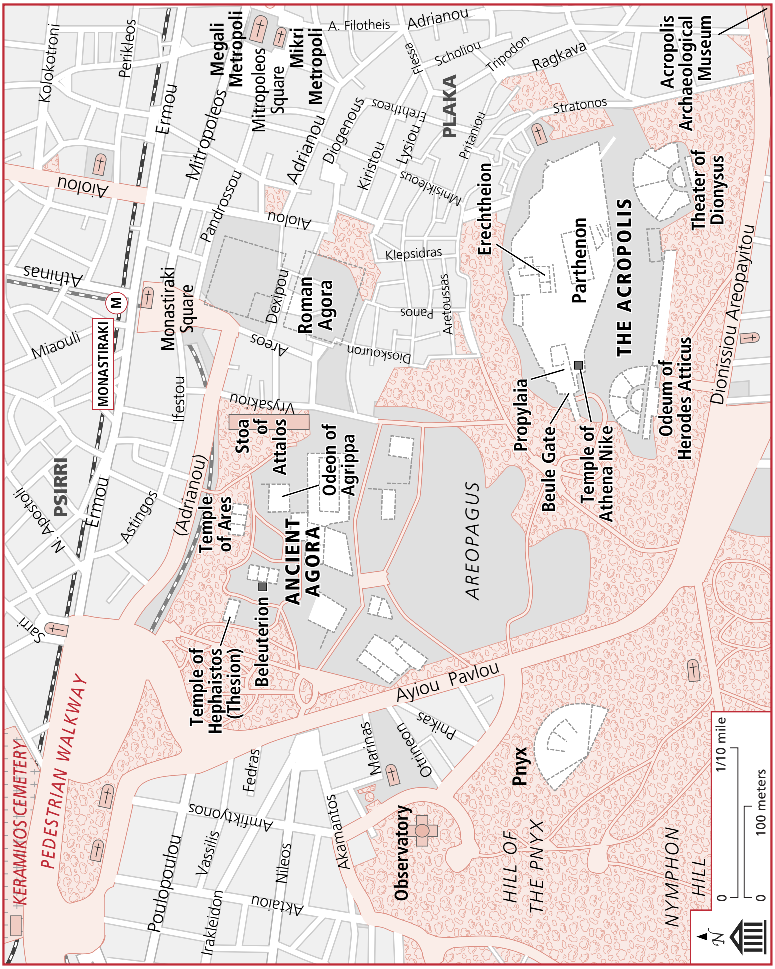
The Acropolis ★★★ ***Note:*** The monuments of the Acropolis underwent extensive renovation in honor of the 2004 Summer Olympics. At press time, these renovations had not yet been completed and it was unclear when work would be finished. The Temple of Nike, which had been entirely dismantled for restoration, had been only partially reerected. The Propylaia and Parthenon were still encased in scaffolding. What follows is an attempt to describe what you should see when the renovations are completed.

If you do climb up the Acropolis—the heights above the city—you'll realize why people seem to have lived here as long ago as 5000 B.C. The sheer sides of the Acropolis make it a superb natural defense, just the place to avoid enemies and to be able to see invaders coming across the sea or the plains of Attica. And, of course, it helped that in antiquity there was a spring here, ensuring a steady supply of water.

Tips **Museum Hours Update**

If you visit Greece during the summer, check to see when sites and museums are open. According to the tourist office, most important places should be open from 8am to 7:30pm in summer and 8:30am to 3 or 5pm in winter, but some may close earlier in the day or even be closed 1 day a week.

The Acropolis & Ancient Agora


THE ACROPOLIS
Parthenon
Erechtheion
Propylaia
Beule Gate
Temple of Athena Nike
Odeum of Herodes Atticus
Theater of Dionysus
Acropolis Archaeological Museum
ANCIENT AGORA
Stoa of Attalos
Odeon of Agrippa
Temple of Ares
Beleuterion
Temple of Hephaistos (Thesion)
Roman Agora
AREOPAGUS
PLAKA
PSIRRI
Monastiraki Square
MONASTIRAKI
M
Mitropoleos Square
Megali Metropoli
Mikri Metropoli
Pnyx
HILL OF THE PNYX
NYMPHON HILL
Observatory
KERAMIKOS CEMETERY
PEDESTRIAN WALKWAY
Kolokotroni
Perikleos
Ermou
Mitropoleos
Aiolou
Athinas
Miaouli
Pandrossou
Adrianou
Diogenous
A. Filotheis
Adrianou
Flessa
Scholiou
Tripodon
Ragkava
Stratonos
Erechtheos
Lysiou
Kiristou
Mnisikleous
Pritaniou
Klepsidras
Dexipou
Areos
Panos
Aretoussas
Dioskouron
Vrysakiou
Ifestou
(Adrianou)
Astingos
N. Apostoli
Sarri
Dionissiou Areopayitou
Ayiou Pavlou
Pnikas
Otrineon
Marinas
Fedras
Amfiktyonos
Akamantos
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In classical times, when Athens's population had grown to around 250,000, people lived on the slopes below the Acropolis, which had become the city's most important religious center. Athens's civic and business center, the Agora, and its cultural center, with several theaters and concert halls, bracketed the Acropolis; when you peer over the sides of the Acropolis at the houses in the Plaka and the remains of the ancient **Agora** and the **Theater of Dionysos,** you'll see the layout of the ancient city. Syntagma and Omonia squares, the heart of today's Athens, were well out of the ancient city center.

Even the Acropolis's height couldn't protect it from the Persian invasion of 480 B.C., when most of its monuments were burned and destroyed. You may notice some immense column drums built into the Acropolis's walls. When the great Athenian statesman Pericles ordered the monuments rebuilt, he had the drums from the

Tips Ticket Prices & Free Museum & Site Guides

The prices listed in this guide are based on the prices available at press time and "guesstimates" off forthcoming changes offered by some museums. As if that is not sufficiently confusing, keep in mind that virtually all the major attractions plan to raise their admission fees "soon." Because there is—surprise!—no fixed policy on cheaper tickets for students and seniors, be sure to ask about a discounted ticket if you are a senior or a student. Keep in mind that many discounts are valid only for Common Market citizens. The currently priced 12€ ($17) ticket that admits you to the Acropolis, Acropolis Museum, Ancient Agora, Theater of Dionysos, Karameikos Cemetery, Roman Forum, Tower of the Winds and Temple of Olympian Zeus, is one of the best buys in town (most individual admissions are 4€–6€/$5.80–$8.70). The ticket is usually available at the Acropolis. Also, ask for the handy free information brochure available at most sites and museums; ticket sellers do not always hand it over unless reminded.

destroyed Parthenon built into the walls lest Athenians forget what had happened—and so they would remember that they had rebuilt what they had lost. Pericles' rebuilding program began about 448 B.C.; the new Parthenon was dedicated 10 years later, but work on other monuments continued for a century.

The **Parthenon** ★★★—dedicated to Athena Parthenos (the Virgin), patron goddess of Athens—was the most important religious monument, but there were shrines to many other gods and goddesses on the Acropolis's broad summit. As you climb up, you pass through first the **Beule Gate,** built by the Romans and now known by the name of the French archaeologist who discovered it in 1852. Next comes the **Propylaia** ★, the monumental 5th-century-B.C. entryway. You'll notice the little **Temple of Athena Nike (Athena of Victory)** ★ perched above the Propylaia; the beautifully proportioned Ionic temple was built in 424 B.C. Off to the left of the Parthenon is the **Erechtheion** ★★, which the Athenians honored as the tomb of Erechtheus, a legendary king of Athens. A hole in the ceiling and floor of the northern porch indicates the spot where Poseidon's trident struck to make a spring (symbolizing control of the sea) gush forth during his contest with Athena to be the city's chief deity. Athena countered with an olive tree (symbolizing control of the rich Attic plain); the olive tree planted beside the Erechtheion reminds visitors of her victory. Give yourself a little time to enjoy the delicate carving on the Erechtheion, and be sure to see the original **caryatids** (the monumental female figures who served as columns on the Erechtheion's porch) in the Acropolis Museum.

However charmed you are by these elegant little temples, you're probably still heading resolutely toward the **Parthenon,** and you may be disappointed to realize that visitors are not allowed inside, both to protect the monument and to allow any ongoing restoration work to proceed safely. If you find this frustrating, keep in mind that in antiquity only priests and honored visitors were allowed in to see the monumental 11m (36-ft.) statue of Athena designed by the great Phidias, who supervised Pericles' building program. Nothing of the huge gold-and-ivory statue remains, but there's a small Roman copy in the National Archaeological Museum—and horrific renditions on souvenirs ranging from T-shirts to ouzo bottles.

The Parthenon's entire roof and much of the interior were blown to smithereens in 1687, when a party of Venetians attempted to take the Acropolis from the Turks. A shell fired from nearby Mouseion Hill struck the Parthenon—where the Turks were storing gunpowder and munitions—and caused appalling damage to the building and its sculptures. Most of the remaining sculptures were carted off to London by Lord Elgin in the first decade of the 19th century. Those surviving sculptures—known to much of the world as **Elgin Marbles,** but known here as the **Parthenon Marbles**—are on display in the British Museum, causing ongoing pain to generations of Greeks. Greece has undercut the British Museum's protests that Athens has no safe and suitable place to display the marbles by building the 130€-million new Acropolis Museum to house the marbles and the contents of the original Acropolis Archaeological Museum (see below).

The Parthenon originally had sculpture in both its pediments, as well as a frieze running around the entire temple. Alternating **triglyphs** (panels with three incised grooves) and **metopes** (sculptured panels) made up the frieze. The message of most of this sculpture was the triumph of knowledge and civilization (read: Athens) over the forces of darkness and barbarians. An interior frieze showed scenes from the Panathenaic Festival each August, when citizens walked in procession through the streets, bringing a new *peplos* (tunic) for the statue of Athena. Only a few fragments of any of the sculptures remain in place, and every visitor will have to decide whether it's a good or a bad thing that Lord Elgin removed so much before the smog spread over Athens and ate away at the remaining sculpture.

If you're lucky enough to visit the Acropolis on a smog-free and sunny day, you'll see the golden and cream tones of the Parthenon's handsome Pentelic marble at their most subtle. It may come as something of a shock to realize that the Parthenon, like most other monuments here, was painted in antiquity, with bright colors that have since faded, revealing the tones of the marble.

The contents of the original Acropolis Archaeological Museum have been transferred to the **new Acropolis Archaeological Museum** ★★ on Dionisiou Aeropagitou, at the foot of the Acropolis, scheduled to open in 2008, with or without the Parthenon Marbles. Displays will include the four original caryatids from the Erechtheion that are still in Athens (one disappeared during the Ottoman occupation, and one is in the British Museum). Other delights here include sculpture from the original Parthenon burned by the Persians, statues of ***korai*** (maidens) dedicated to Athena, figures of ***kouroi*** (young men), and a wide range of finds from the Acropolis not previously on display.

You'll probably want to spend half a day on the Acropolis.

Dionyssiou Areopagitou. ✆ **210/321-0219.** Admission 12€ ($17) adults. Free admission on Sun. This ticket, valid for 1 week, includes admission to the Acropolis, Acropolis Museum, Ancient Agora, Theater of Dionysos, Karameikos Cemetery, Roman Forum, Tower of the Winds, and Temple of Olympian Zeus. The Acropolis is usually open summer daily 8am–7pm; winter daily 8:30am–3pm. The Acropolis Museum usually closes at least half an hour earlier than the Acropolis. From Syntagma Sq., take Amalias Ave. into pedestrianized Dionyssiou Areopagitou, and follow the marble path up to the Acropolis. The ticket booth, along with a small post office and a snack bar, are slightly below the Acropolis entrance. Metro: Acropolis.

Ancient Agora ★★ The Agora was Athens's commercial and civic center, with buildings used for a wide range of political, educational, philosophical, theatrical, and athletic purposes—which may be why what remains seems such a jumble. This is a nice place to wander and enjoy the views up toward the Acropolis; take in the herb garden and flowers planted around the 5th-century-B.C. **Theseion (Temple of Hephaistos);** peek into the heavily restored 11th-century church of **Ayii Apostoli (Holy Apostles);** and get a sense of what an entire ancient civic building looked like from the 2nd-century-B.C. **Stoa of Attalos,** totally reconstructed in the 1950s.

The museum in the Stoa's ground floor has finds from 5,000 years of Athenian history, including sculpture and pottery, as well as a voting machine and a child's potty seat, all with labels in English. The museum (which, by the way, has excellent toilet facilities) closes 15 minutes before the site.

You'll want to spend at least 2 hours here.

Below the Acropolis on the edge of Monastiraki (entrance on Adrianou, near Ayiou Philippou Sq., east of Monastiraki Sq. and on Ay. Apostoli, the road leading down into Plaka from the Acropolis). ✆ **210/321-0185.** Admission (includes museum) 6€ ($8.70), or free with purchase of 12€ ($17) Acropolis ticket. The Agora is usually open summer daily 8am–7pm; winter daily 8:30am–3pm. Metro: Monastiraki.

Cemetery of Kerameikos ★ This ancient cemetery, where **Pericles** gave his famous funeral oration during the Peloponnesian War, is a short walk from the Ancient Agora and not far from the presumed site of **Plato's Academy.** There are a number of well-preserved funerary monuments and the remains of the colossal **Dipylon Gate,** the main entrance to the ancient city of Athens. In 2002, the well-preserved marble figure of a *kouros* (youth) was found in excavations here, a hint of what treasures remain to be found. For now, you can see the substantial remains of the 5th-century-B.C. fortifications known as the "Long Walls" that ran from Athens to Piraeus. The Kerameikos is seldom crowded, which makes it a pleasant spot to sit and read. The excellent Meson el Mirador Mexican restaurant is nearby (see above, "Where to Dine"). If you like cemeteries, be sure to take in Athens's enormous **First Cemetery,** near the Athens Stadium, where notables such as former prime minister George Panandreou are buried beneath elaborate monuments. Both cemeteries are pleasant spots in which to spend a few hours.

148 Ermou. ✆ **210/346-3553.** Admission 4€ ($5.80), or free with purchase of 12€ ($17) Acropolis ticket. Summer Tues–Sun 8:30am–6pm; winter Tues–Sun 8:30am–3pm. Walk west from Monastiraki Sq. on Ermou past Thisio Metro station; cemetery is on the right. Metro: Monastiraki or Thisio.

THE TOP MUSEUMS

The National Archaeological Museum ★★★ This is an enormous and enormously popular museum; try to arrive as soon as it opens (or the hour before it closes) so that you can see the exhibits and not just the other visitors' backs. Be sure to ask for the free pamphlet with a handy map of the galleries when you buy your ticket. The collection includes objects from the Neolithic to the Roman eras. Don't miss the stunning gold masks, cups, dishes, and jewelry unearthed from the site of Mycenae by Heinrich Schliemann in 1876; the elegant marble Cycladic figurines (ca. 2000 B.C.); and the famous marble and bronze statues. The museum—often listed as one of the ten most important in the entire world—was largely closed during renovations from 2002 to 2005. Now, almost all the galleries have reopened, including the superb collection of Greek vases on the second floor. In addition, several of the restored 3500 B.C. frescoes from the site of Akrotiri on the island of Santorini (Thira) are again on view on the second floor, while others are intended to be displayed on the island of Santorini itself. The museum shop has reproductions and books on aspects of the collection. You'll probably want to spend a minimum of 3 hours here—and wish you'd spent more.

Tips Online Museum Updates

Information on most Greek museums and archaeological sites—and updates on any price hikes—should be available on www.athensinfoguide.com and www.culture.gr.

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44 Patission. ✆ **210/821-7717.** Admission 6€ ($8.70) or 12€($17) with Acropolis entrance. Mon 12:30–5pm; Tues–Fri 8am–6pm; Sat–Sun and holidays 8:30am–3pm. Sometimes open until 7pm in summer. From Omonia Sq., walk about .5km (⅓ mile) or a brisk 10 min. north on the road officially named 28 Oktovriou (October 28) Ave. but usually called Patission. Metro: Omonia or Viktoria.

N. P. Goulandris Foundation Museum of Cycladic Art ★★★ This handsome museum houses the largest collection of Cycladic art outside the National Archaeological Museum. See if you agree with those who have compared the faces of the Cycladic figurines to the works of the Italian painter Modigliani. Be sure to go through the courtyard into the museum's newest acquisition: an elegant 19th-century Stathatos Mansion. The mansion, which is used for special exhibits, has some of its original furnishings and provides a glimpse of how wealthy Athenians lived a hundred years ago. The museum shop has a wide variety of books and reproductions—and an all too often unhelpful staff. You'll want to spend at least 3 hours here; be sure to take a break in the garden cafe.

4 Neophytou Douka. ✆ **210/722-8321.** www.cycladic-m.gr. Admission 4€ ($5.80). Mon and Wed–Fri 10am–4pm; Sat 10am–3pm. From Syntagma Sq., walk 7 blocks east along Vasilissis Sofias Ave., and then ½ block north on Neophytou Douka. Metro: Syntagma.

Benaki Museum ★★★ This stunning private collection includes treasures from the Neolithic era to the 20th century. The folk-art collection (including magnificent costumes and icons) is superb, as are the two entire rooms from 18th-century northern Greek mansions, ancient Greek bronzes, gold cups, Fayum portraits, and rare early Christian textiles. A new wing doubles the exhibition space of the original 20th-century neoclassical town house that belonged to the wealthy Benaki family. The museum shop is excellent, and new galleries have special exhibitions. Dine with a spectacular view over Athens at the excellent rooftop cafe, which offers a buffet supper (40€/$58) Thursday evenings, when the museum remains open until midnight. This is a very pleasant place to spend several hours—or days.

Koumbari 1 (at Leoforos Vasilissis Sofias, Kolonaki, 5 blocks east of Syntagma Sq.). ✆ **210/367-1000.** www.benaki.gr. Admission 6€ ($8.70); free admission on Thurs. Mon, Wed, and Fri–Sat 9am–5pm; Thurs 9am–midnight; Sun 9am–3pm. Closed Tues. Metro: Syntagma or Evangelismos.

Byzantine and Christian Museum ★★ As its name makes clear, this museum, with two large new galleries flanking a 19th-century Florentine-style villa, is devoted to the art and history of the Byzantine era (roughly 4th–15th c. A.D.). If you love icons (paintings, usually of saints, usually on wood) or want to find out about them, this is the place to go. Exhibits include selections from Greece's most important collection of icons and religious art—along with sculptures, altars, mosaics, religious vestments, Bibles, and a small-scale reconstruction of an early Christian basilica. Allow at least an hour for your visit; two if a special exhibit is featured. And three is even better. The small museum shop sells books, CDs of Byzantine music, and icon reproductions.

22 Vasilissis Sofias Ave. ✆ **210/723-1570** or 210/721-1027. Admission 4€ ($5.80). Tues–Sun 8:30am–3pm. From Syntagma Sq., walk along Queen Sophias about 15 min. Museum is on your right. If you get to the Hilton Hotel, you've gone too far. Metro: Syntagma or Evangelismos.

Greek Folk Art Museum ★★ *Kids* This endearing small museum has dazzling embroideries and costumes, carved wooden furniture and tools, and ceramic and copper utensils from all over the country, plus a small room with zany frescoes of gods and heroes done by eccentric artist Theofilos Hadjimichael, who painted in the early part of the 20th century. Lots of Greek schoolchildren visit here, and sometimes puppet shows are offered. We stop by here every time we're in Athens, always finding something new, always looking forward to our next visit—and always glad we weren't born Greek women 100 years ago, when we would have spent endless hours embroidering, crocheting, and weaving. Much of what is on display was made by young women for their *proikas* (dowries) in the days when a bride was supposed to arrive at the altar with enough embroidered linen, rugs, and blankets to last a lifetime. This is a great museum for repeated leisurely visits. The museum shop is small but good.

17 Kidathineon, Plaka. ✆ **210/322-9031.** Admission 2€ ($2.90). Tues–Sun 10am–2pm. From Syntagma, take Filellinon to Kidathineon.

Ilias Lalaounis Jewelry Museum ★★ The 3,000 pieces on display here are so spectacular that even those who don't care about jewelry will enjoy this small, sparkling museum, founded by one of Greece's most successful jewelry designers. Jewelry displayed includes pieces inspired by ancient, Byzantine, and Cycladic designs, as well as by flora and fauna. The museum also has frequent special exhibits, a cafe, a seductive boutique, and a small workshop. The jewelers in the shop can reproduce pieces in the museum, something to keep in mind if you want your own gold necklace inspired by insect vertebrae. Many of the exhibits here are small and detailed, so you may want to spend several hours here, with a break at the cafe.

12 Kalisperi (at Karyatidon). ✆ **210/922-1044.** www.lalaounis-jewelrymuseum.gr. Admission 4€ ($5.80). Mon and Thurs–Sat 9am–4pm; Wed 9am–9pm (free after 3pm); Sun 10am–4pm. Walk 1 block south of the Acropolis between Theater of Dionysos and Odeum of Herodes Atticus.

Jewish Museum ★★ Greece's Jewish community, a strong presence throughout the country and a dominant force in Thessaloniki, was essentially obliterated in the Holocaust. Perhaps the most impressive exhibit is the handsome reconstruction of the Patras synagogue. Articles of daily life and religious ceremony include children's toys and special Passover china. Most exhibits have English labels. If you contact museum curator Zanet Battinou in advance of your visit, she will try to have a staff member take you through the collection. The small shop carries books and museum reproductions, including lovely note cards reproducing manuscripts and prints.

39 Nikis (on the left side of Nikis as you walk away from Syntagma Sq.). ✆ **210/322-5582.** Fax 210/323-1577. www.jewishmuseum.gr. Admission 3€ ($4.35). Mon–Fri 9am–2:30pm; Sun 10am–2pm. Metro: Syntagma.

Museum of Popular Greek Musical Instruments ★★ Photographs show the musicians, while recordings let you listen to the tambourines, Cretan lyres, lutes, pottery drums, and clarinets on display. In addition, this museum is just steps from the excellent Platanos taverna, so you can alternate the pleasures of food, drink, and music. On a recent visit, an elderly Greek gentleman listened to some music, transcribed it, stepped out into the courtyard, and played it on his own violin! The shop has a wide selection of CDs and cassettes, the garden has resident tortoises, and the

Athens's New Museums

In the last few years, a number of new and wonderful museums have opened in Athens. The most impressive is **Benaki Museum of Islamic Art.** The stunning collection, housed in a 19th-century town house, displays Islamic art (ceramics, carpets, woodcarvings, and other objects) that date from the 14th century to the present. Labels are in Greek and English. There's a terrific roof top café with another one of those wrap-around views that Athens does so well (at Agio Asomaton and Dipylou, Psirri; ✆ **210/367-1000;** www.benaki.gr; admission 6€/$8.70; Metro: Monastiraki).

A block away, **The Museum of Traditional Pottery** has a wide-ranging display of traditional and contemporary Greek pottery, labeled in Greek and English (at 4–6 Melidoni, Kerameikos; ✆ **210/331-8491**).

In nearby Plaka, **Frissiras Museum** has innovative and excellent special exhibits as well as a permanent collection of 20th-century and later European art, with labels in English (at 3–7 Moni Asteriou; ✆ **210/323-4678;** admission 6€/$8.70; Metro: Akropolis).

Pierides Museum of Ancient Cypriot Art does just what it says: It records the art and politics of Cyprus (at 34–35 Kastorias, Votanikos; ✆ **210/348-0000;** www.athinais.com.gr; free admission).

The stunning **Benaki Museum-Pireos Street Annexe,** 138 Pireos and Andronikou (✆ **210/345-3111;** www.benaki.gr), stages exhibitions as does the huge multipurpose **Technopolis,** 100 Pireos (✆ **210/346-0981;** www.culture.gr).

Finally, the **National Museum of Contemporary Art** was set to open in its new Syngrou-Fix location in 2008 in what appears to be yet another brilliant industrial-to-art conversion.

wonderful Platanos restaurant (see "Where to Dine," earlier in this chapter) is just steps away. The museum sometimes hosts evening concerts; ask what's scheduled when you visit.

1–3 Dioyenous (around the corner from the Tower of the Winds). ✆ **01-325-0198.** Free admission. Tues and Thurs–Sun 10am–2pm; Wed noon–6pm. Metro: Acropolis or Monastiraki.

GALLERIES

One of the great (usually free) pleasures of visiting Athens is browsing in its small art galleries. Occasionally a gallery will have an admission fee for a special exhibit, but usually there is no charge. This is a wonderful way to get a sense of the contemporary Greek art scene and possibly buy something to take home. A good way to check on what's on is to pick up a free copy of the quarterlies ***Art and the City*** and ***The Athens Contemporary Art Map.*** Both are free, bilingual in Greek and English, and usually available in hotels in galleries. In case you do not immediately find a copy of either quarterly, here are some galleries to keep an eye out for in central Athens. The **Epistrofi Gallery,** 6 Taki (✆ **210/321-8640**) in trendy **Psirri,** has occasional concerts as well as shows; the **Epikentro Gallery,** 10 Armodiou (✆ **210/331-2187**), stages frequent exhibits in its improbable location in the Athens Central Market; the **Rebecca Kamhi Gallery,** Sophokleous 23 (✆ **210/321-0448**), not far from the Central Market, is one of Athens's best-known galleries; in August, it's open by appointment only. **Bernier/Eliades Gallery,** 11 Eptachalkou, Theseion (✆ **210/341-3935**), stages group exhibitions, as does **Kappatos,** Agias Irenes 6 (✆ **210/321-7931**). There are also frequent shows at the **Melina Mercouri Cultural Center,** Iraklidon and Thessalonikis 66 (✆ **210/345-2150**), not far from the Theseion and at the **Melina Mercouri Foundation,** Polygnotou 9–11 (✆ **210/331-5601**), in the Plaka. The fashionable Kolonaki district is chockablock with galleries: the **Athens Art Center,** 4 Glyconos, Dexameni (✆ **210/721-3938**); **Photohoros,** Tsakalof 44 (✆ **210/321-0448**); and **Medussa,** Xenokratous 7 (✆ **210/724-4552**), are three to look for. The **Athens Arts and Technology School** (✆ **210/381-3700**) usually stages shows around Athens in July and August when many galleries close or move out of town. One just-out-of-town suburban gallery that's open year-round and well worth a visit (in part for its great cafe and shop) is the **Deste Foundation for Contemporary Art,** Omirou 8, Nea Psychico (✆ **210/672-9460;** www.deste.gr), a 20-minute cab ride from Syntagma.

ORGANIZED TOURS

The best-known Athens-based tour groups are **CHAT Tours,** 4 Stadiou (✆ **210/322-3137** or 210/322-3886); and **Key Tours,** 4 Kalliroïs (✆ **210/923-3166;** www.keytours.gr). Each offers half- and full-day tours of the city, "Athens by Night" tours, and day excursions from Athens. Expect to pay about 50€ ($73) for a half-day tour, 80€ ($116) for a full-day tour, and around 100€ ($145) for "Athens by Night" (including dinner and sometimes a folk-dance performance at the Dora Stratou Theater). To take any of these tours, you must book and pay in advance. At that time, you will be told when you will be picked up at your hotel, or where you should meet the tour.

Each company also offers excursions from Athens. A visit to the very popular **Temple of Poseidon at Sounion** costs about 60€ ($87) for a half-day trip, including swimming and a meal. A trip to **Delphi** usually costs about 110€ ($160) for a full day, which often includes stops at the Monastery of Osios Loukas and Arachova village. If you want to spend the night in Delphi (included are hotel, site, and museum admissions, as well as dinner, breakfast, and sometimes lunch), the price goes up 50€ ($73) to 160€ ($232). Rates for excursions to the **Peloponnese,** taking in Corinth, Mycenae, and Epidaurus, are similar to those for Delphi. If your time in Greece is limited, you may find one of these day trips considerably less stressful than renting a car for the day and driving yourself.

A handy new **Sightseeing Bus** (✆ **185;** www.oasa.gr; 5€/$7.25) with a tour guide leaves every half hour from the National Archaeological Museum from 7am to 9pm in summer and ends up about 90 minutes later at the National Archaeological Museum. In between, the bus stops at the Acropolis, Temple of Zeus, Plaka, Syntagma-Parliament, the university, Omonia Square, Kerameikos, Monastiraki, Psirri, Thission, the Benaki Museum, the National Gallery, the Central Market and the Panathenaiko Stadium. This is a hop-on, hop-off bus so you can get off at any site you choose and catch the next bus to your next destination. Tickets can only be purchased from the bus driver and are valid for 24 hours. The service runs during summer months and may become year-round.

If you want to hire a private guide, speak to the concierge at your hotel, or contact the **Association of Official Guides,** 9a Apollonas (✆ **210/322-9705**). Expect to pay from 100€ ($145) for a 5-hour tour.

THE SHOPPING SCENE

You may find a copy of the monthly magazines ***Athens Today*** and ***Now in Athens,*** both of which have a shopping section, in your hotel room. ***Note:*** Keep in mind that most of the restaurants and shops featured pay for the privilege. This is not true of places featured in the excellent English-language magazine ***Odyssey.***

You're in luck shopping in Athens, because almost everything you'll probably want to buy can be found in the central city, bounded by Omonia, Syntagma, and Monastiraki squares. This is where you'll find most of the shops frequented by Athenians, including a number of large **department stores.**

Monastiraki has its famous **flea market,** which is especially lively on Sundays. Although it has a vast amount of ticky-tacky stuff for sale here, it also has some real finds, including retro clothes and old copper. Many Athenians furnishing new homes head here to try to pick up old treasures.

The **Plaka** has pretty much cornered the market on souvenir shops, with enough T-shirts, reproductions of antiquities (including obscene playing cards, drink coasters, and more), fishermen's sweaters (increasingly made in the Far East), and jewelry (often not real gold) to circle the globe.

In the Plaka-Monastiraki area, several shops worth seeking out amid the endlessly repetitive souvenir shops include **Stavros Melissinos,** the Poet-Sandalmaker of Athens, relocated after 50 years on Pandrossou to his new location at 12 Agias Theklas (☎ **210/321-9247**); **Iphanta,** the weaving workshop, 6 Selleu (☎ **210/322-3628**); **Emanuel Masmanidis' Gold Rose Jewelry Shop,** 85 Pandrossou (☎ **210/321-5662**); the **Center of Hellenic Tradition,** 59 Mitropoleos and 36 Pandrossou (☎ **210/321-3023**), which sells arts and crafts; and the **National Welfare Organization,** on Amalias Boulevard (☎ **210/325-0524**), where a portion of the proceeds from everything sold (including handsome woven and embroidered carpets) goes to the National Welfare Organization, which encourages traditional crafts.

Kolonaki, up on the slopes of Mount Likavitos, is boutique heaven—but it's a better place to window-shop than to buy, since much of what you see is imported and heavily taxed. If you're here during the January or August sales, you may find some bargains. If not, it's still a lot of fun to work your way up pedestrian Voukourestiou along Tsakalof and Anagnostopoulou (with perhaps the most expensive boutiques in Athens) before collapsing at a cafe on one of the pedestrian shopping streets (Milioni is a good choice) in Kolonaki Square. Then you can engage in the other really serious business of Kolonaki: people-watching. Give yourself about 15 minutes to discern the season's must-have accessory. If you want to make a small, traditional purchase, have a look at the "worry beads" at **Kombologadiko,** 6 Koumbari (☎ **210/362-4267**); or check out charms that ward off the evil eye at **To Fylakto Mou,** 20 Solonos (☎ **210/364-7610**).

Pedestrianized Ermou Street is the prime shopping district in the city with more stores than you will ever have the time to visit, but if you want to do all your shopping in one take and not walk around outdoors, check out some of the 300 shops on the eight floors of the **Atttica** department store in the CityLink Building at 9 Panepistimiou (☎ **210/180-2500**). If you're not in the mood to shop, you'll still be wowed by the window displays.

ATHENS AFTER DARK

Greeks enjoy their nightlife so much that they take an afternoon nap to rest up for it. The evening often begins with a leisurely *volta* (stroll); you'll see it in most neighborhoods, including the Plaka and Kolonaki Square. Most Greeks don't think of dinner until at least 10pm. Around midnight the party may move on to a club—often out of central Athens—for the start of an evening of music and dancing. Feel free to try places on your own, although you may feel like the odd man out because Greeks seldom go anywhere alone. If you're a woman on your own and want to be left alone, you'll probably find hitting the bars and dance clubs uncongenial.

Ask the concierge or desk clerk at your hotel for nightlife recommendations. The listings in the weekly *Athinorama* (Greek) or in publications such as the English-language *Athens News,* the *Kathimerini* insert in the *Herald Tribune,* and hotel handouts such as *Best of Athens* and *Welcome to Athens* can also be very helpful.

Wherever you go, you're likely to face a cover charge of at least 20€ ($29). Thereafter, each drink will probably cost between 15€ and 20€ ($22–$29). Many clubs plop a bottle on your table that's labeled (but doesn't necessarily contain) Johnny Walker Red or Black, and then they try very hard to charge you at least 100€ ($145) whether you drink it or not.

If you hear music you like when you're out on the town, **Metropolis** (✆ **210/380-8549**) in Omonia Square has a wide choice of CDs and tapes of Greek music. **Polis,** 7 Pezmatzoglou (✆ **210/324-9587**), a short ride from Syntagma Square, is usually open from midmorning to well after midnight, offering everything from recorded classical to live jazz and pop (both Greek and American). Since it's open most of the day, Polis draws regulars who hang out to read the newspaper, write letters, and of course, talk on cellphones.

FESTIVALS

New festivals spring up every year in Athens and throughout Greece. You may want to check with the Greek National Tourism Organization to see what's new at your destination. Additional information on the festivals below is available at www.hellenicfestival.gr, www.athensinfoguide.com, and www.greektourism.com.

Hellenic Festival ★★★ Early June through September, the Hellenic Festival (also known as the **Athens** or **Greek Festival**) features famous Greek and foreign artists from Elton John to Placido Domingo performing on the slopes of the Acropolis. You may catch an opera, concert, drama, or ballet here—and see the Acropolis illuminated over your shoulder at the same time. Schedules and advance tickets are usually available at the **Hellenic Festival Office,** 39 Panepistimiou (in the arcade; ✆ **210/928-2900**). You will have better luck if you come here in person rather than try to reach the office by phone. If available—and that's a big "if"—tickets can be purchased at the Odeion of Herodes Atticus (✆ **210/323-2771** or 210/323-5582) several hours before the performance. Again, you will have better luck going to the ticket office than phoning, although if your hotel has a concierge, he or she may be able to obtain tickets (15€–50€/$22–$73) over the phone. Shows usually begin at 9pm.

Epidaurus Festival ★★★ From late June to late August, performances of ancient Greek tragedies and comedies (usually given in modern Greek translations) take place at Epidaurus, in Greece's most beautiful ancient theater. You can purchase bus service along with your ticket (about 2 hr. each way). Contact the **Greek National Tourism Organization,** the **Hellenic Festival Office** (see above), or the **Rex Theater** box

Tips Open in August

A great many popular after-dark spots close in August, when much of Athens flees the summer heat to the country. Some places that stay open include a number of bars, cafes, ouzeries, sweet shops and tavernas on the pedestrian **Iraklion Walkway** at Thissio (Theseion). **Stavlos,** 10 Iraklidon (✆ **210/346-7206**), the restaurant, bar, and disco popular with all ages, remains open on August weekends. **Athinaion Politeia** (a cafe/bar/restaurant), 30 Apostolou Pavlou and 1 Akamanthos (✆ **210/341-3794**), has a great location with uninterrupted views of the Acropolis and passersby. And remember, some of the best lounges/bars in the city these days are found in hotels. Don't forget to have a drink at the top-floor **Galaxy** bar at the **Hilton** hotel for an amazing city view you won't find anywhere else. For the most happening scene stop by the hotel lounge/bars at the **St. George Lycabettus Hotel,** the **Fresh Hotel,** and **Ochre & Brown Hotel.**

office (✆ **210/330-1881**) on Panepistimiou just outside Spiromilios Arcade. You can sometimes get tickets at **Epidaurus** (✆ **27530/22-006**) just before a performance.

Athens International Dance Festival Founded in 2003, this festival takes place during the first 2 weeks in July at the Technopolis arts complex, 100 Piraeus, Gazi. This is not the place to go for a traditional rendition of Swan Lake; groups performing here push the envelope of contemporary dance. The 2005 festival featured the American Pretty Ugly Dance Company. Schedule and ticket information is at ✆ **210/346-1589** or 210/346-7322.

THE PERFORMING ARTS

The acoustically marvelous new **Megaron Mousikis Concert Hall** ★★, 89 Leoforos Vas. Sofias (✆ **210/729-0391** or 210/728-2333), hosts a wide range of classical music programs that include quartets, operas in concert, symphonies, and recitals. On performance nights, the box office is open Monday through Friday from 10am to 6pm, Saturday from 10am to 2pm, and Sunday from 6 to 10:30pm. Tickets are also sold Monday through Friday from 10am to 5pm in the Megaron's convenient downtown kiosk in the Spiromillios Arcade, 4 Stadiou. Ticket prices run from as little as 5€ ($7.25) to as more than 100€ ($145), depending on the performance. The Megaron has a limited summer season but is in full swing the rest of the year.

The **Greek National Opera** performs at **Olympia Theater,** 59 Akadimias at Mavromihali (✆ **210/361-2461**). The summer months are usually off season.

Pallas Theater, 1 Voukourestiou (✆ **210/322-8275**), hosts many jazz and rock concerts, as well as some classical performances. Prices vary from performance to performance, but you can get a cheap ticket from about 10€ ($15).

Since 1953, **Dora Stratou Folk Dance Theater** ★ has been giving performances of traditional Greek folk dances on Filopappos Hill. At present, performances take place May through September, Tuesday through Sunday at 9:30pm, with additional performances at 8:15pm on Wednesday and Sunday. You can buy tickets at the **box office,** 8 Scholio, Plaka, from 8am to 2pm (✆ **210/924-4395,** or 210/921-4650 after 5:30pm; www.grdance.org). Prices range from 15€ to 25€ ($22–$36). Tickets are also available at the theater before the performances.

Seen from Pnyx hill, **sound-and-light** shows illuminate (sorry) Athens's history by telling the story of the Acropolis. As lights pick out monuments on the Acropolis and the music swells, the narrator tells of the Persian attack, the Periclean days of glory, the invidious Turkish occupation—you get the idea. Shows are held April through October. The 45-minute performances in English are given at 9pm on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday. Tickets (10€/$15) can be purchased at the **Hellenic Festival Office,** 39 Panepistimiou (✆ **210/928-2900**), or at the entrance to the sound-and-light show (✆ **210/922-6210**). You'll hear the narrative best if you don't sit too close to the very loud public-address system.

LIVE-MUSIC CLUBS

Walk the streets of the Plaka on any night and you'll find lots of tavernas offering pseudo-traditional live music (usually at clip-joint prices) and a few offering the real thing. **Taverna Mostrou,** 22 Mnissikleos (✆ **210/324-2441**), is one of the largest, oldest, and best known for traditional Greek music and dancing. Shows begin about 11pm and usually last to 2am. The cover charge (from about 30€/$44) includes a fixed-price supper; a la carte fare is available but expensive. Nearby, **Palia Taverna Kritikou,** 24 Mnissikleos (✆ **210/322-2809**), is another lively open-air taverna with music and dancing. Appealing tavernas offering low-key music along with good food include fashionable **Daphne's,** 4 Lysikratous (✆ **210/322-7971**); **Nefeli,** 24 Panos (✆ **210/321-2475**); **Dioyenis,** 4 Sellei (✆ **210/324-7933**); **Stamatopoulou,** 26 Lissiou (✆ **210/322-8722**); and longtime favorites **Klimataria,** 5 Klepsidrias (✆ **210/324-1809**), and **Xinos,** 4 Agelou Geronta (✆ **210/322-1065**).

Those interested in authentic *rembetika* (music of the urban poor and dispossessed) should consult their hotel receptionist or the current issue of *Athenscope* or *Athinorama* (in Greek) to see which clubs are featuring the best performers. *Rembetika* performances usually don't start until nearly midnight, and though there's rarely a cover, drinks can cost as much as 20€ ($29). Many clubs close during the summer. One of the more central places for *rembetika* is **Stoa Athanaton,** 19 Sofokleous, in the Central Meat Market (✆ **210/321-4362**), which serves good food and has live music from 3 to 6pm and after midnight. It's closed Sunday. Open Wednesday through Monday, **Frangosyriani,** 57 Arachovis, Exarchia (✆ **210/360-0693**), specializes in the music of *rembetika* legend Markos Vamvakaris. The legendary Maryo I Thessaloniki (Maryo from Thessaloniki), described as the Bessie Smith of Greece, sometimes sings *rembetika* at **Perivoli t'Ouranou,** 19 Lysikratous (✆ **210/323-5517** or 210/322-2048), in Plaka. Expect to pay at least 10€ ($15) per drink in these places, most of which have a cover from 25€ ($36).

A number of clubs and cafes specialize in jazz but also offer everything from Indian sitar music to rock and punk. **The Café Asante,** 78 Damareos in Pangrati (✆ **210/756-0102**), has music most nights from 11pm. As at most of these clubs and cafes, admission varies, but count on spending at least 35€ ($51) at the Café Asante if you have a couple of drinks. The very popular **Half Note Jazz Club,** 17 Trivonianou, Mets (✆ **210/921-3310**), offers up everything from medieval music to jazz nightly. Performance times vary from 8 to 11pm and later; admission is usually around 20€ ($29). At **The House of Art,** 4 Sahtouri and Sari (✆ **210/321-7678**), and at **Pinakothiki,** 5 Agias Theklas (✆ **210/324-7741**), both in increasingly fashionable Psyrri, you can often hear jazz from 11pm; admission is around 20€ ($29), including the first drink. You'll pay the same here as at the *rembetika* clubs—from 10€ ($15) per drink and a cover of at least 25€ ($36).

THE GAY & LESBIAN SCENE

In Greece, the weekly publications *Athinorama* and *Time Out* often list gay bars, discos, and special events in the nightlife section. Get-togethers are sometimes advertised in the English-language press, such as the weekly *Athens News.* Information is also available from the Greek national gay and lesbian organization (**EOK; ✆ 210/253-7333;** www.eok.gr). You can also look for the Greek publication **Deon Magazine** (**✆ 210/953-6479;** www.deon.gr) or surf the Web at www.gaygreece.gr. The bookstore **Colourful Planet** (**✆ 210/882-660;** www.colourfulplanet.gr) at 6 Antoniadou, which carries Plateia Victoria Greek and foreign-language publications, caters mainly to a Greek gay and lesbian clientele. **Gay Travel Greece,** at 377 Syngrou Ave. in central Athens (**✆ 210/948-4385**), specializes, as its name proclaims, in travel for gay and lesbian visitors.

Gay and lesbian travelers should not encounter difficulties at any Athenian hotel, but one with a largely gay and lesbian clientele is the 41-room **Hotel Rio Athens** (www.hotel-rio.gr), at 13 Odysseos off Karaiskaki Square. The hotel is in a nicely restored neoclassical building.

Similarly, almost all Athenian bars, dance joints, and restaurants are user-friendly for gay and lesbian travelers. Here are some suggestions, leading with one of the best known: **Lamda,** 15 Lembessi and 9 Syngrou, Makrigianni (**✆ 210/922-4202;** www.lamdaclub.gr), has been popular for so long it has become an Athenian institution. The energy on the ground floor is mostly laid back, while things in the basement get far rowdier. Perhaps the cavelike dark room (the only one in town) is to blame. It's open daily 11pm to 5am.

A number of gay and lesbian favorites are in the increasingly popular Gazi district, including **Sodade,** 10 Triptopolemou, Gazi (**✆ 210/346-8657;** www.sodade.gr). Much like Lamda, Sodade has also become an institution in Athenian nightlife. It's owned by two lesbians who had the foresight over a decade ago to take a chance in a forgotten part of the city with a gay bar. It remains extremely popular every day of the week but is unbearably packed on weekends. Weeknights 10:30pm to 4am; weekends 10:30pm to 6am. **Blue Train,** 84 Konstantinoupoleos, Gazi (**✆ 210/346-0677;** www.bluetrain.gr), is right by the railway tracks on the edge of Gazi. The friendly scene here is a great place to begin the evening, preferably in the sidewalk seating where you can watch the trains and the boys go by. **Kazarma,** 1st floor, 84 Konstantinoupoleos, Gazi (**✆ 210/346-0667**), above Blue Train, is one of the best gay clubs in the city. During summer the fun moves to the terrace. Wednesday though Sunday midnight to 5am. Daily 8pm to 4am. Right now, **Noiz,** 41 Evmolpidon and Konstantinoupoleos, Gazi (**✆ 210/342-4771;** www.noizclub.gr), seems to be the most popular lesbian bar/club in town. It's open weeknights 10:30pm to 4am; weekends 10:30pm to 6am. At **Micraasia,** 70 Konstantinopoleos, Gazi (**✆ 210/346-4851**), red lighting, colored tiles, chaises, and belly dancers all contribute to making this a unique, atmospheric, and interesting venue (mostly for women). There is also seating on its "secret" rooftop. It's open daily 7:30pm to 4am.

2 The Northern Peloponnese & Delphi ★★★

With the undeniable exception of the Acropolis in Athens, the most famous and beautiful ancient sites in Greece bracket the Gulf of Corinth that separates the mainland and the Peloponnese. On the mainland north of the wide Gulf, the sanctuary of Apollo's famous oracle at Delphi clings to mountain slopes; south of the Gulf in the

Tips Driving Tips

Keep in mind that although most Greek roads are quite good, much of your journey to and around the Peloponnese will be on beautiful, but sometimes vertiginous, winding mountain roads and heavily trafficked coastal roads that make distances deceptive. Check for up-to-date information on road conditions with your rental-car agency in Athens when you pick up the car, or contact the **Greek Automobile Association (ELPA;** Athens Tower, 2–4 Mossogion, Athens 115 27; ✆ **210/779-1615**), which has a reciprocity arrangement with many foreign auto clubs. The ELPA emergency number is ✆ **104.** Remember that only Portugal has more traffic fatalities each year than Greece, so buckle up and be careful out there!

northern Peloponnese are Agamemnon's palace at Mycenae, the Mycenaean fortress of Tiryns, the spectacular 4th-century-B.C. theater of Epidaurus, and Olympia, the birthplace of the Olympic Games. Some say that Delphi is the most spectacular ancient site in Greece, others give the laurels to Olympia. You decide.

EXPLORING THE REGION BY CAR Thanks to the well-maintained highway that links Athens and the Peloponnese at Corinth, and the Rio-Antirio Bridge across the Gulf of Corinth (much speedier than the old ferry service), it's easy to combine a visit to Delphi with a tour of the most important ancient sites in the Peloponnese. Try to allow at least 4 days (spending 2 nights at Nafplion and 1 night each at Olympia and Delphi).

If traffic is light (and it almost never is), you can drive the 88km (55 miles) from Athens to Corinth on the National Road in an hour. After you take a look at the Corinth Canal and the sprawling site of ancient Corinth, an hour's drive (less if you take the new National Road to Argos and double back) through the farmland of Corinthia and Argolis will take you to Mycenae, 114km (71 miles) southwest of Athens. From Mycenae, less than an hour's drive will get you to Nafplion, 145km (90 miles) southwest of Athens. Generally considered the prettiest town in the Peloponnese, Nafplion is the perfect spot to visit for its own charms and to use as a base for seeing the northern Peloponnese.

Although it's only 32km (20 miles) from Nafplion to Epidaurus, the road is usually clogged with tour buses, especially when there are performances at the ancient theater; to be on the safe side, allow an hour for the drive. From Nafplion and Epidaurus, two main routes lead across the Peloponnese to Olympia. You can return to Corinth and join the National Road, which runs as far as Patras, where you take the heavily trafficked coast road on to Olympia. (Although there are signs in Patras pointing you toward Olympia, the heavy traffic in Patras means that you can easily spend an hour getting across town.)

If you want to avoid Patras, you can join the National Road at Argos and drive on good roads through the Arcadian mountains via Tripolis to Olympia, 320km (199 miles) west of Athens. Either way, expect to spend at least 4 hours en route—and try to spend more, so that you can enjoy the coastal scenery or the mountain villages of Arcadia. Then, to reach Delphi from Olympia, simply head to Rio, just north of Patras, and take the **Rio-Antirio Bridge** (10€/$15; www.gefyra.gr) across the Gulf.

With a 2,252m (7,388-ft.) fully suspended continuous deck and 40km (25 miles) of cables, this is the longest cable-stayed bridge in the world, built to withstand both earthquakes and bombs. If you prefer—and if it has not been discontinued, as threatened—you can still take the Rio-AntiRio car ferry, which runs twice an hour from early morning until about 11pm (3€/$4.35).From the north shore of the Gulf, a good road runs all the way to Delphi, 177km (110 miles) west of Athens. With a coffee break or two, the trip from Olympia to Delphi is about 5 hours; the Athens-to-Delphi journey takes about 3 hours, except on winter weekends, when skiers heading for Mt. Parnassus clog the road.

THE NORTHERN PELOPONNESE & THE CLASSICAL SITES ★★★

One of the delights of visiting the northern Peloponnese during the summer high season (July–Aug) is that it's relatively uncrowded when many of the Cycladic islands in the Aegean seas are sagging under the weight of tourists. That doesn't mean you'll have famous spots like Mycenae, Epidaurus, and Olympia to yourself if you arrive at high noon in August. In fact, if you arrive at high noon in August, you'll find it hard to believe that anyone is visiting the islands! Still, if you arrive just as they open or just before they close, you may have an hour under the pine trees at Olympia or Epidaurus virtually alone, and be able to stand in Mycenae's Treasury of Atreus with swallows as your only companions.

Because even the most avid tourists do not live by culture alone, it's good to know that one of the great delights of spending time in the northern Peloponnese comes from quiet hours spent watching shepherds minding their flocks and fishermen mending their nets. An hour in a seaside cafe watching the locals watching you watch them is the ideal way to unwind after a day's sightseeing.

Warning: If you visit here in the summer, check on your hotel's air conditioning; if you come in the winter, make sure your hotel has functioning heating.

CORINTH ★★

Today, as in antiquity, Corinth and Patras are the two major gateways to the Peloponnese. Corinth exported its pottery around the Mediterranean and dominated trade in Greece for much of the 8th century and 7th century B.C. It experienced a second golden age under the Romans in the 2nd century A.D. As you enter the Peloponnese, you'll want to leave the main highway (look for the turnoff for the Canal Tourist Area) to take a look at the Corinth Canal and visit ancient Corinth before heading deeper into the northern Peloponnese. If you are driving, keep an eye out for signs for ARCHAIA KORINTHOS/ANCIENT CORINTH and try to avoid the modern town of Corinth, which has neither antiquities nor modern charms.

Essentials

GETTING THERE **By Train** There are several trains a day from Athens's Stathmos Peloponnisou (train station for the Peloponnese) to the Corinth train station off Demokratias (✆ **27410/22-522** or 27410/22-523). These trains are almost invariably late, often taking 3 hours or more. For information on schedules and fares, call ✆ **210/529-8735** or 11100; www.ose.gr.

By Bus There are at least 15 buses a day, taking 2 to 2½ hours, from the Stathmos Leoforia Peloponnisou (bus station for the Peloponnese) in Athens, 100 Kifissou (✆ **210/512-4910;** www.ktel.org), to Corinth, where you can catch a bus for the short (15–20 min.) trip to Archaia Korinthos. For general information on Athens-Peloponnese schedules and fares, call ✆ **210/512-4910;** or check www.ktel.org. ***Warning:*** Buses from Athens to Corinth sometimes terminate at the canal; from there, another bus will run into Corinth itself. From Corinth, you can continue to Ancient Corinth.

Confusingly, at present buses for destinations in the Peloponnese leave Corinth from one of two badly signposted stations: one at the corner of Kolokotroni and Koilatsou (✆ **27410/24-444**) and the other at the corner of Ethnikis Konstantinou and Aratou (✆ **27410/24-403**). For most destinations in the Peloponnese beyond Tripolis, you'll find yourself changing buses at Tripolis.

By Car The National Highway runs from Athens to Corinth. The highway, which has been widened over the last decade, still contains some nasty three-lane stretches. The highway now sweeps over the Corinth Canal; if you want to stop here, look for the signs indicating the Canal Tourist Area. Shortly after the canal, you'll see signs for Corinth (the modern town and ancient site), Isthmia (site of the Isthmian Games), and Patras. Allow about 1½ hours for the journey to the canal from Athens.

The Corinth Canal

When the main road ran directly past the restaurants and cafes on either side of the canal, almost everyone used to stop here for a coffee, a souvlakia, and a look at the canal that separates the Peloponnese from the mainland. Now buses, trucks, and most cars stay on the new highway, but you can still take the exit for the Canal and Tourist Area to see the canal and have a snack. There's a small post office at the canal and a kiosk with postcards and English-language newspapers. Most of the large souvlakia places have surprisingly clean toilet facilities (and very tough souvlakia).

The French engineers who built the Corinth Canal between 1881 and 1893 used lots of dynamite, blasting through 87m (285 ft.) of sheer rock to make this 6km-long (3¾-mile), 27m-wide (89-ft.) passageway. The canal utterly revolutionized shipping in the Mediterranean; vessels that previously had spent days making their way around Cape Matapan, at the southern tip of the Peloponnese, could dart through the canal in hours. Although it took modern technology to build the canal, the Roman emperors Caligula and Nero had tried, and failed, to dig a canal with slave labor. Nero was obsessed with the project, going so far as to lift the first shovelful of earth with a dainty golden trowel. That done, he headed back to Rome and left the real work to the 6,000 Jewish slaves he had brought here from Judea.

Exploring Ancient Corinth

To reach Ancient Corinth, follow the signs after the Corinth Canal for Ancient and Old Corinth. It's a 20-minute bus ride from the train station or 10 minutes by taxi. A number of small restaurants and cafes are adjacent to the ancient site; frankly, we have had bad or mediocre meals at most of them; the grandly named **Splendid** restaurant across from the site and the **Ancient Corinth** on the main square serve okay lunch and dinner (simple stews, chops, and salads) for around 15€ ($22). **Marinos Rooms** (✆ **27410/31-209**), a 5-minute walk from the excavations, has very simple rooms (around 50€/$73) and good food. This place is usually taken over by visiting archaeologists in summer. If you are heading on to Nafplion, you will be able to get excellent accommodations and food there.

Ancient Corinth ★★ Although Corinth's greatest period of prosperity was between the 8th and 5th centuries B.C., most of the ancient remains here are from the

Roman period. Razed and destroyed when the Romans conquered Greece in 146 B.C., Corinth was refounded by Julius Caesar in 44 B.C. and began a second period of wealth and prosperity. When Paul visited here in A.D. 52, he found it all too sophisticated and chastised the Corinthians for their wanton ways.

By the 2nd century A.D., Corinth was much larger and more powerful than Athens, but during the next hundred years, a series of barbarian invasions and attacks undermined the city's prosperity. Historians concluded that Corinth lapsed into a long stagnant period as a provincial backwater with a glorious past. New evidence has turned up to make historians question that conclusion: beginning in 1995, excavations have unearthed finds ranging from an extensive Roman villa of the 4th century A.D. to imported English china of the 19th century A.D.—important suggestions that Corinth's prosperity did not end in antiquity.

The most conspicuous—and the most handsome—surviving building at Ancient Corinth is clearly the 6th-century-B.C. **Temple of Apollo,** which stands on a low hill overlooking the extensive remains of the **Roman Agora** (forum or marketplace).

Ancient Corinth's main drag, the 12m-wide (39-ft.) marble-paved road that ran from the port of Lechaion into the heart of the marketplace, is clearly visible from the temple. Along the road, and throughout the Agora, are the foundations of hundreds of the stores that once stocked everything from spices imported from Asia Minor to jugs of wine made from Corinth's excellent grapes.

Two spots in the Agora are especially famous—the **Fountain of Peirene** and the **Bema.** The fountain honors the maternal devotion of Peirene, a woman who wept so hard when her son died that she dissolved into the spring that still flows here. In the 2nd century A.D., the famous Roman traveler, philhellene, benefactor and compulsive builder Herodes Atticus is thought to have encased the modest Greek fountain in an elaborate two-story building with arches, arcades, and a 5-sq.-m (54-sq.-ft.) courtyard. Later benefactors further elaborated the fountain. As for the Bema (public platform), this was where Paul had to plead his case when the Corinthians, irritated by his constant criticisms, hauled him in front of the Roman governor Gallo in A.D. 52.

Old Corinth. ✆ **27410/31-207.** Admission to archaeological site and museum 6€ ($8.70). Summer Mon–Fri 8am–7pm; Sat–Sun 8am–3pm. Winter Mon–Fri 8:45am–3pm; Sat–Sun 8:30am–3pm.

Archaeological Museum ★ As you'd expect, this museum just inside the site entrance has a particularly fine collection of the famous Corinthian pottery, which is often decorated with charming red-and-black figures of birds and animals. There are also a number of statues of Roman worthies and several mosaics, including one in which Pan is shown piping away to a clutch of cows. The museum courtyard is a shady spot in which to sit and read up on the ancient site, which has virtually no shade. When you visit, be sure to see the handsome sculpture and vases stolen from the museum in 1990; found hidden in a fish processing factory in Miami, Florida, in 1998; and officially handed over to Greece in 2001, some of which are again on display.

Insider Tip: The Archaeological Museum has an extensive collection of finds from the Shrine of Asclepius; because many of these are graphic representations of intimate body parts, they are kept in a room that is usually locked. If you look solemn and express a scholarly interest, you may be able to persuade a guard to unlock the room for you.

Ancient Corinth, in the town of Old Corinth. ✆ **27410/31-207.** Admission to museum and archaeological site 6€ ($8.70). Summer daily 8am–7pm; winter daily 8am–3pm.

Acrocorinth ★★ *Moments* It's hard to say what's more impressive here: the superb fortifications or the spectacular view across the plain of Corinth to the Gulf and beyond into central Greece. A winding dirt road runs from the site of Ancient Corinth to the summit of this rugged limestone sugarloaf mountain topped by centuries of fortifications that dominates the plain of Corinth. A superb natural acropolis, Acrocorinth was fortified first by the Greeks and later by the Byzantines, Franks, Venetians, and Turks. Extensive remains of the centuries of walls, turrets, and towers built here still remain. After you roam around enjoying the seemingly endless view over the rich plain below, you can relax at the cafe just outside the site entrance. The walk up is tiring—allow at least an hour. Round-trip cab fare is around 25€ ($36), with a 30-minute wait on the summit; a cab only going up, if you can find a willing driver, is about 15€ ($22).

Old Corinth. ✆ **27410/31-966.** Free admission. Summer daily 8am–7pm; winter daily 8am–3pm.

NAFPLION ★★★

Nafplion is far and away the most charming town in the Peloponnese, with stepped streets overhung with balconies dripping with bougainvillea, handsome neoclassical buildings, and enticing shops, restaurants, cafes, and, for that matter, two fine museums—and even a miniature castle (the Bourtzi) on a miniature island in the harbor! A good deal of Nafplion's appeal comes from the fact that for several years after the Greek War of Independence (1821–28), this was the country's first capital. Although the palace of Greece's young King Otto—a mail-order monarch from Bavaria—burned down in the 19th century, an impressive number of handsome neoclassical civic buildings and private houses have survived, as have a scattering of Turkish fountains and several mosques. You could spend several pleasant days here simply enjoying wandering the streets of this port town itself, but you'll probably want to use Nafplion as your home base for day trips to the ancient sites at Mycenae, Tiryns and Epidaurus, and—if you didn't see it on the way here—Corinth. Keep in mind that *lots* of Greeks come here year-round on weekends, so if you're visiting Nafplion on a weekend, reserve your hotel in advance. I've had trouble finding a parking place by the harbor even on a rainy February Sunday afternoon!

Essentials

GETTING THERE **By Bus** There are at least a dozen buses a day to Nafplion from the Stathmos Leoforia Peloponnisou (bus station for the Peloponnese) in Athens, 100 Kifissou (✆ **210/512-4910;** www.ktel.org). The trip is a slow one (about 4 hr.) because the bus goes into both Corinth and Argos before reaching the Nafplion station on Syngrou Street (by Plateia Kapodistrias; ✆ **27520/28-555**). For general information on Athens-Peloponnese schedules and fares, call ✆ **210/512-4910** or go to www.ktel.org.

By Car From Athens, head south to the Corinth Canal. Take the Corinth-Tripolis national road to the Argos exit and follow signs into Argos and then for Nafplion. You'll almost certainly get lost at least once in Argos, which has an abysmal system of directional signs. Allow at least 3 hours for the drive from Athens to Nafplion, more, if you stop at Corinth, Mycenae, or Epidauros (all clearly signposted) en route. When you reach Nafplion, park in the large, free municipal lot by the harbor and be sure to lock your car.

VISITOR INFORMATION The tourist information office (the former **Greek National Tourist Organization [EOT]** office) is at 16 Photomara (✆ **27520/28-131**), cater-cornered from the bus station in Plateia Nikitara. It's usually open weekdays from 9am to 2pm, but seems to have frequent unscheduled closings. The helpful brochure *Nafplion Day and Night* is sometimes available here, in shops, and in hotels.

Where to Stay

Remember, this town is so popular with both Greeks and tourists that reservations are strongly advised; every room in town is often taken on summer and holiday weekends. And here's something to keep in mind when you make a reservation: At present, a surprising number of Nafplion's hotels do not take credit cards, but say that they plan to soon.

Byron Hotel ★★ This was one of the first of the "boutique" hotels in Nafplion. The Byron is in a quiet, breezy location overlooking the Church of Agiou Spiridona, a short but steep hike from the main plateia. Sitting rooms and guest rooms contain nice bits of Victoriana, as well as modern conveniences. The cheapest rooms are quite small with no view; usually, for another 15€ ($22), you'll can get a view of Nafplion—and enough space that you won't feel the burden of togetherness with your roommate.

2 Platonos, Plateia Agiou Spiridona, 21100 Nafplion. ✆ **27520/22-351.** Fax 27520/26-338. www.byronhotel.gr. 17 units. 80€–100€ ($116–$145) double. AE, MC, V. **Amenities:** Breakfast room; terrace. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer.

Hotel Ilion ★★ You'll have to decide whether you find the decor in this boutique hotel (a member of the Historic Hotels of Europe) in a restored 19th-century town house on a stepped street above Plateia Syntagma engaging or overwhelming. Virtually every ceiling is painted (often with cupids), and wall frescoes with scenes from Greek mythology alternate with borders of fruits and flowers. Windows and beds alike are draped with filmy hangings. The mattresses are excellent. A friend who spent a happy week here reported that the service was top-notch, the neighborhood quiet, and the breakfasts delicious.

4 Efthimiopoulou and 6 Kapodistriou sts., 21100 Nafplion. ✆ **27520/25-114.** Fax 27520/24-497. www.ilionhotel.gr. 15 units. 100€–115€ ($145–$167) double; 140€–180€ ($203–$261) suite; 110€–120€ ($160–$174) studio. Breakfast 10€ ($15). No credit cards. **Amenities:** Bar/breakfast room. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar.

Hotel Leto ★ *Value* Your effort in climbing up to the Leto, perched under Acronafplia, is rewarded with fine views over Nafplion. Guest units are simply furnished, with decent-size bathrooms; ask for a room with a balcony. The staff here has been praised as very helpful.

28 Zigomala, 21100 Nafplion. ✆ **27520/28-098.** Fax 27520/29-588. 15 units. 75€–95€ ($109–$138) double. No credit cards. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar.

Hotel Nafsimedon ★ Another boutique hotel, this one is in a handsome mid-19th-century neoclassical house with a small garden with palm trees overlooking relatively quiet Kolokotronis Park. The guest rooms, many done in shades of apricot and peach, have handsome chandeliers, marble-topped tables, some old paintings—and good-size bathrooms and beds with firm mattresses. The Nafsimedon now has a younger and more elegant sister hotel, the **Ippoliti** (www.ippoliti.gr).

Nafsimedon, 9 Sidiras Merarhias (on Kolokotronis Park), 21100 Nafplion. ✆ **27520/25-060.** Fax 27520/26-913. www.nafsimedon.gr. 13 units. 95€–125€ ($138–$181) double. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Bar/breakfast room; courtyard. *In room:* A/C, TV.

King Otho I and II ★★ The King Otho I, a longtime favorite, was getting down-at-the-heels before its completely successful renovation in 2000. In 2002, the owners bought and restored another wonderful town house a few blocks up the hill on Staikopoulou and christened it King Otho II. Now, Nafplion has two small hotels that contend for the honor of most breathtaking curved staircase in the Peloponnese. Both hotels have high ceilings (some with frescoes), wood floors, and period furniture, including marble-topped tables. The new Otho is more expensive, because every guest room has a view (of Nafplion, or of Nafplion and the harbor). Each hotel has a garden, a real plus for breakfast or a quiet hour's reading. Both sometimes close in winter.

King Otho I: 4 Farmakapoulou, 21100 Nafplion. ✆ **27520/27-585.** Fax 27520/27-595. 12 units. King Otho II: 21 Staikopoulou, 21100 Nafplion (✆ **27520/97-790**). Fax 27520/27-595. 10 units. 90€–100€ ($131–$145) double. Rates include continental breakfast. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Breakfast room. *In room*: A/C, TV, minibar.

Omorfi Poli Pension ★★ *Value* *Kids* What a lovely place! This small pension/hotel above the charming cafe by the same name (Beautiful City) has gone all out, giving you the sense that you're staying in a Nafplion home—but with your own privacy. There's nothing to fault here—the beds are good, and the tile floors and prints on the walls are handsome. This makes a very pleasant base for touring the area. Families will like the rooms with fridges and sleeping lofts for children. Sometimes closed in winter.

5 Sofroni, 21100 Nafplion. ✆ **27520/21-565.** www.greek-tourism.gr/nafplio/omorfi-poli. 9 units, all with shower only. 75€ ($109) double; 115€ ($167) family suite (for up to 5 persons). Rates include breakfast. No credit cards.

Where to Dine

Oddly enough, the restaurants in and just off Nafplion's Syntagma Square are not the tourist traps you'd expect. Furthermore, you'll see a good number of Greeks at the big harborside cafes on Akti Miaoulis. In short, Nafplion has lots of good restaurants, and any number of ice-cream parlors selling elaborate gooey confections.

Antica Gelateria di Roma ★★★ SWEETS/ICE CREAM/COFFEES/DRINKS Marcello and Claudia Raffo make and sell the best ice creams and ices in the entire Peloponnese. You can have anything from a banana split to a tiny cup with just a taste. Flavors not to miss are hazelnut, lemon, mango, strawberry, chocolate—well, you get the idea. If you tire of ice cream, you can always have freshly made panini with tomato and mozzarella and finish off with a real espresso, while getting up-to-the-minute news of Italian soccer.

3 Pharmakopoulou and Komninou. ✆ **27520/23-520.** spyde@tri.forthnet.gr. Sweets and sandwiches 4€–12€ ($5.80–$17). No credit cards. Daily about 10am–midnight.

Hellas Restaurant ★ GREEK Kostas, the omnipresent host of the Hellas, says that there's been a restaurant here for more than 100 years. Awnings make this a cool spot to eat outdoors; there's also an inside dining room, where locals tend to congregate year-round. Reliable dolmades with egg-lemon sauce are usually on the menu, as well as stuffed tomatoes and peppers in season. Just about everyone in town passes through Plateia Syntagma, so this is a great spot to watch the world go by.

Plateia Syntagma. ✆ **27520/27-278.** Main courses 6€–12€ ($9–$17). AE, MC, V. Daily 9am–midnight.

Karamanlis ★ *Value* GREEK This simple harborfront taverna several blocks east of the cluster of cafes tends to get fewer tourists than most of the places in town. It serves up good grills and several kinds of meatballs (keftedes, sousoutakia, and yiouvarlakia). If you like the food here, you'll probably also enjoy **Arapakos, Kanares Taverna,** and **Hundalos Taverna,** also on Bouboulinas.

1 Bouboulinas. ✆ **27520/27-668.** Main courses 6€–15€ ($9–$22); fresh fish priced by the kilo. AE, MC, V. Usually daily 11am–midnight.

Paleo Archontiko (Taverna Old Mansion) ★★ GREEK Sometimes when it's snowing in New England, where I spend part of the year, I dream of spending the evening here. In summer, when I'm usually in Nafplion, tables spill out along Siokou Street. I also have happy memories of cozy winter evenings spent enjoying the good food and lively local scene. The menu offers consistently good traditional Greek *spitiko* (home) cooking: stews, chops, and usually several vegetarian choices. When live music is featured in the evening, tables are at a premium.

7 Siokou. ✆ **27520/22-449.** Main courses 8€–15€ ($12–$22). MC, V. Daily 7pm–midnight; summer weekends noon–4pm.

Sokaki COFFEE/DRINKS/SNACKS/BREAKFAST In the morning, tourists dig into the full American breakfast here, while locals toy with tiny cups of Greek coffee. In the evening, young men lounge, some eyeing the women who pass by, others eyeing the men. In short, great people-watching and good margaritas.

8 Ethniki Antistaseos. ✆ **27520/26-032.** Drinks and snacks 2€–12€ ($2.90–$17). No credit cards. Daily about 8am–8pm; summer daily 8am–midnight.

Ta Phanaria ★ GREEK A shaded table under Ta Phanaria's enormous scarlet bougainvillea makes for one of the prettiest places in the center of town for lunch or dinner. Ta Phanaria usually has several inventive vegetable dishes on the menu in addition to such standbys as moussaka. The stews and chops here are also good. In winter, hearty bean dishes are usually available. Like the Hellas, Ta Phanaria continues to attract steady customers, despite doing much of its business with tourists.

13 Staikopoulo. ✆ **27520/27-141.** Main courses 6€–12€ ($8.70–$17). MC, V. Daily about noon–midnight.

Exploring the Town

Nafplion is a stroller's delight, and one of the great pleasures here is simply walking through the parks, up and down the stepped side streets, and along the harbor. Don't make the mistake of stopping your harborside stroll when you come to the last of the large seaside cafes on the quay. If you continue, you can watch fishing boats putting in at the pier and explore several cliff-side chapels. Nafplion is so small that you can't get seriously lost, so have fun exploring. Here are some suggestions on how to take in the sights—and get in some shopping—after you've had your initial stroll.

ACRONAFPLIA & THE PALAMIDI ★ Nafplion's two massive fortifications, the **Acronafplia** and the **Palamidi,** dominate the skyline and, as usual with fortresses, are most impressive when seen from afar. It's a very stiff climb to either fortress, and you may prefer to take a taxi up (around 5€/$7.25) and walk back down. If you do walk up to Acronafplia, follow signs in the lower town to the **Church of Saint Spyridon,** one of whose walls has the mark left by one of the bullets that killed Ianni Kapodistria, the first governor of modern Greece.

From Saint Spyridon, follow the signs farther uphill to the **Catholic Church of the Metamorphosis.** This church is as good a symbol as any for Nafplion's vexed history. Built by the Venetians, it was converted into a mosque by the Turks and then reconsecrated as a church after the War of Independence. Inside, an ornamental doorway has an inscription listing philhellenes who died for Greece, including nephews of Lord Byron and George Washington. As you continue to climb to Acronafplia, keep an eye out for several carvings of the winged lion that was the symbol of Mark, the patron saint of Venice.

Similarly, if you're not in the mood to climb the 800-plus steps to the summit of the **Palamidi** ★, you can take a taxi up and then walk down. The Venetians spent 3 years building the Palamidi, only to have it conquered the next year (1715) by the Turks. You'll enter the fortress the way the Turkish attackers did, through the main gate to the east. Once inside, you can trace the course of the massive wall that encircled the entire summit and wander through the considerable remains of the five fortresses that failed to stop the Turkish attack. If you're in Nafplion during the June **Music Festival,** find out if any evening concerts are being held at the **Palamidi,** which is open in summer, Monday through Friday from 8am to 7pm, and Saturday and Sunday from 8am to 3pm; in winter, daily from 8am to 3pm. Admission is 3€ ($4.35).

THE BOURTZI ★★ Everyone's favorite fortress—and perhaps the only one to evoke squeals of "how cute" from tourists—the miniature **Bourtzi Fortress** was built by Venetians in the 15th century to guard the entrance to Nafplion's harbor. Since then, it's had a checkered career, serving as a home for retired executioners in the 19th century and as a small hotel in the 20th century. Small boats ply back and forth between the harbor and the Bourtzi (5€/$7.25) round-trip); usually, you can stay as long as you wish, explore, and return with the same or a different boat. Take something to drink and a snack with you, as the small cafe here is often closed.

NAFPLION'S MUSEUMS Nafplion's museums are within easy walking distance of one another. Almost as soon as it opened in 1981, the **Folk Art Museum** ★★, also called the **Peloponnesian Folklore Foundation** (1 V. Alexandros; ✆ **27520/28-947;** www.pli.gr), with its superb collection of Greek costumes, won the European Museum of the Year Award. The museum occupies three full floors in an elegant 18th-century house with a shady courtyard. In 2005, the museum installed a new permanent exhibition focusing not on rural but on urban Greece, particularly Nafplion in the 19th and 20th centuries. Dioramas show elegant town-house parlors stuffed with marble-topped furniture, Persian carpets, and ornate silver and china bibelots. It's open Wednesday through Monday from 9am to 3pm; closed Tuesday and the month of February. Admission is 4€ ($5.80).

The Nafplion Archaeological Museum, Syntagma Square (✆ **27520/27-502**), housed in the handsome 18th-century Venetian arsenal that dominates Syntagma Square, has been closed for almost 5 years. For the past 3 years, the guard has told me that the museum will reopen "next year." If the museum has finally reopened when you visit, you'll see ancient pottery, jewelry, Mycenaean terra-cotta idols, and a handsome bronze Mycenaean suit of armor. The museum is scheduled to be open Tuesday through Sunday from 8:30am to 1pm, with admission of 2€ ($2.90).

SHOPPING IN NAFPLION ★★ As you might expect of a town that has so many Greek visitors, Nafplion has some terrific shops. For a wide range of handsome handcrafted jewelry, try **Preludio,** 2 Vas. Konstantinou (✆ **27520/25-277**), just off Plateia Syntagma a few steps from the Hellas Restaurant. Staikopoulou Street, one block uphill from Plateia Syntagma, is great window shopping territory. The **Komboloi Museum,** 25 Staikopoulou (✆/fax **27520/21-618;** www.cs-net.gr/komboloi), is on the second floor of a shop selling *kombolo*—the round "worry beads" that many Greek men twirl. The beads sell for anything from a few to many thousand euros; museum admission is 2€ ($2.90). **To Enotion** (no phone) has museum-quality reproductions of characters from the Greek shadow theater—from country bumpkins to damsels in distress. The smallest of the colorful marionettes begins at about 20€ ($29). A few doors along, **Nafplio tou Nafpliou,** 56A Staikopoulou (no phone), sells icons showing virtually every saint in the Greek Orthodox church. Over on Siokou St., **Konstantine Beselmes,** 7 Ath. Siokou (✆ **27520/25-842**), offers magical paintings of village scenes, sailing ships, and idyllic landscapes. Although new, the paintings are done on weathered boards, which gives each a pleasantly aged look. A few doors away, **Agynthes,** 10 Siokou (✆ **27520/21-704**) has hand-loomed fabrics that look and feel wonderful; some are fashioned into throws, bags, and scarves.

If you want Greek wine, try the **Wine Shop,** 5 Amalias (✆/fax **27520/24-446**); and **Nektar and Ambrosia,** 6 Pharmakopoulou (✆ **27520/43-001**), is one of several new shops selling delicious herbs and organic honey products, including scented soaps.

A Day Trip from Nafplion: Tiryns

Tiryns ★★ is 5km (3 miles) outside Nafplion on the Argos road; if possible, visit Tiryns and Mycenae (see below) together, to get the best sense of Greece's two best-known Mycenaean sites. From the moment you see it, you'll understand why Homer called this **citadel,** which may have been Mycenae's port, "well walled." Tiryns stands on a rocky outcropping 27m (89 ft.) high and about 302m (990 ft.) long, girdled by the massive walls that so impressed Homer—but that didn't keep Tiryns from being destroyed around 1200 B.C. Later Greeks thought that only the giants known as Cyclopes could have hefted the 14-ton red limestone blocks into place for the walls that archaeologists still call "Cyclopean." Even today, Tiryns's walls stand more than 9m (30 ft.) high; originally, they were twice as tall—and as much as 17m (56 ft.) thick. The citadel is crowned by the palace, whose **megaron** (great hall) has a well-preserved circular hearth and the base of a throne. This room would have been gaily decorated with frescoes (the surviving frescoes are now in the National Archaeological Museum in Athens).

The site is officially open daily, from 8am to 7pm in the summer, from 8am to 3pm in the winter. Admission is 4€ ($5.80). Visitors without cars can reach Tiryns from Nafplion by taxi (expect to pay about 30€/$44 for the round-trip and an hour or so wait while you visit the site) or by the frequent (about every half-hour) Nafplion-Argos-Nafplion bus (about 2€/$2.90; tell the driver you want to get off at Tiryns).

MYCENAE ★★★

Virtually every visitor to the Peloponnese comes to Mycenae, which can make for bumper-to-bumper tour buses on the narrow roads to the citadel and wall-to-wall tourists inside the citadel itself. Greek legend and the poet Homer tell us that King Agamemnon of Mycenae was the most powerful leader in Greece at the time of the Trojan War. In about 1250 B.C., Homer says, Agamemnon led the Greeks from Mycenae to Troy, where they fought for 10 years to reclaim fair Helen—who had eloped with the Trojan prince Paris—who just happened to be the wife of Agamemnon's brother Menelaus. Family honor was at stake, and the first of many wars between Greece and Turkey erupted. Centuries late, in 1874, the German archaeologist Heinrich Schliemann, who found and excavated Troy, began to dig at Mycenae, searching for evidence of Agamemnon's kingdom. Did Schliemann's excavations here prove that what Homer wrote was based on an actual event, not myth and legend? Scholars are suspicious, although most admit that Mycenae could be rebuilt from Homer's descriptions of its palace.

Essentials

GETTING THERE **By Bus** Buses run frequently from Athens's **Stathmos Leoforia Peloponnisou,** 100 Kifissou (✆ **210/512-9233,** or 210/512-4910 for general information; www.ktel.org), to Corinth, Argos, and Nafplion. Allow 3 to 4 hours. From any of those places, allow an hour for the trip to Mycenae.

By Car From Corinth, take the new national highway toll road to the Nemea exit, where you will join the old Corinth-Argos highway, which has a clearly marked turnoff for Mycenae. If you prefer, you can take the old Corinth-Argos road to the Mycenae turnoff. This takes longer and you may get stuck behind a bus or truck, but you will have a better sense of the countryside than on the elevated highway. Either way, Mycenae is about 90km (56 miles) south of Corinth. From Nafplion, take the road out of town toward Argos. When you reach the Corinth-Argos highway, turn right and then, after about 16km (10 miles), turn right again at the sign for Mycenae. When you return from Mycenae to Nafplion, follow the signs for Nafplion.

Where to Stay & Dine

Most of the restaurants around Mycenae specialize in serving set-price meals to groups. If you eat at one of the big, impersonal roadside restaurants, you're likely to be served a bland, lukewarm "European-style" meal of overcooked roast veal, underripe tomatoes, and, even in summer, canned vegetables. You'll have better luck at the smaller restaurants at the hotels listed below.

La Belle Helene The real reason to stay here is to add your name to that of Schliemann and other luminaries in the guest book. Sentiment aside, this small hotel, one of the most famous in Greece, is usually quiet (although it does do a brisk business with tour groups in its large restaurant). The simple rooms are clean and comfortable. If you stay here, be sure to drive or walk up to the ancient site at night, especially if the moon is full.

Mycenae, 21200 Argolis. ✆ **27510/76-225.** Fax 27510/76-179. 8 units, none with bathroom. 50€–65€ ($73–$94) double, sometimes lower off season. Rates include breakfast. DC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant.

La Petite Planete ★ This would be a nice place to stay even without its (very) small swimming pool, which is irresistible after a hot day's trek around Mycenae. We've usually found it quieter here than at La Belle Helene, with very helpful owners, a decent restaurant, and fine views from the front rooms over the plain of Argos to the hills beyond.

Mycenae, 21200 Argolis. ✆ **27510/76-240.** 30 units. 70€ ($102) double. AE, V. Usually closed Apr–Oct. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; outdoor freshwater pool. *In room:* A/C, TV.

Exploring Ancient Mycenae

The Citadel & the Treasury of Atreus ★★★ As you walk uphill to Mycenae (passing the new Archaeological Museum; see below), you begin to get an idea of why people settled here as long ago as 5000 B.C. Mycenae straddles a low bluff between two protecting mountains and is a superb natural citadel overlooking one of the richest plains in Greece. By the time of the classical era, almost all memory of the Mycenaeans had been lost, and Greeks speculated that places like Mycenae and Tiryns had been built by the Cyclopes. Only such enormous giants, people reasoned, could have moved the huge rocks used to build the ancient citadels' defense walls.

You enter Mycenae through just such a wall, passing under the massive Lion Gate, whose two lions probably symbolized Mycenae's strength. The door itself (missing, like the lions' heads) probably was made of wood and covered with bronze for additional protection; cuttings for the doorjambs and pivots are clearly visible in the lintel. Soldiers stationed in the round **tower** on your right would have shot arrows down at any attackers who tried to storm the citadel.

One of the most famous spots at Mycenae is immediately ahead of the Lion Gate—the so-called **Grave Circle A,** where Schliemann found the gold jewelry now on display at the National Archaeological Museum in Athens. When archaeologist Heinrich Schliemann opened the tombs and found some 14 kilograms (31 lb.) of gold here, including several solid-gold face masks, he concluded he had found the grave of Agamemnon himself. However, recent scholars have concluded that Schliemann was wrong, and that the kings buried here died long before Agamemnon was born.

From the grave circle, head uphill past the low remains of a number of houses. Mycenae was not merely a palace, but a small village, with administrative buildings and homes on the slopes below the **palace.** The palace had reception rooms, bedrooms, a throne room, and a large megaron (ceremonial hall). You can see the imprint of the four columns that held up the roof in the megaron, as well as the outline of a circular altar on the floor.

If you're not claustrophobic, head to the northeast corner of the citadel and climb down the flight of stairs to have a look at Mycenae's enormous **cistern.** (You may find someone here selling candles, but it's a good idea to bring your own flashlight.) Along with Mycenae's great walls, this cistern, which held a water supply channeled from a spring 450m (1,476 ft.) away, helped make the citadel impregnable for several centuries.

There's one more thing to see before you leave Mycenae. The massive tomb known as the **Treasury of Atreus** is the largest of the tholos tombs (circular marble structures) found here. You'll see signs for the Treasury of Atreus on your right as you head down the modern road away from Mycenae. The Treasury of Atreus may have been built around 1300 B.C., at about the same time as the Lion Gate, in the last century of Mycenae's real greatness. The enormous tomb, with its 118-ton lintel, is 13m (43 ft.) high and 14m (46 ft.) wide. To build the tomb, workers first cut the 35m (115-ft.) passageway into the hill and faced it with stone blocks. Then the tholos chamber itself was built, by placing slightly overlapping courses of stone one on top of the other until a capstone could close the final course. As you look up toward the ceiling of the tomb, you'll see why these are called "beehive tombs." Once your eyes get accustomed to the poor light, you can make out the bronze nails that once held hundreds of bronze rosettes in place in the ceiling. This tomb was robbed even in antiquity, so we'll never know exactly what it contained, although the contents of Grave Circle A give an idea of what riches must have been here. If this was the family vault of Atreus, it's entirely possible that Agamemnon himself was buried here.

There's a good deal of up-and-down walking here, much on slippery terrain; give yourself at least 3 hours to absorb this magnificent and mysterious site.

☎ **27510/76-585.** Admission includes Treasury of Atreus 8€ ($12). Summer daily 8am–7pm; winter daily 8am–3pm.

Archaeological Museum of Mycenae ★★ This long-awaited museum, on the slopes of the citadel, opened in 2004. The museum focuses on the story of the excavations here and of Mycenaean civilization in general. Unfortunately, since the museum's galleries are quite small, both the displays and the labels (in Greek and English) are hard to see when the museum is crowded, which it often is. Oddly, tickets to the museum (and the museum guidebook) are currently sold only at the main entrance to the site. Most displays are grouped with others found in the same area of the citadel in an attempt to show how people actually lived here. The so-called "Cult Center," for example, has alarming representations of snakes and wide-eyed figures found together. Still, it's an indication of how little is known of what went on at the Cult Center that it is not certain whether the figurines represent the deities who were worshiped or the mortals who worshiped them. Throughout the museum, exhibits are labeled in Greek and English, and there are very welcome toilet facilities.

✆ **27510/76-585.** Admission 4€ ($5.80); guidebook 5€ ($7.25). Summer daily 8am–7pm; winter daily 8am–3pm.

EPIDAURUS ★★★

The Theater of Epidaurus is one of the most impressive sights in Greece, in one of the most famous places in ancient Greece. Greeks came to the shrine of Asclepios in antiquity as they go to the shrine of the Virgin on the Cycladic island of Tinos today, to give thanks for good health and in hopes of finding cures for their ailments. While at Epidaurus, patients and their families could "take the waters" at any one of a number of healing springs and in the superb baths. Visitors could also take in a performance in the theater, just as you can today. Probably built in the 4th century, the theater seats some 14,000 spectators and is astonishingly well-preserved.

Warning: The village of Palea Epidaurus, a beach resort 10km (6 miles) from Epidaurus, is confusingly sometimes signposted ANCIENT EPIDAURUS; the theater and sanctuary are usually signposted ANCIENT THEATER.

To confuse things further, Palea Epidaurus has its own small theater and festival. If you want a swim, Palea Epidaurus is the nearest beach—but it is often quite crowded.

Essentials

GETTING THERE **By Bus** Two buses a day run from the **Stathmos Leoforia Peloponnisou,** 100 Kifissou, Athens (✆ **210/512-9233,** or 210/512-4910 for general information; www.ktel.org). The trip takes about 3 hours. There are three buses a day to Epidaurus from the Nafplion bus station, off Plateia Kapodistrias (✆ **27520/28-555**), with extra buses when there are performances at the Theater of Epidaurus. The trip takes about an hour.

By Car Epidaurus is 63km (39 miles) south of Corinth and 32km (20 miles) east of Nafplion. If you're coming from Athens or Corinth, turn left at the sign for Epidaurus immediately after the Corinth Canal and take the coast road to the Theatro (ancient theater), not to Nea Epidaurus or Palaia Epidaurus. From Nafplion, follow the signs for Epidaurus. If you drive to Epidaurus from Nafplion for a performance, be alert; the road will be clogged with tour buses and other tourists.

THEATER PERFORMANCES **Classical performances** at the **ancient theater** are usually given Saturday and Sunday at around 9pm June through September. Many productions are staged by the **National Theater of Greece,** some by foreign companies. Ticket prices at press time ranged from 12€ to 35€ ($17–$51). For the latest ticket prices and other information, contact the **Hellenic Festival Box Office,** 39 Panepestimiou (in the arcade; ✆ **210/928-2900;** www.hellenicfestival.gr); or the **Epidaurus Festival Box Office** (✆ **27530/22-006**). It's also possible to buy tickets at most of Nafplion's travel agencies and at the theater itself, starting at 5pm on the day of a performance.

Tip: If you're a theater buff, be sure to take in the **Epidaurus Festival Museum,** near the entrance to the site, with its displays of props, costumes, programs, and memorabilia from past performances. Free admission.

Where to Stay & Dine

We suggest that you stay in Nafplion when you visit Epidaurus. The small hotels closer to Epidaurus are usually booked by tour groups well in advance of theater performances and are not sufficiently charming to recommend if you visit when there is not a performance. As to food, several kiosks sell snacks and cold drinks near the ticket booth at Epidaurus. The only restaurant worth seeking out is **Leonidas** (**✆ 27530/ 22-115**). This small restaurant with a garden on the main Epidaurus road is open for lunch and dinner year-round, has consistently good food, and attracts a post-theater crowd that often includes actors who relax here after performances.

Exploring the Ancient Site

The **excavation museum** at the entrance to the site helps put some flesh on the bones of the confusing remains of the Sanctuary of Asclepios. The museum has an extensive collection of architectural fragments from the sanctuary, including lovely acanthus flowers from the mysterious tholos, which you'll see when you visit the site. Also on view are an impressive number of votive offerings from pilgrims: The terra-cotta body parts show precisely what part of the anatomy was cured. The display of surgical implements will send you away grateful that you didn't have to go under the knife here, although hundreds of inscriptions record the gratitude of satisfied patients.

It's pleasant to wander through the shady **Sanctuary of Asclepios,** but it's not at all easy to decipher the scant remains. The Asclepion had accommodations for visitors, several large bathhouses, civic buildings, a stadium and gymnasium, and several temples and shrines. The remains are so meager that you might have to take this on faith. Try to find the round tholos, which you'll pass about halfway into the sanctuary. The famous 4th-century-B.C. architect Polykleitos, who built similar round buildings at Olympia and Delphi, was the designer here. If you wonder why the inner foundations of the tholos are so convoluted and labyrinthine, you're in good company—scholars aren't sure what went on here, although some suspect that Asclepios's healing serpents lived in the labyrinth.

The museum and archaeological site (**✆ 27530/23-009**) are open in summer, weekdays from 8am to 7pm and Saturday and Sunday from 8:30am to 3:15pm; in winter, weekdays from 8am to 3pm and Saturday and Sunday from 8:30am to 3pm. Admission (also covering the theater; see below) is 6€ ($8.70). Several kiosks sell snacks and cold drinks near the ticket booth.

The Theater

If you found the remains of the ancient sanctuary a bit of a letdown, don't worry—the **Theater of Epidaurus** is one of the most impressive sights in Greece. Probably built in the 4th century B.C., possibly by Polykleitos, the architect of the tholos, the theater seats some 14,000 spectators. Unlike so many ancient buildings, and almost everything at the Sanctuary of Asclepios, the theater was not pillaged for building blocks in antiquity. As a result, it's astonishingly well preserved, and restorations have been minimal and tactful.

If you climb to the top, you can look down over the seats, divided into a lower section of 34 rows and an upper section with 21 rows. The upper seats were added when the original theater was enlarged in the 2nd century B.C. The theater's acoustics are famous; you'll almost certainly see someone demonstrating that a whisper can be heard all the way from the orchestra to the topmost row of seats. Just as the stadium at Olympia brings out the sprinter in many visitors, the theater at Epidaurus tempts many to step center stage and recite poetry, declaim the opening of the Gettysburg Address, or burst into song. It's always a magical moment when a performance begins, as the sun sinks behind the orchestra and the first actor steps onto the stage.

The 6€ ($8.70) admission to the museum and archaeological site (see above) includes the theater; they keep the same hours.

OLYMPIA ★★★

With its shady groves of pine, olive, and oak trees; the considerable remains of two temples; and the stadium where the first Olympic races were run in 776 B.C., Olympia is the most beautiful major site in the Peloponnese. It's wonderful to have more than just 1 day here, especially if your hotel has a swimming pool! The ancient site of Olympia is a 15-minute walk south of the modern village. Parking near the site is virtually nonexistent; you'll probably have to park in town and walk—with care: the road teems with tour buses, and the walk is less than relaxing.

The straggling modern village of Olympia (confusingly known as Ancient Olympia) is bisected by its one main street, Leoforos Kondili. The town has about twenty hotels and restaurants and the usual assortment of tourist shops. One pleasant exception to the T-Shirt shops, the **Galerie Orphee,** Antonios Kosmopoulos's shop on the main street in Ancient Olympia (☎ **26240/23-555**), has a wide selection of books, an extensive range of cassettes and CDs of Greek music, and frequent displays of contemporary art.

Essentials

GETTING THERE **By Train** Several trains a day run from Athens to Pirgos, where you change to the train for Olympia. Information on schedules and fares is available from the **Stathmos Peloponnisou** (railroad station for the Peloponnese) in Athens (☎ **210/513-1601;** www.ose.gr).

By Bus There are three buses a day to Olympia from the Stathmos Leoforia Peloponnisou (bus station for the Peloponnese) in Athens, 100 Kifissou (☎ **210/512-4910;** www.ktel.org). There are also frequent buses from Patras to Pirgos, with connecting service to Olympia. In Patras, KTEL buses leave from the intersection of Zaimi and Othonos (☎ **2610/273-694**). For general schedule information for Athens-Peloponnese service, try **210/512-4910** or www.ktel.org.

By Car Olympia, 320km (199 miles) from Athens, is at least a 6-hour drive whether you take the coast road that links Athens to Corinth, Patras, and Olympia or head inland to Tripolis and Olympia on the Corinth-Tripolis road. Heavy traffic in Patras, 159km (99 miles) south, means that the drive from Patras to Olympia can easily take 2 hours.

VISITOR INFORMATION The tourist information office (the former **Greek National Tourist Organization [EOT]** office) is on the way to the ancient site near the south end of Leoforos Kondili, the main street (☎ **26240/23-100** or 26240/23-125). It's usually open daily, from 9am to 10pm in the summer and from 11am to 6pm in the winter. That said, on a number of occasions when I have been in Olympia out of high season, the office had an open sign in its window, but was closed.

Where to Stay

Olympia has more than 20 hotels, which means you can almost always find a room, although if you arrive without a reservation in July or August, you might not get your first choice. In the winter, many hotels are closed. If you're here in winter, check to see if the hotel you choose has functioning central heating.

Hotel Europa ★★★ The Europa is the best hotel in town—and one of the best in the Peloponnese. Part of the Best Western chain (but managed by a very helpful local family), it's a few minutes' drive out of town on a hill overlooking both the modern village and the ancient site. Most units overlook the large pool and garden, and several have views of a bit of the ancient site. The rooms are large, with extrafirm mattresses and sliding glass doors opening onto generously sized balconies. The two very professional restaurants include a taverna in the garden, which serves tasty grills and stews; the indoor breakfast buffet is extensive.

27065 Ancient Olympia, Peloponnese. ☎ **800/528-1234** in the U.S., 26240/22-650, or 26240/22-700. Fax 26240/23-166. www.bestwestern.com. 80 units. 130€ ($189) double. Considerable reductions possible off season. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; pool. *In room:* A/C, TV, minifridge, hair dryer.

Hotel Olympia Palace ★ Frankly, I had looked forward to staying here again after the renovations and I was disappointed. It's true that the Olympia Palace, which was completely remodeled for the 2004 Olympics, is an excellent choice if you want to be poised on the main street in order to investigate the village. The guest rooms have good beds, cheerful prints on the walls, and nice rag rugs on the floor; the bathrooms are modern and good-size. However, street noise plagues the front rooms and a large parking lot flanks the side toward the ancient site; try for a rear room. Another problem: seriously ho-hum service.

2 Praxiteleous Kondili, 27065 Ancient Olympia. ☎ **26240/23-101.** Fax 26240/22-525. 58 units. 100€–130€ ($145–$189) double. AE, MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; shops. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer.

Hotel Pelops ★★★ If you've heard how helpful Aussie expat Susanna Spiliopoulou and her Greek husband, Theo, are, believe every word! This is one of the most welcoming hotels in Greece. Rooms are good size, cheerful, and very comfy, unlike all too many Greek hotels. Check out their website to learn about their 3- and 4-day cooking, writing, and painting classes, usually offered off season. An added bonus: Guests here can use the attractive pool at the Europa Hotel and order a Pelops Platter (a wide variety of Greek mezedes) for dinner back at the Pelops. But the real bonus here is leaving the all-too-often anonymous world of hotels and entering a welcoming haven, in the center of town, but on a blissfully quiet street.

2 Varela, 27065 Ancient Olympia. ☎ **26240/22-543.** www.hotelpelops.gr. 25 units. 75€–85€ ($109–$123) double. MC, V. **Amenities:** Breakfast room. *In room:* A/C, TV.

Where to Dine

There are almost as many restaurants as hotels in Olympia, but some of the best food in town is served at the **Hotel Europa** and the **Hotel Pelops** (see above). Do check to see whether the excellent **Kladeos Taverna** has reopened. On the main drag, **The Tessera Epochi (Four Seasons), Zeus** and **The Aegean** stand out from the many places that tend to have indifferent food and service. **The Taverna Ambrosia,** by the railroad station, does a brisk business with tour groups, but also treats independent travelers well. Local cafes and bakeries are a good place to stop for a snack.

The Museums & the Ancient Site

Archaeological Museum ★★★ Even though you'll be eager to see the ancient site, it's a good idea to first visit the museum, which reopened after extensive renovations in 2004. The collection makes clear Olympia's astonishing wealth and importance in antiquity: Every victorious city and almost every victorious athlete dedicated a bronze or marble statue here, creating what was in effect one of the first outdoor museums of sculpture. Nothing but the best was good enough for Olympia, and many of these superb works of art are on view (with excellent labels in Greek, German, and English). Most of the exhibits are displayed in rooms to the right and left of the main entrance and follow an essentially chronological sequence, from severe Neolithic vases to baroque Roman imperial statues, neither of which will probably tempt you from heading straight ahead to see the museum's superstars. Still, don't miss the superb bronze heads of snarling griffins or the painted terra-cotta statue of a resolute Zeus abducting the youthful Ganymede.

The monumental **sculpture from the Temple of Zeus** is probably the finest surviving example of archaic Greek sculpture. The sculpture from the west pediment shows the battle of the Lapiths and Centaurs raging around the magisterial figure of Apollo, the god of reason. On the east pediment, Zeus oversees the chariot race between Oinomaos, the king of Pisa, and Pelops, the legendary figure who wooed and won Oinomaos's daughter by the unsporting expedient of loosening his opponent's chariot pins. Pelops not only won his bride but had the entire region named after him: the Peloponnese (Pelops's island). At either end of the room, sculptured metopes show scenes from the Labors of Hercules, including the one he performed at Olympia: cleansing the foul stables of King Augeus by diverting the Alfios River.

Just beyond the sculpture from the Temple of Zeus are the 5th-century-B.C. **Winged Victory,** created by the artist Paionios; and the 4th-century-B.C. figure of Hermes and the infant Dionysos, known as the **Hermes of Praxiteles.** The Hermes has a room to itself—or would, if tourists didn't make a beeline to admire Hermes smiling with amused tolerance at his chubby half-brother Dionysos. If you want to impress your companions, mention casually that many scholars think that this is not an original work by Praxiteles, but a Roman copy.

Directly across the street from the Ancient Site (see below). ☎/fax **26240/22-529.** www.culture.gr. Admission to site and museum 9€ ($13). Usually summer Mon–Fri 8:30am–7pm, Sat–Sun 8:30am–3pm; winter Mon–Fri 8am–5pm, Sat–Sun 8:30am–3pm.

Ancient Site ★★★ Olympia's setting is magical—pine trees shade the little valley, dominated by the conical Hill of Kronos that lies between the Alphios and Kladeos rivers. Reforrestation of the hill of Kronos continues after the devastating fires of 2007 that ravaged the Peloponnese and threatened ancient Olympia itself. The 1980s excavations concentrated on Roman Olympia, especially in the southern area of the site. Although considerable progress has been made, neither the main entrance nor the route of the ceremonial way during Roman times is yet known. The handsome temples and the famous stadium are not at once apparent as you enter the site. Immediately to the left are the unimpressive low walls that are all that remain of the **Roman baths** where athletes and spectators could enjoy hot and cold plunge baths; some recently restored mosaics are on view. The considerably more impressive remains with the slender columns on your right mark the **gymnasium** and **palestra,** where athletes practiced their footracing and boxing skills. The enormous gymnasium had one roofed track where athletes could practice in bad weather. Also on the right are the fairly meager remains of a number of structures, including a swimming pool and the large square **Leonidaion,** which served as a hotel for visiting dignitaries until a Roman governor decided it would do nicely as his villa. If you want, you can continue around the outskirts of the site, identifying other civic buildings, but you'll probably want to enter the sanctuary itself.

The religious sanctuary is dominated by two shrines: the good-size **Temple of Hera** and the massive **Temple of Zeus.** The Temple of Hera, with its three standing columns, is the older of the two, built around 600 B.C. If you look closely, you'll see that the temple's column capitals and drums are not uniform. That's because this temple was originally built with wooden columns, and as each column decayed, it was replaced; inevitably, each new column had slight variations. The Hermes of Praxiteles was found here, buried under the mud that covered Olympia for so long, caused by the repeated flooding of the rivers. The Temple of Zeus, which once had a veritable thicket of 34 stocky Doric columns, was built around 456 B.C. In 2004, one column was re-erected in honor of the Athens Olympics. The entire temple—so austere and gray today—was anything but plain in antiquity. Gold, red, and blue paint was everywhere, and inside the temple stood an enormous gold-and-ivory statue of Zeus seated on an ivory-and-ebony throne. The statue was so ornate that it was considered one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World—and so large that people joked that if the Zeus stood up, his head would go through the temple's roof. In fact, the antiquarian Philo of Byzantium suggested that Zeus had created elephants simply so that the sculptor Phidias would have the ivory to make his statue.

Not only do we know that Phidias made the 13m (43-ft.) statue, we know where he made it: **The Workshop of Phidias** was on the site of the well-preserved brick building clearly visible west of the temple outside the sanctuary. Between the Temples of Zeus and Hera you can make out the low foundations of a round building: This was all that remained of the **shrine** that Philip of Macedon, never modest, built here to pat himself on the back after conquering Greece in 338 B.C. until part of the facade was restored in 2004 in honor of the Athens Olympics.

Beyond the temples of Zeus and Hera, built up against the Hill of Kronos, are the curved remains of a once-elegant **Roman fountain** and the foundations of 11 **treasuries** where Greek cities stored votive offerings and money. In front of the treasuries are the low bases of a series of bronze statues of Zeus dedicated not by victorious athletes but by those caught cheating in the stadium. The statues would have been the last thing competitors saw before they entered the stadium.

✆/fax **26240/22-529.** www.culture.gr. Admission to site and museum 9€ ($13). Usually summer Mon–Fri 8:30am–7pm, Sat–Sun 8:30am–3pm; winter Mon–Fri 8am–5pm, Sat–Sun 8:30am–3pm.

The Museum of the History of the Olympic Games in Antiquity ★ The museum, which opened in 2004, occupies the handsome neoclassical building that served as the site's original archaeological museum. The path to the museum is steep; it is sometimes possible to get permission to drive up and drop off passengers by the museum's entrance. The superb collection includes chariot wheels, musical instruments, statues of athletes, bronze dedications to Zeus, and all manner of athletic gear. A number of photos and drawings highlight the religious sanctuary. Each of the 12 galleries has a theme, including "The Beginning of the Games," "Zeus and His Cults," "The Events," and Games at other ancient sites (Nemea, Isthmia, Delphi). If you are an Olympics buff, also take in the small Museum of the Olympic Games, signposted in the village of Ancient Olympia; admission 2€ ($2.90); open Monday to Saturday from 8am to 3:30pm; Sunday and holidays 9am to 2:30pm.

✆ **26240/22-529.** Free admission (but a fee is planned). Summer Mon noon–7pm, Tues–Sun 8am–7pm; winter, the museum usually closes by 5pm.

DELPHI ★★★

Delphi, which the ancient Greeks believed was the center of the world, is the big enchilada of Greek sites. Even more than Olympia, Delphi has it all: a long and glorious history as the scene of Apollo's famous oracle and the Pythian games; a gravity-defying cliff-side location with the remains of treasuries, small temples, a stadium, and a theater; the massive temple of Apollo and a view over a plain of gnarled olive trees to the Gulf of Corinth. Look up and you see the cliffs and crags of Parnassus; look down at Greece's most beautiful plain of olive trees stretching as far as the eye can see toward the town of Itea on the Gulf of Corinth. The star of the Delphi museum is the famous bronze statue of the charioteer who raced his horses to victory in Delphi's stadium.

Many tour groups offer day trips to Delphi, stopping at the Byzantine monastery of Osios Loukas (see "Organized Tours," earlier in this chapter). In the summer, tour groups clog Delphi's few streets by day, but many head elsewhere for the night, which means that hotel rooms are usually available—although often all the cheap rooms are gone by midmorning. In the winter, thousands of Greeks head here each weekend, not for the archaeological site, but for the excellent skiing on Mount Parnassus. Getting a room in the once-sleepy nearby hamlet of Arachova is virtually impossible without a reservation on winter weekends, and Delphi itself is often full.

Every summer (usually in June), the European Cultural Center of Delphi sponsors the **Festival of Delphi,** featuring ancient Greek drama and works inspired by ancient pieces. Tickets and schedules are usually available at the Center's Athens office at 9 Frynihou, Plaka (✆ **210/331-2798**), and at the Center's Delphi office (✆ **22650/82-731**). ***Budget travelers take note:*** Tickets are sometimes substantially discounted or even free close to performance time.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **By Bus** There are usually five buses daily to Delphi from the Athens bus station at 260 Liossion (✆ **210/831-7096,** 210/831-7179 in Athens, or 22650/82-317 in Delphi).

By Car Take the Athens-Corinth National Highway 74km (46 miles) west of Athens to the Thebes turnoff and continue 40km (25 miles) west to Levadia. If you want to stop at the monastery of Osios Loukas, take the Distomo turnoff for 9km (5½ miles). Return to Distomo and continue via Arachova for 26km (16 miles) to Delphi or via the seaside town of Itea for 64km (40 miles) to Delphi. The approach from Itea on a steeply climbing road with views back to the sea is well worth the time if you aren't in a hurry—and don't mind hairpin curves.

VISITOR INFORMATION The tourist information office (the former **Greek National Tourism Organization [GNTO]** Office; ✆ **22650/82-900**) on the main street (Frederikis) is usually open from 8am to 3pm (sometimes later in summer)—and sometimes mysteriously closed.

GETTING AROUND The village of Delphi, with its two main one-way parallel streets connected by stepped side streets, is small enough that most visitors find it

Tips Free Tram Rides in Delphi

Visitors to Delphi may want to check out the free tram that offers 30-minute rides around the village of Delphi nightly from about 8 to 11pm in the summer and on some off-season weekends. The tram leaves from the Hotel Vouzas, the last hotel in Delphi before you reach the ancient site and its museum.

easiest to abandon their cars and explore on foot. If you have to drive to the site rather than make the 5- to 10-minute walk from town, be sure to set off early to get one of the few parking places. Whether you walk or drive, keep an eye out for the enormous tour buses that barrel down the center of the road—and for the poorly marked one-way streets in the village.

WHERE TO STAY

There's no shortage of hotels in Delphi, and you can usually get a room even in July and August. Still, if you want a room in a specific price category or with a view, it's best to make a reservation. Finally, in summer (but not in winter when the skiers take over this hamlet), consider staying in nearby **Arachova,** where the hotels are usually less crowded (see "A Day Trip from Delphi," below). Be sure to check whether your hotel has functioning heating if you visit in the winter.

Tip: If you want a room with a view, be sure to ask for a back room with a balcony that faces the Gulf of Corinth. You may not always see the water, but from your balcony you will almost always see the magnificent valley of olive trees that leads down to the Gulf—and avoid the traffic noise of the main street.

Hotel Acropole ★★ *Value* The 42-room Hotel Acropole was completely redecorated in 2007, stays open year-round, and is owned and managed by the very helpful Kourelis family. One street below Vasileos Pavlou and Frederikis, the Acropole has one of the quietest locations and best views in town over private houses, gardens, and the olive groves that stretch beneath Delphi to the sea. If the Acropole is full, the staff can usually find you a room at its other Delphi hotel, the **Parnassos**. The Parnassos does not have the great view, but is less expensive (70€/$102), with a 10% discount usually available to Frommer's readers. Guests at both hotels have free use of the Internet cafe at the Parnassos.

13 Filellinon St., 33054 Delphi. ☎ **22650-82-675.** www.delphi.com.gr. 42 units. 80€ ($116) double. Rates include breakfast. Inquire about Frommer's discount. AE, MC, V. **Amenities:** Breakfast room; lounge w/fireplace. *In room:* A/C, TV, Internet.

Hotel Varonos ★ This small, family-owned hotel has minimalist (bed, table, chair) guest rooms with fine views over the olive plain. The family is very welcoming: We once arrived with an ailing gardenia plant, and the entire family pitched in to make sure it was well taken care of.

25 Vasileos Pavlou and Frederikis, 33054 Delphi. ☎/fax **22650/82-345.** 11 units, 10 with shower, 1 with tub/shower. 80€–100€ ($116–$145) double. Rates include breakfast (room without breakfast sometimes possible). Inquire about a Frommer's 20% discount. MC, V. **Amenities:** Breakfast room; lounge w/fireplace. *In room:* A/C, TV.

Hotel Vouzas ★★ If you don't mind sacrificing the swimming pool at the Amalia, this is *the* place to stay—great location only a short walk from everything you're here to see and spectacular views from rear room balconies. The guest rooms and bathrooms are quite comfortable. Each unit has a balcony with table and chairs (and, in season, a welcoming pot of basil).

1 Frederikis (at Vasileos Pavlou), 33054 Delphi. ☎ **22650/82-232.** Fax 22650/82-033. 59 units. 145€–200€ ($210–$290) double. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar. *In room:* A/C, TV.

WHERE TO DINE

You won't starve in Delphi, but restaurants here can sometimes be overwhelmed by tour groups; so if you are here anytime but winter, you may prefer to head to the village of Arachova, 10km (6¼ miles) to the north (see "A Day Trip from Delphi," below).

In Delphi, we strongly recommend the **Epikouros** Restaurant (☎ **22650/83-250**), at 33 Pavlou and Frederikis, owned and managed by the same helpful Kourelis family that runs the Hotel Acropolis and Hotel Parnassos. This is a great place to make an entire meal of appetizers *(mezedes).* The astonishingly wide and varied menu includes tasty vegetable fritters, the delicious local formaella cheese, lamb with fresh tomato sauce, and, in season, wild boar. The Epikouros also easily has the best view in town from a restaurant; entrees run from 9€ to 18€ ($13–$26). The **Taverna Skala** (☎ **22650/82-762**), also on Vasileos Pavlou and Frederikis, and the **Taverna Vakchos** (☎ **22650/83-186**), 31 Apollonos, and **Taverna Lekaria** (☎ **22650/82-776**), 33 Apollonos, are reliable for simple taverna fare.

EXPLORING THE SITE

If possible, begin your visit when the site and museum open in the morning (both are sometimes relatively uncrowded in the hour before closing, too). If you begin your visit at the museum, you'll arrive at the site already familiar with many of the works of art that once decorated the sanctuary. As with Olympia, it's easy to spend a whole day here, taking in the site and museum, with a break for lunch. Unlike Olympia, the main site at Delphi—built on a slope of Mt. Parnassus—involves a great deal of climbing with almost no shade.

Delphi Archaeological Museum ★★★ This already superb museum reopened in 2005 after extensive renovations and the addition of a new wing, shop, and cafe. Each of the museum's rooms has a specific focus: sculpture from the elegant Siphnian treasury in one room, finds from the Temple of Apollo in two rooms, discoveries from the Roman period (including the Parian marble statue of the epicene youth Antinous, the beloved of the emperor Hadrian) in another. Keep an eye out for the impressively large 4th-century-B.C. marble egg, a symbol of Delphi's position as the center of the world. According to legend, when Zeus wanted to determine the earth's center, he released two eagles from Mount Olympus. When the eagles met over Delphi, Zeus had his answer. (You can still see eagles in the sky above Delphi, but as often as not, the large birds circling overhead are the less distinguished Egyptian vultures.)

The star of the museum is the "must-see" 5th-century-B.C. **Charioteer of Delphi,** a larger-than-life bronze figure that was part of a group that originally included a four-horse chariot. It's an irresistible statue—don't miss the handsome youth's delicate eyelashes shading wide enamel and stone eyes or the realistic veins that stand out in his hands and feet.

Although the charioteer is the star of the collection, he's in good company. Delphi was chockablock with superb works of art given by wealthy patrons, such as King Croesus of Lydia, who contributed the massive silver bull that's on display. Many of the finest exhibits are quite small, such as the elegant bronzes in the museum's last room, including one that shows Odysseus clinging to the belly of a ram. According to Homer, this is how the wily hero escaped from the cave of the ferocious (but nearsighted) monster Cyclops.

✆ **22650/82-312.** Admission 9€ ($13) includes admission to site. Museum only, 6€ ($8.70). Summer Mon 11am–7pm, Tues–Fri 8am–7pm, Sat–Sun and holidays 8am–3pm; winter daily 8:30am–3pm. (Be sure to check these hours when you arrive in Delphi, as they can change without warning.)

Sanctuary of Apollo, Castalian Spring & Sanctuary of Athena Pronaia ★★★

As you enter the **Sanctuary of Apollo,** just past the museum, you'll be on the marble **Sacred Way,** following the route that visitors to Delphi have taken for thousands of years. The Sacred Way twists uphill past the remains of Roman **stoas** (porticoes) and a number of **Greek treasuries,** including the Siphnian and Athenian treasuries, whose sculpture is in the museum. The Athenian treasury is easy to spot, as it's the only one that has been restored. Take a close look at the Athenian treasury's walls: You'll see not only beautiful drywall masonry, but countless inscriptions. The ancient Greeks were never shy about using the walls of their buildings as bulletin boards. Alas, so many contemporary visitors have added their own names to the ancient inscriptions that the Greek Archaeological Service no longer allows visitors inside the massive 4th-century-B.C. **Temple of Apollo,** which was built here after several earlier temples were destroyed.

From the temple, it's a fairly steep uphill climb to the remarkably well preserved 4th-century-B.C. theater and the stadium, extensively remodeled by the Romans. In antiquity, contests in the Pythian festivals took place in both venues. Today the theater and stadium are used most summers for the Festival of Delphi—which, on occasion, has featured exceptionally nonclassical pop music.

Keep your ticket as you leave the Sanctuary of Apollo and begin the 10-minute walk along the Arachova-Delphi road to the Sanctuary of Athena (also called the Marmaria, which refers to all the marble found here). En route, you'll pass the famous **Castalian Spring,** where Apollo planted the laurel from which later victory crowns were fashioned. Above are the rose-colored cliffs known as the Phaedriades (the Bright Ones), famous for the way they reflect the sun's rays. Drinking from the Castalian Spring has inspired legions of poets; however, the spring is currently off-limits to allow repairs to the Roman fountain facade.

A path descends from the main road to the **Sanctuary of Athena Pronaia,** goddess of wisdom, who shared the honors at Delphi with Apollo. The remains here are quite fragmentary, except for the large 4th-century-B.C. gymnasium, and you might choose simply to wander about and enjoy the site without trying too hard to figure out what's what. The round 4th-century-B.C. tholos with its three graceful standing Doric columns is easy to spot—but no one knows why the building was constructed, why it was so lavishly decorated, or what went on inside. Again, the oracle is silent.

✆ **22650/82-313.** Admission (which includes the museum) 9€ ($13). Site only, 6€ ($8.70). Summer Mon–Fri 7:30am–6:30pm, Sat–Sun and holidays 8:30am–3pm; winter usually daily 8:30am–3pm. (Be sure to check these hours when you arrive in Delphi, as they can change without warning.)

A DAY TRIP FROM DELPHI: ARACHOVA ★★

The mountain village of Arachova, 10km (6¼ miles) north of Delphi, clings to Mount Parnassus some 945m (3,100 ft.) above sea level. For generations, Arachova was famous for its hand-loomed tagari shoulder bags, heavy blankets, and fluffy flokakia rugs; now, alas, many are machine-loomed and imported. When several tour buses stop here during the daytime, the tiny village can be seriously crowded. Don't despair—come in the evening, when the shops are still open and the cafes and restaurants allow you to escape from the tourist world of Delphi to the village world of Greece—except, of course, in winter, when Athenian skiers in après-ski outfits roam the village. Arachova is also very crowded at Easter and at St. George's Day (Apr 23), which often falls close to Easter. Year-round, in decent weather, there's usually an energetic evening *volta* (stroll) on the main street, and if you climb the steep stairs to the upper town, you'll find yourself on quiet neighborhood streets where children play and families sit and chat in front of their homes.

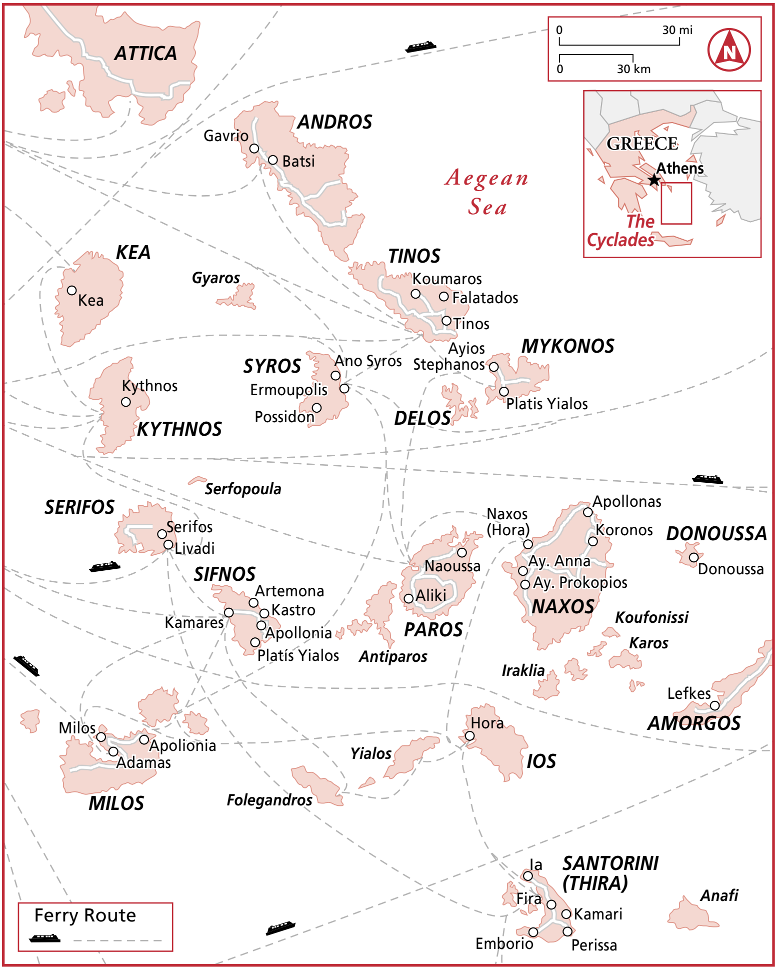
On the main street, a string of shops offer local weavings and crafts, reproductions of antiques, and local cheeses. **Anemi** (✆ **22670/31-701**) often has nice antiques and reproductions. For lunch or dinner, try one of the restaurants strung along the main street with its lovely freshwater springs and cafes: **Taverna Karathanassi** (✆ **22670/31-360**), **Taverna Dasargyri** (also known as Barba Iannis; ✆ **22670/31-391**), or **Taverna Kaplanis** (✆ **22670/31-891**). The Dasargyri has tasty *loukanika* (sausages) and delicious *kokoretsi,* the stuffed entrails that are perhaps not to every traveler's taste. No credit cards are accepted. All are open daily approximately from noon to midnight but sometimes close from about 4 to 7pm. Expect to pay about 15€ to 20€ ($22–$29) for dinner at all these restaurants; in winter, prices are often higher. Meals, featuring roasts and grills perked up with excellent *skordalia* (a garlic-potato sauce that the novice may suspect is almost 100% pure garlic) cost from 20€ ($29). If you want to dance the night (and the garlic!) away, head for **Snow Me** (✆ **6944/341-317**), a popular disco cafe.

If you want to stay in Arachova, The **Anemolia** (✆ **22670/31-640;** www.anemolia.gr) has 52 rooms on a hill just outside Arachova above the Delphi road. Originally a member of the Best Western chain, it has large, comfortable rooms. Doubles run about 100€ ($145), except on weekends, when prices can easily be 50€ ($73) higher. The dining room is unexceptional. If you want to be in town, both the **Paradisiakos Xenonas Maria** (✆ **22670/31-803;** www.mariarooms.com) and the **Xenonas Generali** (✆ **22670/31-529;** www.generalis-xenon.com) occupy handsomely restored 19th-century *arkontika* (town houses). Doubles at the Maria, which has four rooms and four studios with fridge and hot plate, from 100€ ($145); doubles at the Generali, which has an indoor plunge-pool and sauna, from 200€ ($290). If you want a room (or suite, or villa) with a Jacuzzi, in a "boutique retreat" on the slopes of Parnassus that aims to re-create a "private village," with two pools, a spa, tennis courts, and fitness center, head for the **Santa Marina Arachova Resort and Spa** (✆ **22670/31-955;** www.santa-marina.gr); doubles from 200€ ($290). Their sister hotel, the **Santa Marina Arachova** (✆ **22670/31-230;** www.santa-marina.gr) in the village, has doubles from 140€ to 240€ ($203–$348); guests here can use the resort hotel's spa facilities. Both hotels are decorated in lavish country-hotel style, with libraries with fireplaces, dark well-polished wood furniture, and enormous beds heaped with comfy pillows. All of these hotels are usually full on winter weekends, when Greeks flock here to ski Parnassus.

3 The Cyclades

When most people think of the "Isles of Greece," they're thinking of the Cyclades, the rugged (even barren) chain of Aegean islands whose villages of dazzling white houses look from a distance like so many sugar cubes. The Cyclades got their name from the ancient Greek word meaning "to circle," or surround, because the island chain

The Cyclades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Kamares
Apollonia
Platís Yialos
Antiparos
Naxos (Hora)
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Apollonas
Koronos
Ay. Anna
Ay. Prokopios
NAXOS
DONOUSSA
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Koufonissi
Karos
Iraklia
Lefkes
AMORGOS
Milos
Apolionia
Adamas
MILOS
Yialos
Hora
IOS
Folegandros
Ia
SANTORINI (THIRA)
Fira
Kamari
Emborio
Perissa
Anafi
Ferry Route

encircles the sacred island of Delos. Today, especially in the summer, it's the visitors who circle these islands, taking advantage of the swift island boats and hydrofoils that link them. The visitors come to see the white villages, the blue-domed chapels, and the fiery sunsets over the cobalt blue sea. They also come to relax in chic boutique hotels, eat in varied and inventive restaurants, and to enjoy an ouzo—or a chocolate martini—in some of the best bars and cafes in Greece. On many of these islands, the capital town has the name of the island itself. It's also sometimes called "Hora," or "Chora," a term meaning "the place" that's commonly used for the most important regional town.

Mykonos, with its dazzling architecture, superb tradition of weaving, and poverty—all of which made it susceptible to the tourist trade—was the first of the islands to become popular in the 1960s. Although the Beautiful People may have moved on, Mykonos remains a favorite—hence, expensive—island, especially in the summer, when reservations are imperative. The crescent of **Santorini (Thira),** with its black-sand beaches and blood-red cliffs, is all that remains of the island that was blown apart in antiquity by a volcano that still steams and hisses today. Santorini's exceptional physical beauty, dazzling relics, and elegant restaurants and boutiques make it contend with Mykonos for the title of the most popular Cycladic island. Unfortunately, Santorini's charms draw so many day-trippers from cruise ships that the island almost sinks under the weight of tourists each summer. **Tinos,** whose hills are dotted with elaborate dovecotes, is the most important destination in all Greece for religious pilgrims, yet it remains one of the least commercialized islands of the Cyclades—and a joy to visit for that reason. Remember, however, that all these islands are seriously crowded between June and September.

Tip: You can access a useful website for each of the Cyclades by entering "www.greeka.com/cyclades" and the name of the island. For example, www.greeka.com/cyclades/santorini.

GETTING TO THE CYCLADES

BY AIR **Olympic Airways** (✆ **210/966-6666** or 210/936-9111; www.olympic-airways.gr) offers daily flights between Athens and the Santorini airport at Monolithos (which also receives European charters). There are connections with Mykonos five times per week, service three or four times per week to and from Rhodes, and service two or three times per week to and from Iraklion, Crete. **Aegean Airlines** (✆ **210/998-2888,** or 210/998-8300 in Athens), with an office at the Monolithos airport (✆ **22860/28-500**), also has service in summer between Athens and Santorini and Mykonos.

BY SEA **Ferries** leave daily from Athens's main port of Piraeus and from Rafina, the port east of Athens; Confirm ferry schedules with the Athens **GNTO** (✆ **210/870-0000;** www.gnto.gr), the **Piraeus Port Authority** (✆ **210/451-1311** or 1440 or 1441; phone not always answered), or the Rafina Port Police (✆ **22940/22-300**). The speedy **Seajet** (✆ **210/414-1250**) catamaran service also departs from Rafina and zips between Andros, Syros, Tinos, Mykonos, Paros, Naxos, and Santorini (Thira).

It can take an hour for the 27km (17-mile) bus ride from Athens to Rafina (the most convenient port for Mykonos and Tinos), but you save about an hour of sailing time and usually about 20% on the fare. Buses leave every 30 minutes from 6am to 10pm from 29 Mavromateon (✆ **210/821-0872**), near Areos Park north of the National Archaeological Museum (indicated on most city maps).

In the summer there's regular ferry service to Iraklio, Crete, from Piraeus, the port of Athens. There are also ferry and hydrofoil connections several times a week between Mykonos and Kos and Rhodes; twice a week between Mykonos and Skyros, Skiathos, and Thessaloniki; daily between Tinos and Paros and Syros, and two or three times a week between Syros and the Dodecanese.

easyCruise in Greece

In 2007, Sir Stelios Haji-Ioannou, the endlessly energetic Cypriot founder of easyJet and a myriad other easy-companies, added Greece to his easyCruise options. For detailed itineraries and prices, check out www.easycruise.com.

Tips The Wind & the Sea

The winds frequently complicate sea travel on the Aegean. For this reason, plan to arrive back in Athens from the islands **at least** 24 hours before you have to make any critical air or sea connections. In July the strong winds known as the *meltemi* usually kick up, often playing havoc with hydrofoil schedules. The larger ferries still run—although if you're prone to seasickness, take precautions. In the winter the strong north winds *(vorias)* frequently make sea travel impossible for days at a time. This is still one of the best ways to travel and enjoy Greece—but, perhaps, as we say in Greece: *siga, siga* (slowly, slowly)—with all the more time to enjoy the moment.

Remember: Almost all of the rural Greek National Tourist Offices (EOT) have been turned over to local authorities. In most cases, the office remains at the same address, with the same phone and work hours; but call in advance to make sure.

GETTING AROUND THE CYCLADES

Although there is frequent ferry service between most of the islands, schedules can be erratic, and service diminishes suddenly at the end of the season. Changes in the line that serves an island can occur with little—or no—advance warning. To further complicate matters, a line will often authorize only one agent to sell tickets or limit the number of tickets available to an agency, giving other agents little incentive to tout its service. (For specifics, see "Getting There," under "Essentials," for each island.)

For information on cruises, contact the **Greek National Tourist Organization** (✆ **212/421-5777** in New York, 020/7734-5997 in London, or 210/331-0437 or 210/870-0000 in Athens; www.gnto.gr) or the **Greek Island Cruise Center** (✆ **800/342-3030** in the U.S.). **Sea Cloud Cruises** (✆ **888/732-2568** in the U.S.) uses a four-masted private yacht that takes up to 60 passengers on Aegean cruises.

MYKONOS ★★★

What makes this small (about 16km/10 miles long; pop. 15,000), arid island so popular? At least initially, it was the exceptionally handsome Cycladic architecture—and the fact that many on the poor island were more than eager to rent their houses to visitors. First came the jet-setters, artists, and expatriates (including a number of sophisticated gay visitors), as well as the mainland Greeks who opened many of the chic shops and restaurants—all followed by a curious mixture of jet-set wannabes and backpackers. Now, with cruise ships lined up in the harbor all summer and as many as 10 flights each day from Athens, it's easier to say who *doesn't* come to Mykonos than who does. That's why it's very important not to arrive here without reservations in July and August (when it can feel as if every one of the island's annual 800,000 visitors is here), unless you enjoy sleeping outdoors—and don't mind being moved from your sleeping spot by the police, who are not always charmed to find foreigners alfresco.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **By Air** Mykonos is served by Olympic Airways (www.olympic-airways.gr) and Aegean Airlines (www.aegeanair.com). Although there may be as many as 10 flights from Athens to Mykonos a day in summer, it's usually impossible to get a last-minute seat, so book well in advance.

By Boat Mykonos now has two ports: the old port in Mykonos town, and the new port north of Mykonos town at Tourlos. Check before you travel to find out which port your boat will use. From Piraeus, **The Blue Star Ithaki** (www.ferries.gr) has departures once daily at 7:30am. The **Pegasus** has two weekly departures during summer at 7:30pm (Mon and Sat). The **High Speed** has two departures daily, at 7:15am and 4:45pm and the **Marina** has three departures weekly at 11:50pm on Tuesdays, and 5pm Thursday and Saturday. From Rafina, **the Super Ferry** has one departure at 8am daily; the **Super Jet 2** has two departures daily at 7:40am and 4pm. The **Aqua Jewel** has one departure daily at 5pm while the **Penelope** leaves at 7:35pm daily. **High Speed** boats, lines **2** and **3,** have daily afternoon departures at 7:30pm and 4:30pm respectively. Schedules can be checked with the **port police** (✆ **22890/22-218**). There are daily ferry connections between Mykonos and Andros, Paros, Syros, and Tinos; five to seven trips a week to Ios; four a week to Iraklio, Crete; several a week to Kos and Rhodes; and two a week to Ikaria, Samos, Skiathos, Skyros, and Thessaloniki. **Hellas Flying Dolphins** offers service from **Piraeus** (✆ **210/419-9100** or 210/419-9000; www.dolphins.gr) in summer. From the port of Lavrio, the Fly Cat 3 has an 11:15am departure daily to Mykonos.

On Mykonos, your best bet for getting up-to-date lists of sailings is to check at individual agencies. Or you can check with the **port authority** by National Bank (✆ **22890/22-218**), **tourist police** at the north end of the harbor (✆ **22890/22-482**), or **tourist office,** also on the harbor (✆ **22890/23-990;** fax 22890/22-229).

Hydrofoil service to Crete, Ios, Paros, and Santorini is often irregular. For information, check at **Piraeus Port Authority** (✆ **210/451-1311** or 210/422-6000; phone seldom answered); **Piraeus Port Police** (✆ **210/451-1310**); Rafina Port Police (✆ **22940/23-300**), or Mykonos Port Police (✆ **22890/22-218**).

Warning: Check each travel agency's current schedule, because most ferry tickets are not interchangeable. Reputable agencies on the main square in Mykonos (Hora) town include **Sunspots Travel** (✆ **22890/24-196;** fax 22890/23-790); **Delia Travel** (✆ **22890/22-490;** fax 22890/24-440); **Sea & Sky Travel** (✆ **22890/22-853;** fax 22890/24-753); and **Veronis Agency** (✆ **22890/22-687;** fax 22890/23-763).

VISITOR INFORMATION **Mykonos Accommodations Center,** at the corner of Enoplon Dhinameon and Malamatenias (✆ **22890/23-160;** www.mykonos-accommodation.com), helps visitors find accommodations. It also functions as a tourist information center. **Windmills Travel** ★ (✆ **22890/23-877;** www.windmillstravel.com) has an office at Fabrica Square where you can get general information, book accommodations, arrange excursions, and rent a car or moped. Look for the free *Mykonos Summertime* magazine, available in cafes, shops, and hotels throughout the island.

TOWN LAYOUT Legend has it that the streets of Mykonos town—which locals call Hora—were designed to confuse pirates, so your own confusion will be understandable. As you get off the ferry, you can see the main square south across the harbor beyond the small town beach and a cluster of buildings; we refer to it as **Taxi Square,** although it's officially called Plateia Manto Mavroyenous, after a local heroine. Here you'll find several travel agents, kiosks, snack bars, and, of course, the town's taxi stand.

The main street, **Matoyanni,** leads south off Taxi Square behind the church; it's narrow, but you can hardly miss the bars, boutiques, and restaurants. Several "blocks" along it you'll find a "major" cross street, **Kaloyera,** and by turning right, you'll find

Tips Finding an Address

Although some shops hand out maps of Mykonos town, you'll probably do better finding restaurants, hotels, and attractions by asking people to point you in the right direction—and saying *efcharisto* (thank you) when they do. Don't panic at how to pronounce *efcharisto*; think of it as a name and say "F. Harry Stowe." Most streets do not have their names posted. Also, maps leave off lots of small, twisting, streets—and Mykonos has almost nothing but small, twisting, streets! The map published by **Stamatis Bozinakis,** sold at most kiosks for 2€ ($2.90), is quite decent. The useful **Mykonos Sky Map** is free at some hotels and shops.

several of the hotels and restaurants we recommend. If you get lost—and you will—remember that in Mykonos that's part of the fun.

GETTING AROUND **By Foot** One of Hora's greatest assets is the government decree that made the town an architectural landmark and prohibited motorized traffic on its streets. If you don't arrive with your donkey or bicycle, you can walk around town. Many of the town's large hotels ring the busy peripheral road, and a good bus system serves much of the rest of the island.

By Bus Mykonos has one of the best bus systems in the Greek islands; the buses run frequently and on schedule. Depending on your destination, a ticket costs about .50€ to 4€ (75¢–$5.80). There are two bus stations in Hora: one near the archaeological museum and one near the Olympic Airways office (follow the helpful blue signs). At the tourist office, find out from which station the bus you want leaves, or look for schedules in hotels. Bus information in English is sometimes available from the **KTEL** office (✆ **22890/23-360**).

By Boat Caiques to Super Paradise, Agrari, and Elia depart from Platis Yialos every morning, weather permitting; there is also service from Ornos in high season (July–Aug) only. Caique service is highly seasonal, with almost continuous service in high season and no caiques October through May. Excursion boats to Delos depart Tuesday through Sunday between 8:30am and 1pm, from the west side of the harbor near the tourist office. (For more information, see a travel agent; guided tours are available.)

By Car & Moped Rental cars are available from about 50€ ($73) per day, including insurance, in high season; most agencies are near one of the two bus stops in town. **Windmills Travel** (see "Visitor Information," above) can arrange a car rental for you and get good prices. The largest concentration of moped shops is just beyond the south bus station. Expect to pay about 15€ to 30€ ($22–$44) per day, depending on the moped's engine size. Take great care when driving: Many drivers here are new to the island and unfamiliar with the roads.

Warning: If you park in town or in a no-parking area, the police will remove your license plates. You—not the rental office—will have to find the police station and pay a steep fine to get them back.

By Taxi There are two types of taxis in Mykonos: standard **car taxis** for destinations outside town, and tiny, cart-towing **scooters** that buzz through the narrow streets of Hora. The latter are seen primarily at the port, where they wait to bring new arrivals to their lodgings in town—a good idea, since most in-town hotels are a challenge to find. Getting a car taxi in Hora is easy: Walk to Taxi (Mavro) Square, near the statue, and join the line. A notice board gives rates for various destinations. You can also call **Mykonos Radio Taxi** (✆ **22890/22-400**).

FAST FACTS **Commercial Bank** and **National Bank of Greece** are on the harbor a couple of blocks west of Taxi Square; both are open Monday through Friday from 8am to 2pm. ATMs are available throughout town. **Mykonos Health Center** (✆ **22890/23-994** or 22890/23-996) handles routine medical complaints; serious cases are usually airlifted to the mainland. The **tourist police** (✆ **22890/22-482**) are on the west side of the port near the ferries to Delos; the local **police** (✆ **22890/22-235**) are behind the grammar school, near Plateia Laka. The **post office** (✆ **22890/22-238**) is next to the police station; it's open Monday through Friday from 7:30am to 2pm. The **telephone office (OTE)** is on the north side of the harbor beyond the Hotel Leto (✆ **22890/22-499**), open Monday through Friday 7:30am to 3pm. **Internet access** is expensive here: Mykonos Cyber Cafe, 26 M. Axioti, on the road between the south bus station and the windmills (✆ **22890/27-684**), is open daily 9am to 10pm and charges 16€ ($23) per hour or 5€ ($7.25) for 15 minutes. Angelo's Internet Cafe, on the same road (✆ **22890/24-106**), may have lower rates.

WHERE TO STAY

In summer, reserve a room 1 to 3 months in advance (or more), if possible. Ferry arrivals are often met by a throng of people hawking rooms, some in small hotels, others in private homes. If you don't have a hotel reservation, one of these rooms may be very welcome. Many hotels are fully booked all summer by tour groups or regular patrons. Keep in mind that Mykonos is an easier, more pleasant place to visit in the late spring or early fall. Off-season hotel rates are sometimes half the quoted high-season rate. Also note that many small hotels, restaurants, and shops close in winter, especially if business is slow.

Mykonos Accommodations Center (MAC), 10 Enoplon Dinameon (✆ **22890/23-160** or 22890/23-408; fax 22890/24-137; www.mykonos-accommodation.com), is a very helpful service, especially if you are looking for hard-to-find inexpensive lodgings. The service is free when you book a hotel stay of 3 nights or longer. If you plan a shorter stay, ask about the fee, which is sometimes a percentage of the tab and sometimes a flat fee.

In & Around Hora

Belvedere Hotel ★★ The all-white oasis of the Belvedere, in part occupying a handsomely restored 1850s town house on the main road into town, has stunning views over the town and harbor, a few minutes' walk away. Stay here if you want many of the creature comforts of Mykonos's beach resorts, but prefer to be within walking distance of Hora. Rooms are nicely, if not distinctively, furnished. The ultrachic poolside scene buzzes all night and day, in part due to Nobu Matsuhisa's only open-air restaurant, the impeccable **Matsuhisha Mykonos** (see "Where to Dine," below). In season, the hotel often offers massage, salon, and barber service. Off season, look for excellent specials; after a 4-night stay, this might be a free jeep for a day or a fifth night free.

Hora, 84600 Mykonos. ✆ **22890/25-122.** Fax 22890/25-126. www.belvederehotel.com. 48 units. 230€–460€ ($334–$667) double; 650€ ($943) suites. Rates include American buffet breakfast. Considerable off-season reductions. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; pool; fitness center; Jacuzzi; sauna. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, Internet.

Cavo Tagoo ★★ This exceptional hotel set into a cliff with spectacular views over Mykonos town is hard to resist—and consistently makes it onto *Odyssey* magazine's list of 10 best Greek hotels. Hora's harbor is only a 15-minute walk away, although you may find it hard to budge: A saltwater pool and a good restaurant are right here. Cavo Tagoo's island-style architecture has won awards, and its gleaming marble floors, nicely crafted wooden furniture, queen- and king-size beds, and local-style weavings are a genuine pleasure. Elegantly minimalist with marble, spacious bathrooms and large balconies with stunning sea vistas, Cavo Tagoo features suites with private pools, a Spa Center, stunning lounge, and pool areas.

Hora, 84600 Mykonos. ✆ **22890/23-692** to -695. Fax 22890/24-923. www.cavotagoo.gr. 69 units. 225€–420€ ($327–$609) double. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Closed Nov–Mar. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; saltwater pool; gym; sauna. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, Internet.

Elysium ★★ The smartest gay hotel on the island is located on a steep hillside right in the old town; a walk down the steep hill will have you back in town in 3 minutes. Gardens, a pool, great views, a gym, sauna, and a very relaxed atmosphere keep guests returning again and again.

Mykonos Old Town, 84600 Mykonos. ✆ **22890/23-952.** Fax 22890/23-747. www.elysiumhotel.com. 42 units. 180€ ($261) double; 246€ ($357) suite; 800€–1,126€ ($1,160–$1,633) royal suite. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Bar/cafe; pool; gym; sauna; spa; hydromassage. In *room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer, safe, Internet.

Philippi Hotel ★ Each room in this homey little hotel in the heart of Mykonos town is different, so you might want to have a look at several before choosing yours. The owner tends the garden that often provides flowers for her son's restaurant, the Philippi (see "Where to Dine," below), which can be reached through the garden.

25 Kaloyera, Hora, 84600 Mykonos. ✆ **22890/22-294.** Fax 22890/24-680. 13 units. 90€ ($131) double. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Restaurant; breakfast room.

Zorzis Hotel★ For a completely different experience, you might like to try this unique option in town. Set inside a traditional 16th-century building in the center of town, the rooms at Zorzis have Casablanca ceiling fans, wooden antique furniture, and antique Louis XV beds; this is truly like taking a few stylish steps back in time.

30 Kalogear Street, Hora, 84600 Mykonos. ✆ **22890/22-167.** Fax 22890/24-168. www.zorzishotel.com. 10 units. 200€ ($290) double. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; cafe; pool; gym; spa. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Internet.

Around the Island

Although most visitors prefer to stay in Hora and commute to the beaches, there are hotels near many of the more popular island beaches.

There are private studios and simple pensions at Paradise and Super Paradise beaches; but rooms are almost impossible to get, and prices more than double in July and August. Contact the **Mykonos Accommodations Center** (✆ **22890/23-160**)—or, for Super Paradise, **GATS Travel** (✆ **22890/22-404**)—for information on the properties they represent. The tavernas at each beach may also have suggestions.

AT KALAFATI The sprawling **Aphrodite Hotel** (✆ **22890/71-367**) has a large pool, two restaurants, and 150 rooms. It's a good value in May, June, and October, when a double costs from 100€ ($145). This place is popular with tour groups and Greek families.

AT ORNOS BAY ★★ Elegant **Kivotos Club Hotel** ★★, Ornos Bay, 84600 Mykonos (✆ **22890/25-795;** fax 22890/22-844; www.kivotosclubhotel.gr), is a small, superb luxury hotel about 3km (2 miles) outside Mykonos town. Most of the 45 individually decorated units overlook the Bay of Ormos, but if you don't want to walk that far for a swim, head for the saltwater or freshwater pool, the Jacuzzi and sauna, or the pool with an underwater sound system piping in music! Kivotos Clubhouse is small enough to be intimate and tranquil; the service (including frozen towels for poolside guests on hot days) gets raves from guests. If you're ever tempted to leave, the hotel minibus will whisk you into town. You can easily dine at the several restaurants on-site. The hotel also has a traditional sailing ship, at the ready for spur-of-the moment sails. This popular honeymoon destination appears often on *Odyssey* magazine's annual list of the best hotels in Greece. Doubles cost 290€ to 390€ ($421–$566); suites are priced from 650€ to 1,000€ ($943–$1,450).

The enormous **Santa Marina,** also at Ornos Bay (✆ **22890/23-200;** fax 22890/23-412; info@santa-marina.gr), has 90 suites and villas on 8 landscaped hectares (20 acres) overlooking the bay. If you don't want to swim in the sea, two pools and spa facilities are available at the hotel, which has its own restaurant as well. Suites with private pool are available from 1,500€ ($2175). Doubles cost from 395€ to 600€ ($573–$870); suites and villas from 625€ to 2,400€ ($906–$3,480).

The more modest 25-unit **Best Western Dionysos Hotel** (✆ **22890/23-313**) is steps from the beach and has a pool, restaurant, bar, and air-conditioned rooms with fridges and TV; doubles cost from 190€ ($276). The even more modest 42-unit **Hotel Yiannaki** (✆ **22890/23-393**) is about 200m (656 ft.) away from the beach and has its own pool and restaurant; doubles begin at 125€ ($181). The nicest units have sea views and balconies.

Tips: Families traveling with children will find staying at one of the Ornos Bay hotels especially appealing. The beach is excellent and slopes into shallow, calm water. Furthermore, this is not one of Mykonos's all-night party beaches. If your hotel does not have watersports facilities, several of the local tavernas have surfboards and pedal boats to rent, as well as umbrellas. One minus: The beach is close to the airport, so you will hear planes come and go.

AT PLATI YIALOS The large and comfortable rooms of the 82-unit **Hotel Petassos Bay,** Plati Yialos, 84600 Mykonos (✆ **22890/23-737;** fax 22890/24-101), all have air-conditioning and minibars. Doubles go for about 150€ ($218). Each has a balcony overlooking the relatively secluded beach, which is less than 36m (132 ft.) away. The hotel has a good-size pool, sun deck, Jacuzzi, gym, and sauna. It offers free round-trip transportation to and from the harbor or airport, safety-deposit boxes, and laundry service. The new seaside restaurant has a great view and serves a big buffet breakfast (a smaller continental breakfast is included in the room rate).

AT AYIOS IOANNIS **Mykonos Grand** is a 100-room luxury resort a few kilometers out of Hora in Ayios Ioannis, 84600 Mykonos (✆ **22890/25-555;** www.mykonosgrand.gr). With its own beach and many amenities—pools, tennis, squash, Jacuzzis, a spa—this is a very sybaritic place. The Mykonos Grand regularly appears on *Odyssey* magazine's list of the 50 best hotels in Greece and is popular with Greeks, Europeans, and Americans. Doubles start at 225€ ($326). The **St. John Hotel,** Ayios Ioannis, 84600 Mykonos (✆ **22890/28-752;** fax 22890/28-751; www.saintjohn.gr), has 148 doubles from 310€ ($450) and 9 suites from 590€ ($856). On a hillside overlooking the Aegean, the St. John was built to suggest a traditional blue-and-white Cycladic village—albeit one complete with a superb restaurant and fitness spa, three pools, its own private beach, and a private chapel.

AT AYIOS STEPHANOS This popular resort, about 4km (2½ miles) north of Hora, has a number of hotels. Most close from November to March. The 38-unit boutique hotel beauty, **Mykonos Grace** ★★, Ayios Stefanos, 84600 Mykonos (✆ **22890/26-690;** www.mykonosgrace.com), 230€ to 330€ ($334–$479) double; 320€ to 420€ ($464–$609) junior suite, won *Odyssey* magazine's "Best New Entry" award for 2007 and was singled out by The *London Sunday Times* as one of the hippest new hotels of 2007 after its complete face-lift that year. Rooms range from standard to VIP suites, all with minimalistic design. Decor, food, privacy, pools and Jacuzzis all get high marks—as do the prices, which are less extravagant than at some of Mykonos's other boutique hotels. It's only a 5-minute walk to town to boot. Other hotels here include the 38-unit **Princess of Mykonos,** Ayios Stephanos beach, 84600 Mykonos (✆ **22890/23-806;** fax 22890/23-031) with bungalows, a gym, a pool, and an excellent beach; doubles cost from 180€ ($261). **Hotel Artemis,** Ayios Stephanos, 84600 Mykonos (✆ **22890/22-345**), near the beach and bus stop, offers 23 units from 115€ ($167), breakfast included. Small but good value **Hotel Mina,** Ayios Stephanos, 84600 Mykonos (✆ **22890/23-024**), uphill behind the Artemis, has 15 doubles that go for 80€ ($116).

AT PSARROU BEACH **Grecotel Mykonos Blu** ★★, Psarrou Beach, 84600 Mykonos (✆ **22890/27-900;** fax 22890/27-783; www.grecotel.gr), is another of the island's serious luxury hotels with award-winning Cyclades-inspired architecture. Like Cavo Tagoo and Kivotos, this place is popular with wealthy Greeks, honeymooners, and jet-setters. The private beach, large pool, and in-house Poets of the Aegean restaurant allow guests to be as lazy as they wish (although there is a fitness club and spa for the energetic). Doubles run from 250€ to 450€ ($363–$653).

WHERE TO DINE

In addition to our suggestions on where to eat in Hora, here are some tips on where to eat when you are out on the island: On Psarou Beach, **N'Ammos** (✆ **22890/22-440**) with its casual elegance, varied menu (lobster-pumpkin risotto, anyone?) and beachfront setting is one of the island's finest restaurants; entrees start at 25€ ($36). At Ayios Sostis Beach, **Kiki's Taverna** reminds everyone of the Greece that was: a small taverna (no phone, no sign, no electricity!) with a garden, where perfect grills and salads are served; entrees start at 8€ ($12). At Fokos Beach, the **Fokos** (✆ **22890/23-205**) has local meat and fish with fresh veggies flown in—are you ready—from the owners' garden on Crete; entrees start at 8€ ($12).

Camares Cafe (✆ **22890/28-570**), on Mavroyenous (Taxi) Square, has light meals and a fine view of the harbor from its terrace. It's open 24 hours and, for Mykonos, is very reasonably priced. Try the "striftopita" or crispy fried "xinotiro' (bitter cheese) and the thyme-scented grilled lamb chops (9am–2am; no credit cards). As is usual on the islands, most of the harborside tavernas are expensive and mediocre, although **Kounelas** on the harbor (no phone; no credit cards) is still a good value for fresh fish—as attested to by the presence of locals dining here.

Restaurants come and go here, so check with other travelers or locals as to what's just opened and is getting good reviews.

Antonini's ★ GREEK Antonini's is one of the oldest of Mykonos's restaurants, and it serves consistently decent stews, chops, and mezedes. Locals still eat here, although in summer they tend to leave the place to tourists.

Plateia Manto, Hora. ✆ **22890/22-319.** Main courses 9€–18€ ($13–$26). No credit cards. Summer daily noon–3pm and 7pm–1am. Usually closed Nov–Mar.

Edem Restaurant ★ GREEK/CONTINENTAL This is one of the oldest restaurants in Hora, with a reputation for good food built over 30 years. Tables are clustered around a courtyard pool—diners have been known to make a splash upon arrival with a preprandial swim—and the sunny courtyard is a pleasant place to enjoy a leisurely dinner even if you aren't dressed for the water. Edem is known especially for its variety of lamb dishes and fresh fish—but the eclectic menu includes steak, pasta, and a variety of traditional Greek and Continental dishes. The service is good and the produce as fresh as you'll see on Mykonos.

Above Panachra Church, Hora. ✆ **22890/23-355.** Reservations recommended July–Aug. Main courses 8€–30€ ($12–$44); fish priced by the kilo. AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 6pm–1am. In off season, sometimes open for lunch. Walk up Matoyianni, turn left on Kaloyera, and follow the signs up and to the left.

Interni ★★ ASIAN FUSION With its avant-garde space and exceptional fusion cuisine, Interni is one of the island's most fashionable restaurants. A happening bar scene is popular with affluent young Athenians, but the attraction here is the cuisine. Consider the marinated salmon and stir-fried seafood noodles and you will see what all the fuss is about.

Hora, Matoyanni. ✆ **22890/26-333.** www.interni.gr. Main courses 18€–40€ ($26–$58). DC, V. Daily 8pm–2am.

Matsuhisha Mykonos ★★ JAPANESE/SOUTH AMERICAN Nobu Matsuhisha has extended his sushi empire to this, his only open-air restaurant in the most happening hotel in town, the Belvedere. Right by the hotel's pool, with views of the sea and town, try the exceptional Japanese cuisine with Latin influences that will have you yearning for more, despite the high prices. Top-quality ingredients and sushi are flown in daily from Japan. Begin with a Sakepirnha, the famous Brazilian cocktail made with sake instead of cachaca and then continue to pick your way through the chef's choice tasting menu.

At the Belvedere Hotel, Hora. ✆ **22890/25-122.** Reservations essential July–Sept. Main courses 68€–82€ ($99–$119). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 8pm–1am.

Philippi ★ GREEK/CONTINENTAL One of the island's most romantic dining experiences, Philippi is in a quiet garden. Old Greek favorites share space on the menu with French dishes and a more than usually impressive wine list. What this restaurant provides in abundance is atmosphere, and that's what has made it a perennial favorite.

Just off Matoyianni and Kaloyera behind the eponymous hotel, Hora. ✆ **22890/22-294.** Reservations recommended July–Aug. Main courses 10€–25€ ($15–$36). AE, MC, V. Daily 7pm–1am.

Sea Satin Market ★★ GREEK/SEAFOOD Below the windmills, beyond the small beach adjacent to Little Venice, the paralia ends in a rocky headland facing the open sea. This is the remarkable location of one of Hora's most charming restaurants. Set apart from the clamor of the town, it's one of the quietest spots in the area. On a still summer night just after sunset, the atmosphere is all you could hope for on a Greek island. At the front of the restaurant, the kitchen activity is on view along with the day's catch sizzling on the grill. You can make a modest meal on mezedes here, or let it rip with grilled bon filet. A couple of readers have recently mentioned "nonchalant" and "slow" service; let us know what you think.

Near the Mitropolis Cathedral, Hora. ✆ **22890/24-676.** Main courses 20€–45€ ($29–$65). No credit cards. Daily 6:30pm–12:30am.

EXPLORING THE ISLAND

Even if you're here for the beaches or to visit the island of Delos, you'll probably want to spend some time exploring Hora, enjoying the twists and turns of the narrow streets, and admiring the harborfront's resident pelican. Try to remember to make haste slowly, and enjoy the unexpected sights you'll see when you (inevitably!) get lost in Hora's maze of narrow passageways. Keep in mind that the town is bounded on two sides by the bay, and on the other two by the busy vehicular District Road, and that all paths funnel eventually into one of the main squares: **Plateia Mantos Mavroyenous,** on the port (called **Taxi Square** because it's the main taxi stand); **Plateia Tria Pigadia;** and **Plateia Laka,** near the south bus station.

As you wander, you'll see Hora's small **Venetian Kastro** (fortress) and the island's most famous church, the **Panagia Paraportiani (Our Lady of the Postern Gate),** a thickly whitewashed asymmetrical edifice made up of four small chapels. Beyond the Panagia Paraportiani is the Alefkandra quarter, better known as **Little Venice** ★★, for its cluster of homes built overhanging the sea. This is the place to have that martini or margarita in one of the cheek-by-jowl edgy bars with drop-dead sunset views. Another place for sunset views and sundowners: the famous **Tria Pigadia (Three Wells)** ★★. Local legend says that if a virgin drinks from all three she is sure to find a husband, but it's probably not a good idea to test this hypothesis by drinking the brackish well water. After you visit the Tria Pigadia, you may want to take in the famous **windmills** of **Kato Myli** and enjoy the views back toward Little Venice and out to sea.

Mykonos has a clutch of (largely neglected) small museums; visit almost any one and you may have it to yourself—and learn a lot about the island. Many of the museums keep somewhat irregular hours, but if one is closed, another is nearby. The **Nautical Museum of the Aegean** (✆ **22890/22-700**), across from the park on Enoplon Dinameon Street, has just what you'd expect, including some handsome ship models; usually open daily from 10:30am to 1pm and 7 to 9pm; admission is 3€ ($4.35). Also on Enoplon Dinameon Street, **Lena's House** (✆ **22890/22-591**) re-creates the home of a middle-class 19th-century Mykonos family; usually open daily Easter through October; free admission. The **Museum of Folklore** (✆ **22890/25-591**), in a 19th-century sea captain's mansion near the quay, has examples of local crafts and furnishings and a re-created 19th-century island kitchen; usually open Monday through Saturday from 4 to 8pm; admission is free. **The Archaeological Museum** (✆ **22890/22-325**), near the harbor, has finds from Delos; it's open Monday and Wednesday through Saturday from 9am to 3:30pm, Sunday and holidays from 10am to 3pm. Admission is 3€ ($4.35); free on Sunday.

THE SHOPS Mykonos has a lot of shops, mostly selling overpriced souvenirs, clothing, and jewelry to day-trippers from cruise ships. Don't despair: you can see exquisite jewelry at LALAoUNIS**,** 14 Polykandrioti (✆ **22890/22-444**), associated with the famous LALAoUNIS museum and shops in Athens. It has superb reproductions of ancient and Byzantine jewelry as well as original designs. If you can't afford LALAoUNIS, you might check out one of the island's oldest jewelry shops, the **Gold Store,** right on the waterfront (✆ **22890/22-397**). **Soho-Soho**, 81 Matoyanni (✆**22890/26-760**) is by far the best-known clothing store on the island; pictures of its famous clientele (Tom Hanks, Sarah Jessica Parker, and so forth) carrying the store's bags have been in gossip publications around the world. If you want to see some serious works of art, try the **Scala Gallery,** 48 Matoyianni (✆ **22890/23-407; www.scalagallery.gr**), which represents a wide range of contemporary Greek artists and frequently has exhibitions. Nearby on Panahrandou is **Scala II Gallery** (✆ **22890/26-993**), where the overflow from the Scala Gallery is sold at reduced prices. In addition, manager **Dimitris Roussounelos** (✆/fax **22890/26-993;** scala@otenet.gr) of Scala Gallery manages a number of studios and apartments in Hora, so you might find lodgings as well as art at Scala!

There was a time when Mykonos was world-famous for its vegetable-dyed hand-loomed weavings, especially those of the legendary Kuria Vienoula. Today, **Nikoletta** (✆ **22890/27-503**) is one of the few shops where you can still see the island's traditional loomed goods. Eleni Kontiza's tiny shop **Hand Made** (✆ **22890/27-512**), on a lane between Plateia Tria Pigadia and Plateia Laka, has a good selection of hand-woven scarves, rugs, and tablecloths from around Greece.

Works of culinary art can be found at **Skaropoulos** (✆ **22890/24-983**), 1.5km (1 mile) out of Hora on the road to Ano Mera, featuring the Mykonian specialties of Nikos and Frantzeska Koukas. Nikos's grandfather started making confections here in 1921, winning prizes and earning a personal commendation from Winston Churchill. Try their famed *amygdalota* (an almond sweet) or the almond biscuits (Churchill's favorite). You can also find Skaropoulos sweets at **Pantopoleion,** 24 Kaloyerou (✆ **22890/22-078**), along with Greek organic foods and natural cosmetics; the shop is in a beautifully restored 300-year-old Mykonian house. When you finish your shopping, treat yourself to yet another almond treat, from **Efthemios,** 4 Florou Zouganeli (✆ **22890/22-281**), off the harborfront.

THE BEACHES If you've come to Mykonos to find a secluded beach, you have made a serious mistake! People come to Mykonos to see and be seen, whether in their best togs at cafes or naked on nudist beaches. If you want to hit the "in" beaches, take a little time to ask around, because beaches go in and out of favor quickly. Then catch the bus or a caique to the beach of your choice. If you want a quick swim, the closest beach to Hora is **Megali Ammos (Big Sand),** about a 10-minute walk south of town, and usually very crowded.

Plati Yialos is another favorite. It's served by a bus that runs every 15 minutes from 8am to 8pm, and then every 30 minutes until midnight during the summer. If Plati Yialos is too crowded, you can catch a caique there for the more distant beaches of Paradise, Super Paradise, Agrari, and Elia. **Paradise,** the island's most famous nude beach, is popular with the gay crowd despite the wall-to-wall umbrellas.

Paradise is never a quiet experience but it is the premiere party beach of the island and shows no signs of stopping. The **Tropicana Beach Bar** and the **Sunrise Bar** are both havens for the party crowd that go all day, long after the sun has set. On top of the hill, the popular and internationally known **Cavo Paradiso Club,** is a large, open-air nightclub with rotating international DJs and doors that do not open until after 2am. In fact the "cool crowd" begins to arrive only after 5am. On the beach Paradise Club is the club destination from 6pm to midnight and then reopens again from 2am to 6am. One beach party on Paradise you shouldn't miss is the **Full Moon Party,** once a month. The only other party that compares to it is the **Closing Party** every September that has become an island institution. As in most of the island, the water here is breathtakingly beautiful, but hardly anybody comes to Paradise for the sea.

Elia, a 45-minute caique ride from Plati Yialos, is one of the island's best and largest beaches, attracting many nudists, gays, and—thanks to a **Watermania,** a theme park with a water slide—families with children (open daily in season 9am–midnight; 12€/$17 adults, 6€/$8.70 children 11 and under).

Beach Notes

Activity on the beaches is highly seasonal, and all the information offered here pertains only to the months of June through September. The prevailing winds on Mykonos (and throughout the Cyclades) blow from the north, which is why the southern beaches are the most protected and calm. The exception to this rule is a southern wind that occurs periodically during the summer, making the northern beaches more desirable for sunning and swimming. In Mykonos town, this southern wind is heralded by particularly hot temperatures and perfect calm in the harbor. On such days, those in the know will avoid Paradise, Super Paradise, and Elia, heading instead to the northern beaches of Ayios Sostis and Panormos—or simply choose another activity for the day.

The next major beach, **Kalo Livadi (Good Pasture),** a beautiful spot in an idyllic farming valley, is accessible by a scramble over the peninsula east from Elia and by bus from the north station in the summer. This is about as quiet a beach as you will find on Mykonos.

The last resort area on the southern coast accessible by bus from the north station is at **Kalafati,** a fishing village that was once the port for the ancient citadel of Mykonos. It's now dominated by the large Aphrodite Beach Hotel complex. Several miles farther east, accessible by a fairly good road from Kalafati, is **Lia,** which has fine sand, clear water, bamboo windbreaks, and a small taverna.

On the north coast, **Panormos** and **Ayios Sostis** are both popular, but usually less crowded than beaches to the south. As press time, rental chairs and umbrellas were not available at these beaches, but there are several small tavernas.

Beaches to avoid on Mykonos because of pollution, noise, and crowds include **Tourlos** and **Korfos Bay.**

DIVING

The best established dive center is **Mykonos Diving Centre,** at Paradise beach (✆/fax **22890/24-808**), which offers 5-day PADI certification courses in English from about 500€ ($725), including equipment. **Psarou Diving Center** in Mykonos town (✆ **22890/24-808**) has also been around for a long time. As always, before you sign up for lessons, be sure that all instructors are PADI certified. The **Union of Diving Centers in Athens** (✆ **210/411-8909**) usually has up-to-date information. In general, certified divers can join guided dives from 50€ ($73) per dive; beginners can take a 2-hour class and beach dive from 60€ ($87). There's a nearby wreck at a depth of 20 to 35m (65–114 ft.); wreck dives run from 60€ ($87).

MYKONOS AFTER DARK

Mykonos has the liveliest, most abundant (and expensive), and most chameleon-like nightlife—especially gay nightlife—in the Aegean. How much are you going to spend for one drink at a chic spot on Mykonos? As little as 10€ ($15)—and after that, the sky really is the limit here! By the way, don't think that you have to wait until after dark to party: There are plenty of virtually all-day beach parties here, especially at Psarou, Paradise, and Super Paradise Beaches. New places open and shut here every season. I'm not giving phone numbers for these bars and clubs—the official phones simply are not answered at these places, where staff carries and uses private cellphones. At Super Paradise, two loud bar/clubs on opposite sides of the beach cater to gay and mixed crowds, respectively. At Paradise Beach's **Paradise Club,** all-day partying becomes all night around the gigantic swimming pool in the middle of the club, that steals the show with its nightly fireworks.

Back in town, things are less wild and more sophisticated around sunset. For over quarter of a century, **Caprice** has been the island's sunset institution, with chairs lined along its narrow porch overlooking Little Venice, the windmills, and the sea. Other Little Venice hot spots include **Kastro,** near the Paraportiani Church; **Montparnasse; Veranda,** in an old mansion overlooking the water and **Galeraki**, with its wide variety of exotic cocktails (and customers); the in-house art gallery gives this popular spot its name, "Little Gallery."

The Mykonos scene really gets going well after dinner—some of these places are at their liveliest just before dawn. Right at the entrance of town from the old harbor, the Athenian hot spot Spanish restaurant/bar/club **El Pecado (The Sin)** moves to Mykonos in the summer and is famous for its sangria and the rum-based drinks combined with the Latin beats. Right on busy Matoyanni street, in one of the finest people-watching locations, the **Aroma** bar goes day and night. **Uno,** a tiny bar also on Matoyanni, is a popular destination for Athenians—peek inside to see why or join in the fun. Also on Matoyanni, **Pierro's,** is extremely popular with gay visitors and rocks all night long to American and European music. Adjacent **Icarus** is best known for its terrace and late-night drag shows. During the early-evening hours, both bars are so popular that sometimes just walking by is difficult. In Taxi Square, another popular gay club, **Ramrod,** has a terrace with a view over the harbor and live drag shows after midnight. Even though the island used to have a loud and large gay club, it no longer does, so Pierro's after 2am is the closest you get, which quite frankly, is pretty close, as is **Yacht Club.** This very popular mixed bar/club after-hours has wild flirting, drinking, and dancing—in short, a great place to end the night. Being a mixed place, there is something for everybody here.

The **Anchor** plays blues, jazz, and classic rock for its 30-something clients, as do **Argo, Stavros Irish Bar, Celebrities Bar,** and **Scandinavian Bar-Disco.** They draw customers from Ireland, Scandinavia, and quite possibly as far away as Antarctica. If you'd like to sample Greek music and dancing, try **Thalami,** a small club underneath the town hall. For a more intense Greek night out, head to **Guzel**—at Gialos, by the waterfront and near the Taxi Square—the place to experience a super trendy hang out populated mostly by trendy Athenians with Greek and international hits that drive the crowd into a frenzy, with people dancing on the tables and on the bars. Don't be intimidated if you aren't Greek. Go and have a blast!

If having a quiet evening and catching a movie is more your speed, head for **Cinemanto** (✆ **22890/27-190**), which shows films nightly around 9pm. Many films are American; most Greek films have English subtitles.

AN EXCURSION TO THE ISLAND OF DELOS ★★★

There is as much to see at **Delos** as at Olympia and Delphi, and there is absolutely no shade on this blindlingly white marble island covered with shining marble monuments. Just 3km (2 miles) from Mykonos, little Delos was considered by the ancient Greeks to be one of the holiest of sanctuaries, the fixed point around which the other Cycladic islands circled. It was Poseidon who anchored Delos to make a sanctuary for Leto, impregnated by Zeus and pursued by Zeus's aggrieved wife Hera. Here, on Delos, Leto gave birth to Apollo and his sister Artemis; thereafter, Delos was sacred to both gods, although Apollo's sanctuary was the more important. For much of antiquity, people

Tips Carpe Diem

Heavy seas can suddenly prevent boats docking at Delos. Follow the advice of the Roman poet Horace and *carpe diem* (seize the day). Come here as soon as possible; if you decide to save your visit here for your last day in the area, rough seas may leave you stranded ashore.

were not allowed to die or be born on this sacred island, but were bundled off to the nearby islet of Rinia.

Delos was not exclusively a religious sanctuary: For much of its history, the island was a thriving commercial port, especially under the Romans in the 3rd and 2nd centuries B.C. As many as 10,000 slaves a day were sold here on some days; the island's prosperity went into a steep decline after Mithridates of Pontus, an Asia Minor monarch at war with Rome, attacked Delos in 88 B.C., slaughtered its 20,000 inhabitants, and sailed home with as much booty as his ships could carry.

The easiest way to get to Delos is by caique from Mykonos; in summer, there are sometimes excursion boats here from Tinos and Paros. Try not to have a late night before you come here and catch the first boat of the day (usually around 8:30am). As the day goes on, the heat and crowds here can be overwhelming. On summer afternoons, when cruise ships disgorge their passengers, Delos can make the Acropolis look shady and deserted. Sturdy shoes are a good idea here; a hat, water, munchies, and sunscreen are a necessity. There is a cafe near the museum, but the prices are high, the quality poor, and the service even worse. Nor are the toilets great.

GETTING THERE From Mykonos, organized guided and unguided excursions leave starting about 8:30am about four times a day Tuesday through Sunday at the harbor's west end. Every travel agency in town advertises its Delos excursions (some with guides). Individual caique owners also have signs stating their prices and schedules. The trip takes about 30 minutes and costs about 10€ ($15) round-trip; as long as you return with the boat that brought you, you can (space available) decide which return trip you want to take when you've had enough. The last boat for Mykonos usually leaves by 4pm. The site is **closed** on Mondays.

EXPLORING THE SITE

Joint entrance to the site and museum costs 6€ ($8.70), unless this was included in the price of your excursion. Signs throughout the site are in Greek and French (the French have excavated here since the late 19th c.).

The remains at Delos are scattered and not easy to decipher, but when you come ashore, you can head right toward the theater and residential area or left to the more public area of ancient Delos, the agora, the famous **Avenue of the Lions** ★, and the museum. If your time is limited, head left, toward the **Agora,** with scattered remains of the central market and civic area on ancient Delos. The agora mainly dates from the Roman period when Delos was more important as a port than as a religious sanctuary. To reach the earlier religious sanctuary, take the **Sacred Way** north from the agora toward the Sanctuary of Apollo. As at Delphi and Olympia, the sanctuary here on Delos would have been chockablock with temples, altars, statues, and votive offerings. You can see some of what remains in the **museum,** which has finds from the various excavations on the island. Beside the museum, the remains of the Sanctuary of

Dionysos are usually identifiable by the crowd snapping shots of the display of marble phalluses, many on tall plinths.

North of the museum and the adjacent Tourist Pavilion is the **Sacred Lake,** where swans credited with powers of uttering oracles once swam. The lake is now little more than a dusty indentation most of the year, surrounded by a low wall. Beyond it is the famous **Avenue of the Lions** ★, made of Naxian marble and erected in the 7th century B.C. There were originally at least nine lions. One was taken away to Venice in the 17th century and now stands before the arsenali there. The whereabouts of the others lost in antiquity remains a mystery; five were carted off to the museum for restoration some years ago and replaced by replicas. Beyond the lake to the northeast is the large square courtyard of the gymnasium and the long narrow stadium, where the athletic competitions of the Delian Games were held.

If you stroll back along the Sacred Way to the harbor, you can head next to the **Maritime quarter,** a residential area with the remains of houses from the Hellenistic and Roman eras, when the island reached its peak in wealth and prestige. Several houses and magnificent villas contain brilliant **mosaics** ★, including Dionysos riding a panther in the **House of the Masks,** and a similar depiction in the **House of Dionysos.** Farther to the south is the massive **Theater,** which seated 5,500 people and was the site of choral competitions during the Delian Festivals, an event held every 4 years that included athletic competitions in addition to musical contests. If you visit here in spring, the wildflowers are especially beautiful, and the chorus of frogs that live in and around the ancient cisterns near the theater will be at its peak.

If you want to take in a great view of the site—and of the Cyclades— take the stepped path up **Mount Kinthos** ★, the highest point (112m /370 ft.) on the island. On many days, nearby Mykonos, as well as Siros to the west, Tinos to the north, and Naxos and Paros to the south are easy to spot. On your way down, keep an eye out for the **Grotto of Hercules,** a small temple built into a natural crevice in the mountainside—the roof is formed of massive granite slabs held up by their own enormous weight.

SANTORINI (THIRA) ★★★

This is one of the most spectacular islands in the world. Many Greeks joke, somewhat begrudgingly, that there are foreigners who know where Santorini is—but are confused about where Greece is! Especially if you arrive by sea, you won't confuse Santorini with any of the other Cyclades. What will confuse you is that the island is also known as Thira. While large ships to Santorini (pop. 7,000) dock at the port of Athinios, many small ships arrive in Skala, a spectacular harbor that's part of the enormous caldera (crater) formed when a volcano blew out the island's center sometime between 1600 and 1500 B.C. To this day, some scholars speculate that this destruction gave birth to the myth of the lost continent of Atlantis.

Your first choice upon disembarking at Skala will be to decide whether you want to ride the funicular (5€/$7.25) or a donkey (5€/$7.25) the 335m (1,100 ft.) up the sheer sides of the caldera to the island's capital, Fira. If you arrive on a large ship, you'll be spared this choice, as you'll dock at the new harbor at Athinios and grab a bus (2€/$2.90) or cab (about 9€/$13) into Fira. Once there, you may decide to reward yourself with a glass of the island's rosé wine before you explore the shops and restaurants of Fira, swim at the black volcanic beach of Kamari, or visit the dazzling site of Minoan Akrotiri, an Aegean Pompeii destroyed when the volcano erupted. (Don't worry—it's dormant now.)

Tips: The best advice we can offer is to avoid visiting here during the months of July and August. Santorini disappears under the weight of tourists during peak season, and crowds make strolling the streets of Fira and Oia next to impossible.

The real wonder is that Santorini exceeds all glossy picture-postcard expectations. Like an enormous crescent moon, Santorini encloses the pure blue waters of its caldera, the core of an ancient volcano. Its two principal towns, **Fira** and **Oia** (also transliterated as **Ia**), perch at the summit of the caldera; as you approach by ship, bending back as far as possible to look as far up the cliffs as possible, whitewashed houses look like a dusting of new snow on the mountaintop. Up close, you'll find that both towns' main streets have more shops (*lots* of jewelry shops), restaurants, and discos than private homes.

Akrotiri is Santorini's principal archaeological wonder: a town destroyed by the volcano eruption here, but miraculously preserved under layers of lava. As soon as you reach Santorini, check to see if Akrotiri is open; the site's protective roof collapsed in 2005 and the site has been totally, or partially, closed since then. If Akrotiri is closed, don't despair: If it weren't that Akrotiri steals its thunder, the site of **Ancient Thira** would be the island's must-see destination. Spectacularly situated atop a high promontory, overlooking a black lava beach, the remains of this Greek, Roman, and Byzantine city sprawl over acres of rugged terrain. Ancient Thira is reached after a vertiginous hike or drive up (and up) to the acropolis itself.

Arid Santorini isn't known for the profusion of its agricultural products, but the rocky island soil has long produced a plentiful grape harvest, and the local wines are among the finest in Greece. Be sure to visit one of the island **wineries** for a tasting. And keep an eye out for the tasty, tiny unique Santorini tomatoes and white eggplants—and the unusually large and zesty capers. Most important, allow yourself time to see at least one sunset over the caldera; the best views are from the ramparts of the kastro and from the footpath between Fira and Oia.

Tip: Some accommodations rates can be marked down by as much as 50% if you come off season. Virtually all accommodations are marked up by at least as much for desperate arrivals without reservations in July and August.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **By Air** **Olympic Airways** (✆ **210/926-9111;** www.olympicairways.gr) offers daily flights between Athens and the Santorini airport Monolithos (✆ **22860/31-525**), which also receives European charters. There are frequent connections with Mykonos and Rhodes, and service two or three times per week to and from Iraklion, Crete. **Aegean Airlines** (✆ **210/998-2888** or 210/998-8300 in Athens), with an office at the Monolithos airport (✆ **22860/28-500**), also has several flights daily between Athens and Santorini. A bus to Fira (3€/$4.35) meets most flights; the schedule is posted at the bus stop, beside the airport entrance. A taxi to Fira costs about 10€ ($15).

By Sea Ferry service runs to and from Piraeus at least twice daily; the trip takes 9 to 10 hours by car ferry on the Piraeus-Paros-Naxos-Ios-Santorini route, or 4 hours by catamaran if you go via Piraeus-Paros-Santorini. **Excursion boats** go to and from Iraklion, Crete, almost daily. All boats are notoriously late and/or early; your travel or ticket agent will give you an estimate of times involved in your journey. High-speed **hydrofoils** connect Santorini with Ios, Paros, Mykonos, and Iraklio, Crete, almost daily in the high season and three times weekly in the low season, if the winds aren't too strong. Information on all schedules is available from the Athens **GNTO**

(**210/870-0000;** www.gnto.gr), the **Piraeus Port Authority** (✆ **210/451-1311** or 1440 or 1441; phone not always answered), or the **Santorini Port Authority** (✆ **22860/22-239**).

VISITOR INFORMATION **Nomikos Travel** (✆ **22860/23-660;** www.nomikosvillas.gr), **Bellonias Tours** (✆ **22860/22-469**), and **Kamari Tours** (✆ **22860/31-390**) are well-established on the island. Nomikos and Bellonias offer bus tours of the island, boat excursions around the caldera, and submarine tours beneath the caldera. Expect to pay about 30€ ($44) to join a bus tour to Akrotiri or Ancient Thira, about the same for a day-trip boat excursion to the caldera islands, and about twice that for the submarine excursion.

GETTING AROUND **By Bus** Santorini has very good bus service. The island's central bus station is just south of the main square in Fira. Schedules and prices are posted on the wall of the office above it; most routes are serviced every half-hour from 7am to 11pm in the summer, less frequently in the off season.

By Car The travel agents listed above can help you rent a car. You might find that a local company such as **Zeus** (✆ **22860/24-013**) offers better prices than the big names, although the quality might be a bit lower. Be sure to take full insurance. Of the better-known agencies, try **Budget Rent-A-Car,** at the airport (✆ **22860/33-290**), or in Fira a block below the small square that the bus station is on (✆ **22860/22-900**); a small car should cost about 60€ ($87) a day, with unlimited mileage. If you reserve in advance through Budget in the U.S. (✆ **800/527-0700**), you should be able to beat that price.

Warning: Something to keep in mind if you rent a car**:** If you park in town or in a no-parking area, the police will remove your license plates and you, not the car-rental office, will have to find the police station and pay a steep fine to get them back. There's a free parking lot—often full—on the port's north side.

By Moped Many roads on the island are narrow and winding; add local drivers who take the roads at high speed, and visiting drivers who aren't sure where they're going, and you'll understand the island's high accident rate. If you're determined to use two-wheeled transportation, expect to pay about 25€ ($36) per day, less during off season. Greek law now requires wearing a helmet; not all agents supply the helmet.

By Taxi The taxi station is just south of the main square. In high season, book ahead by phone (✆ **22860/22-555** or 22860/23-951) if you want a taxi for an excursion; be sure that you agree on the price before you set out. For most point-to-point trips (Fira to Oia, for example), the prices are fixed. If you call for a taxi outside Fira, you'll be charged a pickup fee of at least 2€ ($2.90); also, you're required to pay the driver's fare from Fira to your pickup point. Bus service shuts down at midnight, so book a taxi in advance if you'll need it late at night.

FAST FACTS The **American Express** agent is X-Ray Kilo Travel Service (✆ **22860/22-624;** fax 22860/23-600), at the head of the steps to the old port facing the caldera, above Franco's Bar. Its hours are daily from 8:30am to 9pm. The **National Bank** (Mon–Fri 8am–2pm), with an ATM, is a block south of the main square on the right near the taxi station. The **health clinic** (✆ **22860/22-237**) is on the southeast edge of town, near the bus station & Olympic Air office. There are a number of **Internet** cafes on the main square, including P.C. Club, in the Markozannes Tours office (✆ **22860/25-551**).There are several do-it-yourself launderettes in Fira; if you want your wash done for you, **Penguin Laundry** (✆ **22860/22-168**) is at the edge of Fira on the road to Oia, 200m (656 ft.) north of the main square. The **police** (✆ **22860/22-649**) are several blocks south of the main square, near the post office. For the **port police,** call ✆ **22860/22-239.** The **post office** (✆ **22860/22-238**), open Monday through Friday from 8am to 1pm, is south of the bus station. The **telephone office (OTE)** is off Ipapantis, up from the post office; hours are Monday through Saturday from 8am to 3pm.

WHERE TO STAY

Despite its growing number of hotels, efficiency apartments, and rooms to rent, Santorini is always packed in July and August—and increasingly crowded virtually year-round. If you plan a summer visit, make a reservation at least 2 months in advance. If you arrive without a reservation, try not to accept rooms offered (sight unseen) at the port, unless you're exhausted and don't care where you wake up—possibly in a small room in a village in Santorini's interior plain, quite a distance from what you've come here to see. If you come between April and mid-June or in September or October, when the island is less crowded and far more pleasant, the rates can be less than the high-season rates we quote. Keep in mind that during the off season many of the hotels, restaurants, shops, and bars here close. Most of the hotels recommended below don't have air-conditioning, but with cool breezes blowing through, you won't need it; if you take a room here in the winter, make sure that it offers working central heat or a serviceable room heater. ***Note:*** Unless you're going to be participating in Fira's energetic night life, you may want to consider avoiding the hubbub by staying in one of the villages out on the island. We do suggest several hotels in Fira that are usually quiet.

In addition to the choices below, we've had good reports on the quiet **Hotel Atlantis** (✆ **22860/22-232**), where guests can spend the sunset hours with a bottle of wine on the balcony overlooking the caldera. If you want serious luxury, check out the five elegant villas of the **Tsitouras Collection** (✆ **22860/23-747;** www.tsitouras.gr), about a 10-minute walk from the center of Fira in Firostephani.

In & around Fira

Aigialos ★★ In a quiet caldera location, occupying 16 restored 18th- and 19th-century town houses, the Aigialos proclaims its intention to be a "Luxury Traditional Settlement." The oxymoron aside—rather few traditional settlements here or elsewhere have Jacuzzis, swimming pools, and counter swim exercise pools—this is a nifty place. The units have all the mod cons and all the creature comforts. As the price goes up, you get more space (two bathrooms, not just one) and more privacy (your own, not a shared terrace or your own balcony). There's an extensive breakfast buffet and a highly praised in-house, guests-only restaurant.

Fira, 84700 Santorini. ✆ **22860/25-191.** www.aigialos.gr. 16 units. 375€–550€ ($544–$798) double; 700€–1,300€ ($1,015–$1,885) suite. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Closed Nov–Mar. **Amenities:** Pool bar; pools; 24-hr. room service; twice-daily maid service. *In room:* A/C, TV/DVD, CD player, fridge, safe, Internet.

Hotel Aressana ★★ This hotel compensates for its lack of a caldera view with a large swimming pool and excellent location, tucked away behind the Orthodox cathedral, in a relatively quiet location. Most rooms have balconies or terraces; many have the high barrel-vaulted ceilings typical of this island. Unusual in Greece are the nonsmoking rooms. The breakfast room opens onto the pool terrace, as do most of the guest rooms; the elaborate buffet breakfast includes numerous Santorinian specialties. The Aressana also maintains seven nearby apartments facing the caldera, starting at 250€ ($363), which includes use of the hotel pool.

Fira, 84700 Santorini. ✆ **22860/23-900.** Fax 22860/23-902. www.aressana.gr. 50 units, 1 with shower. 250€–300€ ($363–$435) double; 320€–400€ ($464–$580) suite. Rates include full breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Closed mid-Nov to Feb. **Amenities:** Snack bar; bar; freshwater pool; room service 7am–noon. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar.

Hotel Keti ★★ *Value* This simple little hotel offers one of the best bargains on the caldera. All of the (smallish) rooms have traditional vaulted ceilings, white walls and coverlets, and open onto a shared terrace overlooking the caldera. The bathrooms, at the back of the rooms, are carved into the cliff face. Clearly, the Keti is doing something right: Not many places this modest make it into Alastair Sawday's *Special Places.* One drawback if you have trouble walking: It's a steep 5- to 10-minute walk from the Keti's quiet cliff-side location to Fira itself.

Fira, 84700 Santorini. ✆ **22860/22-324.** www.hotelketi.gr. 7 units. 100€–120€ ($145–$174) double. No credit cards. Closed Nov to mid-Mar. **Amenities:** Breakfast room; bar. *In room:* A/C, TV, fridge, safe.

Pension George ★ *Value* With a small pool, simple wood furnishings, attractive and reasonably priced rooms, and helpful owners, the Pension offers good value if you're on a budget. To save even more money, opt for a room without a balcony. George and Helen Halaris will help you arrange car and boat rentals.

P.O. Box 324, Karterados, 84700 Santorini. ✆ **22860/22-351.** www.pensiongeorge.com. 25 units. 60€–90€ ($87–$131) double. No credit cards. Inquire about apts. that sleep 2–5. **Amenities:** Breakfast on request; free transportation to airport or harbor. *In room:* A/C, TV (in some), fridge, safety-deposit box.

Around the Island

Astra Apartments ★★★ Perched on a cliff side, with spectacular views, this is one of the nicest places to stay in all of Greece. There are other places nearby which also have spectacular pools with spectacular views, but manager George Karayiannis is a large part of what makes Astra so special: He is always at the ready to arrange car rentals, recommend a wonderful beach or restaurant—or even help you plan your wedding and honeymoon here. The Astra Apartments look like a tiny, whitewashed village (with an elegant pool) set in the village of Imerovigli, which is still much less crowded than Fira or Oia. Nothing is flashy here; everything is just right. The vibrant blue of the bed coverlets is echoed in the blue paint on the cupboards. Although each unit has its own kitchenette, breakfast is served on your private terrace or balcony, and you can order delicious salads and sandwiches from the bar day and night.

Imerovigli, 84700 Santorini. ✆ **22860/23-641.** Fax 22860/24-765. www.astra-apartments.com. 85 units. 230€–300€ ($334–$435) double; from 275€ ($399) apt.; 750€ ($1,087) apt. with private pool. MC, V. **Amenities:** Bar; pool. *In room:* A/C, TV/DVD, CD player, kitchenette, radio, Internet.

Katikies ★★ If you find a more spectacular pool anywhere on the island, let us know: This one runs virtually to the side of the caldera, so that you can paddle around and enjoy an endless view. (There's also a smaller pool intended for the use of guests staying in suites.) The hotel's island-style architecture incorporates twists and turns, secluded patios, beamed ceilings, and antiques. If the people in the next room like to sing in the shower, you might hear them—but most people who stay here treasure the tranquillity. The top-of-the-line honeymoon suite has its own Jacuzzi, just in case you can't be bothered going to either outdoor pool.

Oia, 847 02 Santorini. ✆ **22860/71-401.** Fax 22860/71-129. www.katikies.com. 22 units. 290€–400€ ($421–$580) double; prices for suites upon request. Rates include breakfast. MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; 2 outdoor pools. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer.

Zannos Melathron ★★ Relatively uncrowded Pyrgos sits inland between Megalohori and Kamari. This 12-room boutique hotel, on one of the highest points on the island, occupies an 18th-century and a 19th-century building. The rooms mix antiques with modern pieces, the island views are lovely, the pool is welcoming. If you want nightlife, this is not the place for you; if you want a peaceful retreat and near-perfect service, this may be just the spot. If you want a cigar bar, look no further.

Pyrgos, 84700 Santorini. ✆ **22860/28-220.** www.zannos.gr. 12 units. 300€–440€ ($435–$638) double; 550€–1,000€ ($798–$1,450) suite. Credit cards to be accepted soon; reconfirm this when you make your reservation. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; pool; concierge; airport pickup; 24-hr. room service. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar.

WHERE TO DINE

In Fira

Koukoumavlos ★★ GREEK The terrace at Koukoumavlos enjoys the famous caldera view, but unlike most caldera restaurants where a spectacular view compensates for mediocre food, here the view is a distraction from the delights of the kitchen. The menu changes often, as the chef tries out new dishes with ingredients not always used in the islands (a wide variety of mushrooms, for example). Many dishes offer creative variations on traditional Greek food, like the shrimp poached in retsina; or the fava served hot in olive oil with grilled zucchini, onions, tomatoes, olives, and toasted almonds. That said, maybe crayfish with white chocolate–ginger–lemon sauce is one innovation too many.

Below the Hotel Atlantis, facing the caldera. ✆ **22860/23-807.** Reservations recommended for dinner. Main courses 20€–35€ ($29–$51). AE, MC, V. Daily noon–3pm and 7:30pm–midnight.

Selene ★★★ GREEK The best restaurant on Santorini—and one of the best in Greece—Selene uses local produce to highlight what owner George Hatziyiannakis call the "creative nature of Greek cuisine." The appetizers, including a delicious sea urchin salad on artichokes and fluffy fava balls with caper sauce, are deservedly famous. Entrees include *brodero* (seafood stew). The baked mackerel with caper leaves and tomato wrapped in a crepe of fava beans will convert even the most dedicated flesh eaters. The local lamb, quail, rabbit, and beef are all excellent. If you eat only one meal on Santorini, eat it here, in a truly distinguished restaurant with distinctive local architecture. In short, everything—location, ambience, view, service—comes together to form the perfect setting (never pretentious or coy, unlike some trendy spots) for the delicious, inventive food. The selection of cheeses from across the Cyclades is impressive. If you want to learn to make some of Selene's selections yourself, check out its cooking school at www.selene.gr.

Fira. ✆ **22860/22-249.** Fax 22860/24-395. Reservations recommended. Main courses 17€–25€ ($25–$36). AE, MC, V. Mid-Apr to mid-Oct daily 7pm–midnight. Closed late Oct to early Apr. In the passageway between the Atlantis and Aressana hotels.

Sphinx Restaurant ★ INTERNATIONAL Antiques, sculpture, and ceramics by local artists fill this restored mansion and large terrace with views of the caldera and the port at Skala Fira. You may not decide that you've come to Santorini to eat ostrich, but the fresh pasta is tasty, as is the seafood. Locals eat here—always a good sign.

Odos Mitropoleos. ✆ **22860/23-823.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 15€–25€ ($22–$36); fish priced by the kilo. AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 11am–3pm and 7pm–1am. Near the Panagia Ypapantis Church.

Taverna Nikolas ★ *Value* GREEK This is another one of the few restaurants in Fira where locals queue up alongside throngs of travelers for a table—high praise, for a place that has been here forever. There aren't any surprises; you'll get traditional Greek dishes prepared very well. The lamb with greens in egg-lemon sauce is particularly delicious. The dining room is always busy, so arrive early or plan to wait.

Just up from the main square in Fira. No phone. Main courses 10€–15€ ($15–$22). No credit cards. Daily noon–midnight.

Around the Island

Restaurant-Bar 1800 ★★ CONTINENTAL For many years recognized as the best place in Oia for a formal dinner, the 1800 has a devoted following among visitors and locals. Many items are Greek dishes with a difference, such as the tender lamb chops with green applesauce and the cheese pie filled not just with feta, but with five cheeses. The restaurant, housed in a splendidly restored neoclassical captain's mansion, has undeniable romantic charm whether you eat indoors or on the rooftop terrace. After you eat, you can decide whether the owner (an architect and chef) deserves more praise for his skill with the decor or with the cuisine. "Each plate resembles a canvas," this restaurant proclaims.

Oia. Odos Nikolaos Nomikos. ✆ **22860/71-485.** www.oia-1800.com. Main courses 15€–30€ ($22–$44). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 6pm–midnight.

EXPLORING THE ISLAND

FIRA ★★ If you're staying overnight on Santorini, take advantage of the fact that almost all the day-trippers from cruise ships leave in the late afternoon, and explore the capital in the evening. As you stroll, you may be surprised to discover that Fira has a Roman Catholic cathedral and convent in addition to the predictable Greek Orthodox cathedral, a legacy from the days when the Venetians controlled much of the Aegean. The name Santorini, in fact, is a Latinate corruption of the Greek for "Saint Irene." The **Megaron Gyzi Museum** (✆ **22860/22-244**), by the cathedral, has church and local memorabilia, including some before-and-after photographs of the island at the time of the devastating earthquake of 1956. It's open Monday through Saturday from 10:30am to 1pm and 5 to 8pm, and Sunday from 10:30am to 4:30pm; admission is 3€ ($4.35). The small **Archaeological Museum** (✆ **22860/22-217**) has both Minoan and classical finds. It's open Tuesday through Sunday from 8:30am to 3pm; admission is 3€ ($4.35). You might find it almost deserted, as most visitors head directly for Thira's shops. Before you do the same, stop at the **Thera Foundation** ★★ (✆ **22860/230-16**), near the cable car station en route to Firostephani, to have a look at the spectacular reproductions and re-creations of the frescoes from Akrotiri. It's usually open Tuesday through Sunday from 8:30am to 3pm; admission is 4€ ($5.80). The **Museum of Prehistoric Thira** near the bus station has a small, but excellent, collection of finds (mainly from ancient Akrotiri). It's open Tuesday through Sunday from 8:30am to 3pm; admission is 3€ ($4.35).

VILLAGES ★★ Santorini's white villages, often cut out of the lava itself, are enchanting. Two beauties are **Pyrgos** (the name means "Tower"), the highest settlement on the island, and **Oia** (also spelled **Ia**). Oia is almost absurdly scenic, perched on a cliff above the caldera. Badly damaged in a massive earthquake in 1956, Oia was virtually a ghost town until it was rebuilt in the 1960s and 1970s and resettled. Now its chic shops (check out the **Art Gallery** and **Art Gallery Oia** on Oia's meandering main street) and gorgeous sunsets make it an increasingly popular place to stay or to visit—especially with those who find Fira too frenetic. The **Naval Museum** (✆ **22860/71-156;** open Wed–Mon 12:30–4pm and 5–8:30pm; admission 3€/ $4.35), in a restored neoclassical museum, showcases the island's long, intimate relationship with seafaring. If you travel to either village (local buses run here from Fira, or you can take a taxi), keep a lookout for some of the island's cave dwellings (homes hollowed out of Santorini's soft volcanic stone).

Tips Submerged Santorini

There's a great way to explore hidden Santorini: a 1-hour submarine ride under the surface of the caldera. Sink to 30m (100 ft.) below the surface and get a glimpse of the submerged volcanic crater. The trip costs 50€ ($73); information is available at ✆ **22860/28-900** or at most local travel agencies.

BEACHES Santorini's beaches may not be the best in the Cyclades, but the volcanic black and red sand here is unique in these isles—and gets very hot, very fast. **Kamari,** a little over halfway down the east coast, has the largest beach on the island. It's also the most developed, lined by hotels, restaurants, shops, and clubs. The natural setting is excellent, at the foot of cliffs rising precipitously toward Ancient Thira, but the black-pebbled beach becomes unpleasantly crowded in July and August. **Volcano Diving Center** (✆ **22860/33-177;** www.scubagreece.com), at Kamari, offers guided snorkel swims for around 20€ ($29) and scuba lessons from around 50€ ($73). **Perissa,** to the south, is another increasingly crowded beach resort, albeit one with beautiful black sand. **Red beach (Paralia Kokkini),** at the end of the road to Ancient Akrotiri, gets its name from its small red volcanic pebbles; it is—but for how long?—usually much less crowded than Kamari and Perissa. All three beaches have accommodations, cafes, and tavernas.

VINEYARDS If you're traveling between Kamari and Fira by local bus or taxi, you can stop at the several vintners to see how wine is made, have a free sample, and perhaps buy a bottle or two to sample later. ***Be warned:*** Vino Santo, Santorini's sweet wine, is *very* sweet. **Boutari,** Megalohori (✆ **22860/81-011**), is the island's largest vintner. For about 8€ ($12) you can see the wine press, sample the wines, and snack on mezedes. The **Antoniou Winery** (run by the same family that has the Antoniou Jewelry in Fira) is especially charming, with the old wine press and barrels on display.

ANCIENT THIRA & AKROTIRI ★★ Above Kamari beach on a rocky promontory are the ruins of **Ancient Thira** (✆ **02860/22-217** or 02860/22-366), settled in the 9th century B.C., although most of the scattered remains date from the Hellenistic era. The site is usually open Tuesday though Sunday from 8:30am to 3pm, sometimes later in summer. Admission is 6€ ($8.70). A good but alarmingly narrow road runs almost to the summit, which can also be reached on foot or by donkey (for hire from some travel agents) on a path. The hilltop site is very fine, but if you have to choose between Ancient Thira and Akrotiri, and if Akrotiri is open, head there.

The excavations at **Akrotiri,** the Minoan settlement destroyed when the volcano erupted around 1450 B.C., have unearthed buildings three stories tall that were lavishly decorated with frescoes. ***Note:*** The site was closed to the public in 2005 when its protective roof collapsed, so check to see if it has reopened when you arrive on the island. If the entire site is closed when you want to visit, there's no point in coming here in the hopes of catching a glimpse of the remains: Unlike many sites, Akrotiri is *not* visible from the road.

If the site is open, it's breathtaking to walk down the streets and peek in the windows of houses in a town whose life was extinguished in a torrent of lava and ash so long ago. Most of the frescoes discovered were taken to the National Archaeological Museum in Athens, where a number are on display. In addition, you can see several frescoes from Akrotiri in the Museum of Prehistoric Thera in Fira. The **site**

Tips Santorini Swings

The height of the tourist season is also the height of the music season in Santorini: If you are here in July, you may want to take in the annual **Santorini Jazz Festival** (www.jazzfestival.gr), which has been bringing several dozen international jazz bands and artists here every summer since 1997. Many performances are on Kamari beach. In Fira every August and September, the **Santorini International Music Festival** (**✆ 22860/23-166**), founded in 1978, features 2 weeks of mostly classical music.

(**✆ 22860/81-366**) is open Tuesday through Sunday from 8:30am to 3pm; admission is 6€ ($8.70). Akrotiri can be reached by public bus, taxi, or one of the bus tours available from island travel agents.

SANTORINI AFTER DARK

Fira has all-night nightlife; as always on the islands, places that are hot one season are gone the next. I'm not listing phone numbers here because phones simply are not answered. If you want to kick off your evening with a drink on the caldera while watching the spectacular sunset, **Franco's** and **Palaia Kameni** are still the most famous and best places for this magic hour; be prepared to pay 15€ ($22) and up (and up). If you are willing to forego the caldera view, you'll find almost too many spots to sample along the main drag and around the main square, including the inevitable Irish pub, **Murphy's. Kirathira Bar** plays jazz at a level that permits conversation, and the nearby **Art Café** offers muted music.

Discos come and go, and you need only follow your ears to find them. **Koo Club** is the biggest, whereas **Enigma** is thronged most nights. **Tithora** is popular with a young, heavy-drinking crowd. There's usually no cover, but the cheapest drinks at most places are at least 10€ ($15).

Out on the island, in Oia, **Zorba's** is a popular cliff-side pub. The fine restaurant/bar **1800** (see above) is a quiet and sophisticated place to stop in for a drink—and certainly for a meal.

Kamari has lots of disco bars, including **Disco Dom, Mango's, Yellow Donkey,** and **Valentino's,** all popular with the youngish tour groupers who grope about here.

Remember: At virtually all of these places, be prepared to pay 10€ ($15) and way up for one drink.

TINOS ★★★

Unlike Santorini and Mykonos—where foreigners often outnumber locals—**Tinos** is one Cycladic island where you are likely to hear more Greek spoken than German or French. Tinos (pop. 3,500; 161km/87 nautical miles southeast of Piraeus) is the most important destination in Greece for religious pilgrims, yet it remains one of the least commercialized islands of the Cyclades. That makes Tinos a real joy to visit—as do its lovely villages, uncrowded beaches, green hills crossed by stone walls and dotted with the elaborate ***peristerionades*** **(dovecotes)** for which the island is famous, and excellent restaurants that serve the thousands of year-round Greek pilgrims who come here to visit the **Panayia Evanyelistria** ("Our Lady of Good Tidings"), sometimes called the "Lourdes of Greece."

From well out to sea, the Panayia Evanyelistria—illuminated at night—is visible atop a hill overlooking Tinos town, which the inhabitants call "Hora." Like a number of the Cyclades, Tinos had a Venetian occupation, and a number of fine, old Venetian mansions (locally known as *pallada,* the name also used for the harborfront) still stand on the side streets off the harbor. **Megalocharis** is the long, steep street that leads from the harbor to the red-carpeted steps that are the final approach to the cathedral; some devout pilgrims make the entire journey on their knees. Running uphill parallel to Megalocharis, pedestrianized **Evangelistria** is a market street, as well as a pilgrimage route, with many shops selling candles and icons. There are also several jewelry and handicraft shops, one or two cafes, groceries, old-fashioned dry-goods stores—and a surprising number of shops selling both incense and battery-powered kittens that roll over and meow.

It's important to remember that Tinos *is* a pilgrimage place: It is considered disrespectful to wear shorts, short skirts, halters, or sleeveless shirts in the precincts of the Evanyelistria (or any other church, for that matter). And taking snapshots of the pilgrims, especially those approaching the shrine on hands and knees, is not appreciated.

The inland villages of Tinos are some of the most beautiful in the Cyclades. Many of the most picturesque are nestled into the slopes of **Exobourgo,** the rocky pinnacle visible from the port, connected by a network of walking paths that make this island a hiker's paradise. In these villages and dotting the countryside, you'll see the elaborately carved marble lintels, doorjambs, and fan windows on village houses, and ornately decorated medieval dovecotes. The island's beaches may not be the best in the Cyclades, but they are plentiful and uncrowded throughout the summer. All this may change if an airport is built here—all the more reason to visit Tinos now.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE Several ferries travel to Tinos daily from Piraeus (5 hr.). Catamaran (1½ hr.) and ferry services (4 hr.) are available daily in summer from Rafina. Check schedules at the Athens **GNTO** (✆ **210/331-0562**); **Piraeus Port Authority** (✆ **210/459-3223** or 210/422-6000; phone seldom answered); or **Rafina Port Authority** (✆ **22940/22-300**). Several times a day, boats connect Tinos with nearby Mykonos and Siros (20–50 min.; there's usually daily service to Santorini Paros and Naxos in summer. Tinos has more winter connections than most Cycladic isles due to its religious tourism, which continues throughout the year. In summer, check to see whether the day excursion to Delos and Mykonos is operating. If so, there's usually a boat from the old pier in Tinos harbor at 10am Tuesday through Sunday, returning to Tinos at 7pm; the fare is 25€ ($36) adults and 9€ ($13) children under 11.

Tips When *Not* to Visit Tinos

Don't even think about arriving on Tinos without a reservation around **August 15,** when thousands of pilgrims travel here to celebrate the Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin. **March 25** (Feast of the Annunciation) is the second-most-important feast day here, but it draws fewer pilgrims because traveling by sea in March is less easy. Pilgrims also come here on July 23 (the anniversary of St. Pelagia's vision of the icon) and January 30 (the anniversary of the finding of the icon). In addition, it's not a good idea to show up here without a reservation on a weekend, when Greek families bring their babies for baptism.

Be sure to find out from which pier your ship will depart—and be prepared for last-minute changes. Most ferries, the small catamarans (Seajet, Flying Cat, and Jet One), as well as the excursion boat to Delos/Mykonos, dock at the old pier in the town center; some use the new pier to the north, on the side of town in the direction of Kionia. **Tinos Port Authority** (not guaranteed to be helpful) can be reached at ✆ **22830/22-348.**

VISITOR INFORMATION For information on accommodations, car rentals, island tours, and Tinos in general, head to **Windmills Travel** ★★★ (✆ **22830/23-398;** fax 22830/23-327; www.windmillstravel.com), on the harbor by the new port, next to St. Anthony's Catholic church. The office has a large painting of a windmill's round, spoked pinwheel on its exterior. Sharon Turner is the friendly, amazingly helpful and efficient manager, with unparalleled knowledge of Tinos and its neighboring islands. What's more, Turner can often get you substantial discounts on island accommodations, transportation, and tours.

GETTING AROUND **By Bus** The **bus station** (✆ **22830/22-440**) is on the harbor, opposite the National Bank of Greece. Schedules are usually posted or available here. There are frequent daily buses to most island villages.

By Car & Moped Rental agencies in Tinos town include two just off the harbor on Trion Ierarchon, the street where taxis hang out: **Vidalis** (✆ **22830/23-995**) and **Dimitris Rental** (✆ **22830/23-585**). Expect to pay from 30€ ($44) per day for a car and half that for a moped.

By Taxi Taxis hang out on Trion Ierarchon, which runs uphill from the harbor just before the Palamaris supermarket and the Hotel Tinion.

FAST FACTS There are several **banks** on the harbor, open Monday through Thursday from 8am to 2pm and Friday from 8am to 1:30pm; all have ATMs. The **first-aid center** can be reached at ✆ **22830/22-210.** There's a drop-off **laundry** service (✆ **22830/32-765**) behind the Lito Hotel—but be forewarned that it can be slow, up to 3 days in peak season. For **luggage storage,** try Windmills Travel (✆ **22830/23-398**). The **police** (✆ **22830/22-348**) are located just past the new pier, past Lito Hotel and Windmills Travel. The **post office** (✆ **22830/22-247**), open Monday through Friday from 7:30am to 2pm, is at the harbor's south end next to Tinion Hotel. The **telephone office (OTE),** open Monday through Friday from 7:30am to 12:30pm, is on the main street leading to the church of Panagia Evangelistria, about halfway up on the right (✆ **22830/22-399**). The harborside Cultural Foundation (✆ **22830/29-070**) has art exhibitions; admission sometimes charged.

WHERE TO STAY

Sharon Turner of **Windmills Travel** (see "Visitor Information," under "Essentials," above) can often get substantial discounts on island accommodations, transportation, and tours. In addition to hotel accommodations, Windmills has houses for rent in several villages—a great way to see more of the island and get a taste of village life.

Oceanis Hotel ★ This 10-year-old hotel is on the harbor but not where the boats dock, so it is quieter than other lodgings by the port. The balconies, with views of Siros in the distance, are a real plus. The hotel is often taken over by Greek groups visiting the island's religious shrines. As an independent traveler, you may feel a bit odd-man-out. The rooms are simply furnished, with good-size bathrooms. Don't bother with the restaurant. The Oceanis stays open all year and has reliable heat in the winter.

Akti G. Drossou, Hora, 84200 Tinos. ✆ **22830/22-452.** Fax 22830/25-402. 47 units. From 80€ ($116) double. No credit cards. From the old harbor, walk south (right) along the paralia until you come to the Oceanis, whose large sign is clearly visible from the harbor. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar. *In room:* A/C, TV.

Porto Tango ★ This place has all the frills—restaurant, sauna, spa, health club, pool, and more. But—and this is a very big "but"—the beach is an irritating 10-minute walk away. Many rooms have balconies or terraces with sea views; some have both. There are lots of antiques and antique reproductions throughout: chests, glass-globed lamps, and other pseudo–French Provincial decor that jars with island touches such as rough-wood beamed ceilings.

Porto, 84200 Tinos. (✆ **22830/24-411.** Fax 22830/24-416. www.portotango.gr. 61 units. 150€ ($218) double; 250€ ($363) suite. Breakfast buffet included. AE, MC, V. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; pool; health club; spa. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar.

Tinos Beach Hotel ★★ *Kids* Despite a somewhat impersonal character this is the best choice in a beachfront hotel, especially after its renovations in 2006. The decent-size rooms all have balconies, most with views of the sea and pool. The suites are especially pleasant—large sitting rooms open onto poolside balconies. The pool is the longest on the island, and there's a separate children's pool as well. No one seems to praise either the ambience or the service here, but if you want to be on Tinos, near Tinos town but on the beach, this is the place to be.

Kionia, 84200 Tinos. ✆ **22830/22-626** or 22830/22-627. Fax 22830/23-153. www.tinosbeach.gr. 180 units. 140€–160€ ($203–$232) double. Rates include breakfast. Children 7 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, MC, V. Closed Nov–Mar. 4km (2½ miles) west of Tinos town on the coast road. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; saltwater pool; children's pool; tennis courts; watersports equipment for rent. *In room:* A/C, TV, minifridge.

WHERE TO DINE

As in many other Greek coastal towns, it's a good idea to avoid most harborfront joints, where the food is generally inferior and service can be rushed.

Balis ★★ CONTINENTAL/GREEK I yield to no one in my love of Greek food, but sometimes it's fun to take a break from the usual. The Tinian and Austrian husband and wife team Jacob and Margrit Balis turn out delicious meals in an amazingly small (but very efficient) kitchen in their cozy restaurant on a quiet side street off the harbor. The menu usually includes schnitzel with or without wine sauce, stuffed chicken breast, several pasta dishes (often with terrific fresh mushrooms), and wonderful dinner or dessert crepes (lots of whipped cream and chocolate possibilities with the dessert crepes). Daily specials are based on what is freshest at the markets. When I ate here recently every one of the 20 or so seats was taken and I was the only nonlocal in evidence.

9 Taxiarchon, Paralia, Hora. ✆ **22830/23-207.** Main courses 8€–10€ ($12–$15). Dinner. Sometimes open earlier in the day for snacks.

Metaxi Mas ★ GREEK It breaks my heart to report that my favorite restaurant on Tinos is going through what I hope is a brief bad patch. It's hard to pin down, but prices have gone up and the zest that made the cooking at this longtime *mezedopoleio* (hors d'oeuvres place) so distinctive is muted. However, the mezedes are still tasty, especially the vegetable croquettes, fried sun-dried tomatoes, piquant fried cheeses, and succulent octopus. If you get beyond the mezedes, the main courses are more than generous. There's a cozy interior dining room with a fireplace for when it's chilly, and tables outside in the pedestrianized lane for good weather.

A Swim, a Snack, an Ancient Site

If you're staying in Tinos town, the easiest place to take a dip is the beach at Kionia, about 3km (2 miles) west of Hora. Just across from the pebble and sand strand where you'll swim are the island's only excavated antiquities, the modest remains of the Temple of Poseidon and one of his many conquests, Amphitrite, a semidivine sea nymph (Tues–Sun 8:30am–3pm; admission 3€/$4.35). When sheep or the custodians have trimmed the vegetation at the site, you can clearly make out the foundations of the 4th-century-B.C. temple, and a large altar and long stoa, both built in the 1st century B.C. As is inevitable with a site where Romans lived, there are the remains of a bath. Finds from the site are on display at the Tinos town Archaeological Museum (Tues–Sun 8:30am–3pm; admission 3€/$4.35). When you head back to town, you can have a drink and a snack at either the Mistral or Tsambia taverna, both on the main road near the site. Closer to town, also on the main road, you can check your e-mail at the Para Pende cafe. Depending on your mood, you can do this excursion on foot, by public bus, or taxi. If on foot, keep to the side of the road and don't expect the trucks and motorcycles to cut you much slack.

Kontoyioryi, Paralia, Hora. ✆ **22830/24-857.** Main courses 8€–20€ ($12–$29). No credit cards. Daily noon–midnight. Off the harbor, in a lane between the old and new harbors. Look for the sign over the door. Sometimes a METAXI MAS banner is strung across the lane.

Palaia Pallada ★★ GREEK Palaia Pallada, next to Metaxi Mas, is a bit more down-home, a bit less inventive, and consistently good. There are fewer ruffles and flourishes here, but the food (grills, stews, salads) in this family-run place is excellent, as is the local wine. You can eat indoors or outside in the lane.

Kontoyioryi, Paralia, Hora. ✆ **22830/23-516.** Main courses 7€–15€ ($10–$22). No credit cards. Daily noon–midnight. Off the harbor, in a lane between the old and new harbors. Look for the sign over the door, and the sign that overhangs the lane.

To Koutouki tis Eleni ★★ GREEK Known in town simply as Koutouki, this excellent small taverna doesn't usually have a menu. What it does have are good, basic ingredients cooked into simple meals that remind you how delightful Greek food can be. Local cheese and wine, fresh fish and meats, delicious vegetables—these are the staples that come together so well in this taverna, which demonstrates that you don't have to pay a fortune to experience good traditional home cooking.

Paralia, Hora. ✆ **22830/24-857.** Main courses 5€–15€ ($7.25–$22). No credit cards. Daily noon–midnight. From the harbor turn onto Evanyelistria, the market street; take the 1st right up a narrow lane with 3 tavernas; Koutouki is the 1st on the left.

EXPLORING THE ISLAND

TINOS TOWN The **Church of Panagia Evangelistria (Our Lady of Good Tidings)** ★★★ and its museums are usually open from about 7am to 5pm in winter, later in summer. In 1822, a local nun, Pelagia, had a vision that a miraculous icon of the Virgin Mary would be found here; it was, and the church was erected to house the icon, which the faithful believe was painted by Saint Luke. The church is made of gleaming marble from Paros and Tinos, with a tall, slender bell tower and handsome black-and-white pebble mosaics in the exterior courtyard. Inside, hundreds of gold and silver hanging lamps illuminate the icon, which is almost entirely hidden by the votive offerings of gold, silver, diamonds, and other precious jewels, dedicated by the faithful. Even those who do not make a lavish gift customarily make a small offering and light a candle. Beneath the church is the crypt with the chapel of the Zoodochos Pigi, where the icon was found, and several smaller chapels; the crypt is often crowded with Greek parents and children in white, waiting to be baptized with water from the font, or to fill vials with holy water from the spring.

Note: To enter the church, men must wear long pants and shirts with sleeves, and women must wear dresses or skirts and blouses with sleeves. If there is a church service while you are here, you will hear the beautiful, resonant chanting that typifies a Greek Orthodox service—but remember that it's not appropriate to explore the church during a service. There is usually a service in the early morning and periodically throughout the day.

Within the high walls that surround the church are various **museums and galleries,** each of which is worth a quick visit. The gallery of 14th- through 19th-century religious art has icons and church garments and vessels; the gallery of Tinian artists is just that; the picture gallery has the private collection of a local collector of Greek paintings of the 19th and 20th centuries; the sculpture museum has works by former and current island sculptors, many of whom studied with the help of the cathedral charitable foundation. Admission is sometimes charged at these collections, which keep irregular hours.

Exobourgo ★★, a knobbly mountain eminence crowned by the remains of a Venetian *kastro* (castle), is some 15km (9⅓ miles) outside of Hora, from which it is visible. The fortress is surrounded by sheer rock walls on three sides; the only path to the summit starts behind a Catholic church at the base of the rock, on the road between Mesi and Koumaros. As you make the ascent, you'll pass several lines of fortification—the whole hill is riddled with walls and hollow with chambers. As you might expect, the view over the Cyclades is superb from the summit (565m/1,854 ft.).

SHOPPING IN TINOS TOWN

Shops and stalls lining Evangelistria street sell icons, incense, candles, medallions, and *tamata* (tin, silver, and gold votives). You'll also find local embroidery, weavings, and the delicious local nougat, as well as *loukoumia* (Turkish delight) from Siros. There's also a fish market and a farmers' market weekdays in the square by the docks. Keep an eye out for the rather pink-plumed pelican that, reasonably enough, hangs out by the fish market.

There are two fine jewelry shops side by side on Evanyelistria: **Artemis,** 18 Evangelistria (✆ **2830/23-781**), and **Harris Prassas Ostria-Tinos,** 20 Evangelistria (✆ **22830/23-893**). Near the top of Evangelistria, on the left in a neoclassical building, the small **Evangelismos Biotechni Shop** (the outlet of a local weaving school; ✆ **22830/22-894**) sells reasonably priced table and bed linens, as well as rugs.

Authentic hand-painted icons (from around 200€/$290) are sold in the small shop of **Maria Vryoni,** the first left from the port off Leoforos Megaloharis, the second shop on the left. Cross over to 16 Megaloharis to the shop of the **local agricultural cooperative,** where you can buy pungent capers, creamy cheeses, olive oil, and the fiery local *tsiporo* liqueur (✆ **22830/21-184**). Several shops along the harbor sell international newspapers and local guidebooks and maps.

VILLAGES

Most visitors to Tinos think that **Pirgos** ★★, at the western end of the island, is its most beautiful village. It has an enchanting small plateia with trees, a marble fountain, *Tips*

Affordable & Portable Tinian Folk Art

In a small hardware shop across from Pirgos's two museums, **Nikolaos Panorios** ★★★ makes and sells whimsical tin funnels, boxes, spoon holders, and dustpans, as well as dovecotes, windmills, and sailing ships. Each item is made of tin salvaged from containers like those that hold olive oil; each one is different, some with scenes of Pallas Athena, others with friezes of sunflowers, olive gatherers, or fruits and vegetables. All are delightful (from 10€/$15). Eugenia and Nikolaos Panoriou are usually in their shop mornings (✆ **22830/32-263**) from 9am to 1pm.

several cafes, and a taverna, usually open for lunch and dinner in summer, less regularly off season. Renowned for its school of fine arts, Pirgos is a center for marble sculpting, and many of the finest sculptors of Greece have trained here. The **Dellatos Marble Sculpture School** (✆ **22830/23-164;** www.tinosmarble.com), just outside the village by the police station, offers 1- and 2-week workshops for would-be marble workers. The **Museum of Yiannoulis Chalepas** and the **Museum of Panormian Artists** occupy adjacent houses, and give visitors a chance not only to see sculpture by local artists, but to step into an island house. The museums are located near the bus station, on the main lane leading toward the village; both are open Tuesday through Sunday from 11am to 1:30pm and 5:30 to 6:30pm; admission 2€ ($2.90).

Other especially attractive Tinian villages include **Loutra** ★, which has a number of *stegasti,* streets occupying tunnels beneath the projecting second-floor rooms of village houses. **Volax** is situated in a remote valley known for a bizarre lunar landscape of rotund granite boulders—the villagers have recently constructed a stone amphitheater for theatrical productions, so be sure to ask at Windmills Travel (✆ **22830/23-398**) for a schedule of performances (most occur in Aug). Volax is also known for its local basket weavers and attractive town spring. **Koumaros** is a beautiful small village on the road between Volax and Mesi, both of which have many stegasti.

BEACHES

Tinos is not best known for its beaches, but you'll find a decent fine-sand beach 3km (1¾ miles) west of Tinos town at **Kionia,** and another 2km (1¼ miles) east of town at busy **Ayios Fokas.** From Tinos, there's bus service on the south beach road (usually four times a day) to the resort of **Porto,** 8km (5 miles) to the east. Porto offers several long stretches of uncrowded sand, a few hotel complexes, and numerous tavernas, several at or near the beach. The beach at **Ayios Ioannis,** facing the town of Porto, is okay, but you'd be better off walking west across the small headland to a longer, less populous beach, extending from this headland to the church or Ayios Sostis at its western extremity; you can also get there by driving or taking the bus to Ayios Sostis. **Kolimbithres** has two beaches on the north side of the island, easily accessed by car, although protection from the *meltemi* winds can be a problem—the second is the best, with fine sand in a small rocky cove and two tavernas. Just beyond Pirgos, the beach at **Panormou** is in the throes of development as a holiday resort. Finally, a series of hairpin paved and unpaved roads leads down—and we mean "way down"—to beaches at **Ayiou Petrou, Kalivia,** and **Giannaki,** west of Tinos town.

Hungary

by Ryan James

Hungary became a member of the European Union in 2004, although it is not expected to join the euro-zone until at least 2010. Hungary is one of Europe's hottest destinations. Poised between East and West, both geographically and culturally, it's at the center of the region's rebirth.

1 Budapest

Budapest has a glorious history, having once rivaled its neighboring Vienna under the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. But don't let the city's rich past fool you: The Budapest of today buzzes with culture that is becoming more and more dynamically European. A vibrant young generation is proof of this. While the political elite continue to argue about the past, the youth are concentrating on the future. They're becoming multilingual; they're creating new film festivals and fashion shows. The scene they're developing is vibrant and fun—if a bit secretive and cliquish. While it might take some time to enter into their world, it's a pleasurable journey in the end. They are playing catch-up, living off the seat of their pants.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **By Plane** Budapest has two airports: **Ferihegy 1 and 2;** both are in district XVII. If you are planning travels in other parts of Europe before or after coming to Budapest, you may want to check out the numerous budget airlines flying in and out of the city. The oldest of the economy airlines are **Air Berlin** (www.airberlin.com), **Wizz Air** (www.wizzair.com), and **German Wings** (www.germanwings.com). However, there are currently 13 nontraditional airlines flying into Budapest from 62 different destinations within Europe. Although, some of these routes are summertime only, you can check the current routes on **www.skyscanner.com** or **www.flylc.com**.

Both airports now exclusively contract with **Zóna Taxi** (✆ **1/365-5555**). Fares run from zones 1 to 4 and cost from 3,000 Ft to 4,300 Ft ($16–$23/£8.55–£12). These taxis are also metered, so if the metered fare is less than the zone rate, you pay the reduced fare. By law, all taxis must give you a paper receipt for your fare.

Airport Shuttle (✆ **1/296-8555;** www.bud.hu/english), is owned and operated by the Budapest Airport Authority. A clearly visible shuttle kiosk is in each of the terminals. A round-trip fare is 3,900 Ft ($21/£11) per person and one way is 2,300 Ft ($12/£6.55) per person. The fares are the same for both airports. Depending on the number of people, you may find the taxi service less expensive. To arrange your return to the airport from your hotel, call the number above 24 hours *in advance,* but not longer than 24 hours in advance and absolutely not less than 12 hours in advance. The shuttle office is open from 6am to 10pm, but be warned that you may have to wait on hold for some time and may possibly get disconnected in the process.

Two buses leave the airport for the metro. From **Ferihegy 2,** take **bus no. 93** to the last stop, Kőbánya-Kispest. From there, the Blue metro line runs to the Inner City of Pest. The cost is two transit tickets, which is 460 Ft ($2.50/£1.30) for both; tickets can be bought from the automated vending machine at the bus stop (coins only and not recommended) or from any newsstand in the airport. From **Ferihegy 1,** there are two bus options: **bus no. 93** and **bus no. 200.** We recommend bus no. 200 as it is a newer, shorter route with fewer stops, but with the same end point.

The airport train, which runs from **Ferihegy 1** to **Nyugati** train station, costs 300 Ft ($1.60/85p) for one-way. There are over 30 trains daily. If you arrive at **Ferihegy 2,** take either bus above to **Ferihegy 1** in order to catch the train.

By Train Budapest has three major train stations: **Keleti** pályaudvar (Eastern Station), **Nyugati** pályaudvar (Western Station), and **Déli** pályaudvar (Southern Station). The stations' names, curiously, have no correspondence to anything, so don't try to use any logic here. Each has a metro station beneath it. Under no circumstances should a traveler take a taxi from any of the train stations unless you have called the company yourself. This is the most often used scam separating tourists from their cash.

Most international trains pull into bustling **Keleti Station** (✆ **1/314-5010**). It is located in Pest's old and tired Baross tér, beyond the Outer Ring on the border of the VII and VIII districts. The Red line of the metro is below the station; numerous bus, tram, and trolleybus lines serve Baross tér as well.

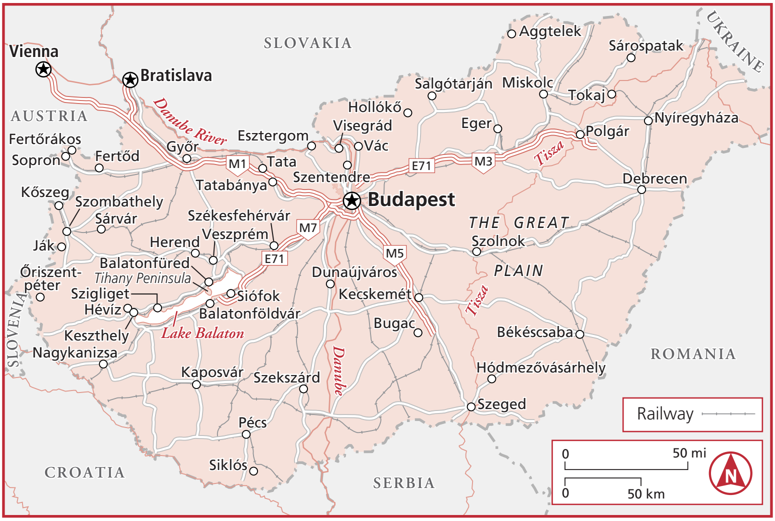
Some international trains arrive at **Nyugati Station** (✆ **1/349-0115**), another classic designed by the Eiffel Company and completed in 1877. The current station is located on the Outer Ring, at the border of the V, VI, and XIII districts. The Blue line metro is beneath Nyugati; numerous tram and bus lines serve busy Nyugati tér.

Few international trains, but some from Vienna, arrive at **Déli Station** (✆ **1/375-6293**), a modern ugly building. It is the only station on the Buda side; the terminus of the Red metro line is beneath this train station.

By Bus The Népliget Bus Station is the city's recently opened modern main bus terminal on the Red metro line at the **Stadionok** stop. The Blue line goes to the much smaller **Árpád híd bus station** that caters only to the domestic bus service.

VISITOR INFORMATION The city's best source of visitor information is **Tourinform,** the official Budapest Tourism offices. They have a booth at each of the airports, plus three offices in the city. The office at V. Liszt Ferenc tér 11, in Pest (✆ **1/322-4098;** www.tourinform.hu; metro: Opera, Yellow line; tram: Oktogon, no. 4–6) is open daily from 10am to 6pm. The office at V. Sütő street 2 (Deák Sq.; metro: Deák tér) is open from 8am to 8pm daily.

The most useful free magazines for English speakers are ***Funzine*** (www.funzine.com) and ***Where,*** each with extensive listings of events, restaurants, and shopping. ***Funzine*** is an independent magazine with lots of pictures useful to travelers. Each issue has basic Hungarian words and phrases with phonetic pronunciations. The ***Budapest Sun*** (www.budapestsun.com), and the ***Budapest Times*** (www.budapesttimes.hu), are both English language, and have listings for concerts, theater, dance, film, and other events, along with restaurant reviews. They are available at most hotels and many newsstands. You can get a free copy of both at the Tourinform office in Pest. One website that attempts to map out Budapest's cultural and social scene is **www.**



Hungary

SLOVAKIA
AUSTRIA
UKRAINE
ROMANIA
SERBIA
CROATIA
SLOVENIA
Vienna
Bratislava
Danube River
Aggtelek
Sárospatak
Salgótarján
Miskolc
Tokaj
Hollókő
Visegrád
Vác
Eger
Nyíregyháza
Polgár
Esztergom
Fertőrákos
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M1
Tata
Tatabánya
Szentendre
E71
M3
Tisza
Debrecen
Budapest
Kőszeg
Szombathely
Sárvár
Székesfehérvár
M7
THE GREAT PLAIN
Szolnok
Ják
Herend
Veszprém
Őriszentpéter
Balatonfüred
Tihany Peninsula
E71
M5
Dunaújváros
Szigliget
Siófok
Kecskemét
Hévíz
Balatonföldvár
Lake Balaton
Keszthely
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N

pestiside.hu, which provides an impertinent and saucy look at the city. Its sister site, **www.chew.hu**, provides some great restaurant news on new places to eat as they open.

CITY LAYOUT The city of Budapest came into being in 1873 as the result of a union of three separate cities: **Buda, Pest,** and **Óbuda** (literally meaning Old Buda) consisting of 23 self-governing municipal districts. Budapest is divided by the **River Danube (Duna)** with Pest, almost completely flat, on the eastern shore, making up almost two-thirds of the city. On the western bank is Buda and farther yet, Óbuda, which has the hilly areas; these areas being much older settlements. If you look at a map of the city, you will see that the districts are numbered in a spiral pattern for the most part with districts I, II, and III on the Buda side and then IV starts the Pest side until XI, which again is the Buda side.

Pest Pest is the heartbeat with the commercial and administrative center of the capital and of all of Hungary. *Central Pest,* the term used in this chapter, is that part of the city between the Danube and the semicircular **Outer Ring Boulevard (Nagykörút).** The Outer Ring begins at the Pest side of the Petőfi Bridge in the south and wraps itself around the center, ending at the Margit Bridge in the north. Pest's major east-west avenues bisect the ring at several major squares.

Central Pest is further defined by the **Inner Ring (Kiskörút),** which lies within the Outer Ring. It starts at Szabadság híd (Freedom Bridge) in the south and is alternately named Vámház körút, Múzeum körút, Károly körút, Bajcsy-Zsilinszky út, and József Attila utca, depending on the district, before ending at the Chain Bridge. Inside this ring is the **Belváros,** the actual city center and the historic Inner City of Pest. The Pest side is our recommended side for accommodations since this is where the lion's share of the action is and it is easy to walk to where you want to go.

Váci utca (distinct from Váci út) is a popular pedestrian-only, touristy, shopping street between the Inner Ring and the Danube. It spills into **Vörösmarty tér,** one of the area's best-known squares. The **Dunakorzó (Danube Promenade),** a popular

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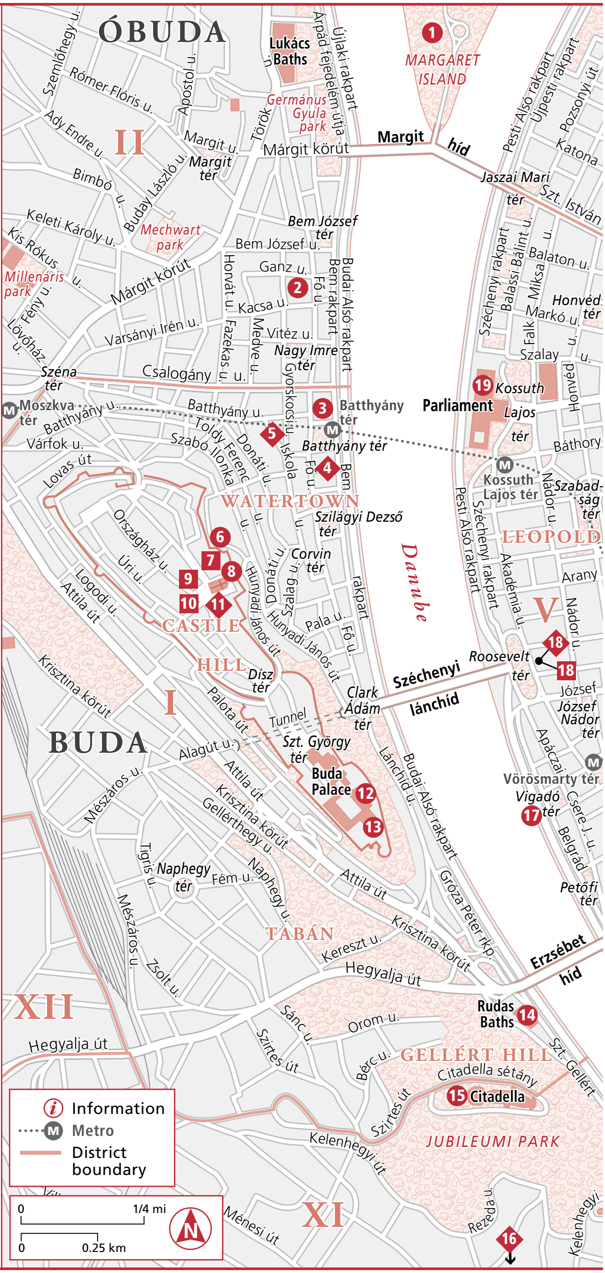
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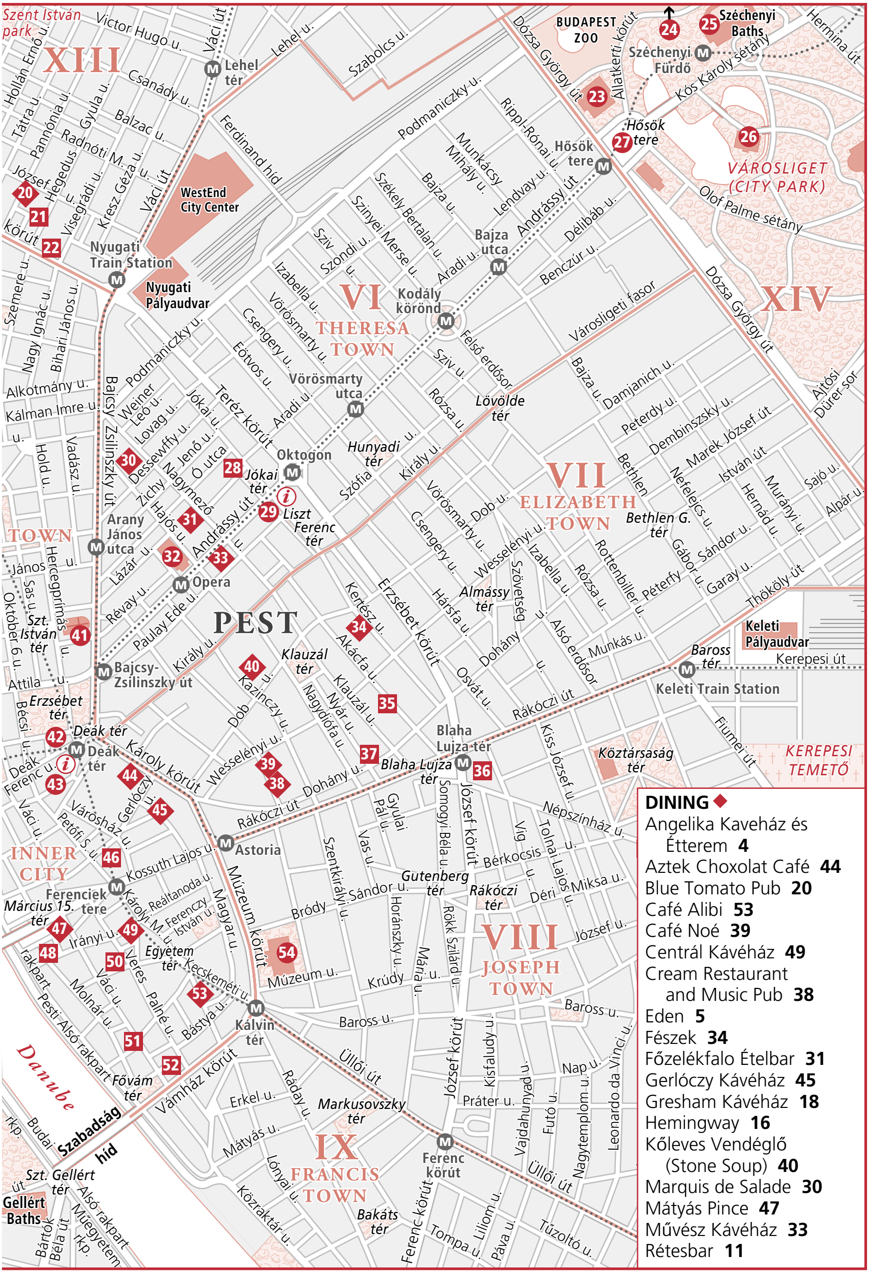
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Street Maps

You can get a good free map at the TourInform office. Otherwise, Cartografia, a Hungarian company, makes two maps that cover Budapest in great detail. Both maps are available throughout central Pest at kiosks and bookstores. The BKV térkép (Budapest Transportation Authority map), is available from metro ticket windows. If you plan on any hiking excursions in the Buda Hills, you should pick up the *A Budai Hegység map, no. 6* of the *Cartografia Turistatérképe* (Touring Map) series.

evening strolling spot, runs along the river in Pest between the Chain Bridge and the Erzsébet Bridge. The historic Jewish district of Pest is in the **Erzsébetváros (Elizabeth Town),** between the two ring boulevards.

Buda & Óbuda On the left bank of the Danube is Buda; to its north, beyond the city center, lies Óbuda. Buda is hilly and a good place for hiking.

Castle Hill is one of the most beautiful parts of Budapest with its magnificent view of Pest. Castle Hill is accessed by steep steps, walking paths, and small roads that are not open to general traffic, although public transportation does serve the hill. From Clark Ádám tér (at the head of the Chain Bridge) you can take the funicular; from Várfok utca (near Moszkva tér) you can take the no. 10 bus; or from Deák, take the no. 16 bus, all of which will take you to the top. Castle Hill consists of the royal palace itself, home to several museums. The Castle District has a long history going to pre-Celtic times, but what remains today are the medieval neighborhoods of small, winding streets, circling around Holy Trinity Square (Szentháromság tér), site of the Gothic Church of Our Lady or commonly referred to as St. Matthias Church.

Gellért Hill, to the south of Castle Hill, is named after the martyred Italian bishop who aided King István I (Stephen I) in his conversion of the Hungarian nation to Christianity in the 10th and 11th centuries. Below Castle Hill, along the Danube, is a long, narrow neighborhood and distract known as **Watertown (Víziváros).** The main street of Watertown is Fő utca (Main St.). One of the original market places is off of Batthyány tér; the famous Király thermal bath is down the street.

Central Buda, the term used in this chapter, is a collection of mostly low-lying neighborhoods below Castle Hill. The main square of Central Buda is **Moszkva tér,** just north of Castle Hill, a hub for trams, buses, and the Red line metro. Beyond Central Buda, mainly to the east, are the Buda Hills.

Óbuda is on the left bank of the Danube, north of Buda. Although the greater part of Óbuda is lacking any architectural significance, reminding one of the communist times, the area boasts both a beautiful old city center and the impressive Roman ruins of Aquincum. The historic center of the old city is **Fő tér (Main Sq.),** a charming square dotted with little, yet impressive museums. **Óbuda Island (Óbudai-sziget)** is home to an enormous park that hosts Hungary's own annual Woodstock music festival, called the Sziget (Island) Festival in August.

GETTING AROUND Budapest has an extensive, efficient, and inexpensive public transportation system. All forms of public transport require the self-validation of prepurchased tickets *(vonaljegy),* which cost 230 Ft ($1.25/65p) apiece (children under 6 travel free); single tickets can be bought at metro ticket windows, newspaper kiosks, and the occasional tobacco shop. There are also automated machines in most metro stations and at major transportation hubs, most of which provide somewhat reliable service, but I wouldn't depend on them.

I strongly recommend that you buy a transport pass, which does not require validation. They are available for 1 day *(napijegy)* for 1,350 Ft ($7.30/£3.85) and are good until midnight of the day marked. The other pass options are 3 days *(turistajegy)* for 3,100 Ft ($17/£8.80), 7 days for 3,600 Ft ($19/£10) or for longer stays, 14 days *(kéthétibérlet)* for 4,800 Ft ($26/£14). The 7- and 14-day passes need to be signed. If your plans are even longer, there is a 30 consecutive day pass *(30 napos bérlet)* at 7,350 Ft ($40/£21), which requires a photo.

The orange or red ticket validating machines can be easy to miss. Most of the validating machines are being replaced by electric models. If you need to use the manual type (usually on trams or buses), insert your ticket with the number down first and facing you. Then pull the black ticket holder toward you until you hear a paper cutter sound. If you don't see any visible difference on your ticket, the machine is not working, so look for another. When using the electronic type, make sure your ticket is numbers up and first into the machine. You will hear a little tone as the ticket is printed with the date and time. Once validated, your ticket is good for one hour.

Transportation inspectors (sometime in uniform, sometimes in plain clothes) patrol the entire transportation system checking people's tickets. The **fines** for not having a validated ticket is 5,000 Ft ($27/£14) if paid on the spot or 10,000 Ft ($54/£28) if paid later; this does not include the embarrassment of getting caught.

Most of the Budapest transportation system closes down between 11:10pm or midnight and 4:30am. There are, however, 31 night routes. Night routes are posted at bus stops if that route has one. All night buses have a nine as the first of a three-digit number. A few of them share the same numbers as buses on daytime routes or they may actually run different routes. Night buses require the standard, self-validated ticket. Many night buses will skip stops if no one signals to stop and if they do not see passengers waiting, so pay attention and press the button for your stop.

By Metro The system is clean and efficient, with trains running every 3 to 5 minutes on weekdays and 6 to 8 minutes on weekends, from about 4:30am until about 11:10pm. The three lines are known by colors: Yellow, Red, and Blue. Officially, they have numbers as well (1, 2, and 3, respectively) which is what you will see on maps. All lines converge at **Deák tér,** the only point where any lines meet. Remember that if you change lines here, you need to validate a new ticket if you are not using a pass.

By Bus With almost 175 different bus *(busz)* lines in greater Budapest, many parts of the city, most notably the Buda Hills, are best accessed by bus. With the exception

Tips Finding an Address

Budapest is divided into 23 districts, called *kerülets* (abbreviated as *ker.*). All addresses in Hungary start with a Roman numeral followed by a period signifying the *kerület;* for example, VII. Akácfa u. 18 is in the seventh *kerület.* Many street names are often used repeatedly in different districts, but are not all continuations of the same street. This makes it very important to know which *kerület* a certain address is in. You will also need to pay attention to the type of street. Is it utca, út, tér, or tere?

of night buses, most lines are in service from about 4:30am to about 11:30pm. Some bus lines run far less frequently (or not at all) on weekends, while others run far more frequently (or only) on weekends.

Each time you change buses, you need a new, validated ticket. Black-numbered local buses constitute the majority of the city's lines. Buses with red numbers are express buses that follow the same routes as local buses with the same number, skipping minor stops along the way. If the red number on the bus is followed by an *E* (there are only five routes with an *E*), the bus makes very few stops between terminals and is best avoided.

It is common practice for the drivers to bypass stops when no one is waiting to get on and no one has signaled to get off. Chances are that the locals riding a given bus will know exactly where your stop is, and will kindly help you. You can also ask the driver to let you know when he has reached your stop.

By Tram You'll find Budapest's 32 bright-yellow tram lines *(villamos)* very useful, particularly nos. 4 and 6, which travel along the Outer Ring (Nagykörút). Tram no. 2, which travels along the Danube on the Pest side between Margit híd and Boráros tér, provides an incredible view of the Buda Hills, including the Castle District, and is far better than any sightseeing tour on a bus. We especially recommend this route at night when the castle is lit on the Buda side and Parliament is spotlighted on the Pest side. It is a romantic ride.

Tickets are self-validated onboard. As with buses, tickets are valid for one ride, not for the line itself. When a tram line is closed for maintenance, replacement buses are assigned the tram route. They go by the same number as the tram, with a *V* (for *villamos*) preceding the number.

By Trolleybus All of the 16 trolleybus lines are in Pest. Of particular interest to train travelers is no. 73, the fastest route between Keleti Station and within a block of Nyugati Station. All the information in the "By Bus" section above regarding boarding, ticket validation, and stops applies to trolleybuses as well.

By Cogwheel Railway & Funicular Budapest's **cogwheel railway** *(fogaskerekű)* runs from Városmajor, across the street from the Hotel Budapest on Szilágyi Erzsébet fasor in Buda, to Széchenyi-hegy, one terminus of the Children's Railway (Gyermek Vasút) and site of Hotel Panoráma in 20 minutes. The cogwheel railway runs from 5am to 11pm, and normal transportation tickets are used.

The **cable car** or **funicular** *(sikló)* connects Buda's Clark Ádám tér, at the head of the Széchenyi Chain Bridge, with Dísz tér, just outside the Buda Castle. The funicular is one of only two forms of public transportation serving the Castle District (bus no. 10 and bus no. 16 are the other possibilities). An extremely steep and short ride, but with a fun view, though like a solarium on sunny days, the funicular runs at frequent intervals from 7:30am to 10pm (closed on the second Mon of the month). Tickets cost 700 Ft ($3.80/£2) to go up, and 1,300 Ft ($7.30/£3.70) for a round-trip for adults, while children get a break at 400 Ft ($2.15/£1.15) up and 750 Ft ($4.05/£2.15) round-trip. After public protest, the funicular now goes slower than it originally did, as riders wanted to enjoy the scenery longer.

By Taxi Budapest taxis fall into two general categories: legitimate and otherwise. All legal taxis must have a yellow license plate and a yellow taxi sign on the roof. The fare to be paid at the destination consists of three basic parts: the base fee; the kilometer fare, based on the distance traveled; and the waiting tariff, which is used if the taxi has had to stop or fails to move in traffic at a rate slower than 15kmph (9 mph). When you call for a taxi, the dispatcher will ask for the phone number you are calling from and they will get your address from this. They will also ask for a name. By law, the driver has to ask your name to ensure you are the one he is to pick up. Calling for a taxi is less expensive than getting one on the street, but if you cannot call, use the following companies only where their names are clearly displayed on the side. Make sure the driver starts the meter once you are in the taxi. By law, they must provide a written receipt. If you have a problem, write down the name of the driver from his license, his taxi number, and the company name and report it to the **Tourism Office of Budapest** at ✆ **1/266-0479.**

I particularly recommend **City Taxi** (✆ **1/211-1111**). Other reliable fleets include **Volántaxi** (✆ **1/466-6666**), **Rádió Taxi** (✆ **1/377-7777**), **Fő Taxi** (✆ **1/222-2222**), **Tele5** (✆ **1/355-5555**), **6×6** (✆ **1/266-6666**), and **Budataxi** (✆ **1/233-3333**). You will seldom, if ever, wait more than 5 minutes for a fleet taxi unless you're in an extremely remote neighborhood (or in bad weather).

Tipping is usually not more than 10%. Hungarians usually round the bill up. If you think the driver has cheated you, then you certainly should not tip. In fact, it is recommended that you call the company and complain, as most will punish their members for untoward behavior. Report it to the Tourism Office also.

FAST FACTS: Budapest

American Express Budapest's only American Express office closed its doors in 2005. There are still many references to it on the Internet and even when calling American Express Customer Service, which is shameful for a company that prides itself on good service. The office has been replaced with a local toll free number, so if you need assistance, call them at ✆ **06/800-1-7920.**

Area Code The country code for Hungary is **36;** the Budapest city code is **1.**

Business Hours Most **stores** are open Monday through Friday from 10am to 6pm and Saturday from 9 or 10am to 1 or 2pm. Most stores are closed Sunday, except those in the central tourist areas. Some shop owners and restaurateurs also close for 2 weeks in August. On weekdays, food stores open early, at around 6 or 7am, and close around 6 or 7pm. Convenience stores, called "non-stops," are open 24 hours and just about every neighborhood has at least one. **Banks** in general are open Monday through Friday from 8am to 4pm. **Museums** are usually open Tuesday through Sunday from 10am to 6pm. Almost all of them are closed on Monday, but there are exceptions to the rule.

Doctors & Dentists We recommend the **First Med Center** (formerly called the American Clinic), I. Hattyu u. 14, 5th floor (✆ **1/224-9090;** www.firstmedcenters.com). Also recommended is the **Rózsakert Medical Center** (✆ **1/391-5903**), located in the Rózsakert Shopping Center, II. Gábor Áron u. 74–78/a. Another suitable facility is **IMS,** a private outpatient clinic at XIII. Váci út 184 (✆ **1/329-8423**), with English-speaking doctors; it's reached via the Blue metro line (Gyöngyös utca). IMS also operates an emergency service after hours and on weekends at III. Vihar u. 29 (✆ **1/388-8257**).

People from neighboring countries come here for dental care for the quality and the low cost, thus creating the niche market of dental tourism. If you are thinking of extensive dental procedures, check out what is available, at **Dental-Hungary.hu,** XII. Normafa u. 54 (✆ **061/20-381-3534** cellphone; www.dental-hungary.hu). **Pasaréti Dental** at II. Pasaréti út. 8 (✆ **1/488-7919**) also provides a wide range of services. If you need emergency work done, you can also try **S.O.S. Dent Kft,** a 24-hour emergency dental clinic at VII. Király u. 14 (✆ **1/269-6010**), just a few minutes by foot from Deák tér (all three metro lines); look for the red cross on the building. Not all dentists on staff speak English.

Embassies The embassy of **Australia** is at XII. Királyhágó tér 8–9 (✆ **1/457-9777**); the embassy of **Canada** is at II. Ganz u. 12–14 (✆ **1/392-3360**); the embassy of the **Republic of Ireland** is at V. Szabadság tér 7 (✆ **1/301-4960**); the embassy of the **United Kingdom** is at V. Harmincad u. 6 (✆ **1/266-2888**); and the embassy of the **United States** is at V. Szabadság tér 12 (✆ **1/475-4400**). New Zealand does not have an embassy in Budapest, but the U.K. embassy can handle matters for New Zealand citizens.

Emergencies Dial ✆ **104** for an ambulance, ✆ **105** for the fire department, ✆ **107** for the police, and ✆ **188** for car breakdown service. ✆ **1/438-8080** is a 24-hour hot line in English for reporting crime.

Internet Access If you have your laptop with you and your hotel does not provide free Wi-Fi access, then treat yourself to a coffee or tea and hang out at a cafe or restaurant that offers free Wi-Fi. Look for Wi-Fi signs on windows and doors. Wi-Fi hotspots can also be found at www.hotspotter.hu. Unfortunately, the site is in Hungarian, but if you click on a green flag (*Ingyenes* meaning free); the name of the establishment and its address will pop up. There are dozens in the city and they are not all listed on Hotspotter.

Laundry & Dry Cleaning Self-service launderettes do not exist in Budapest. The Mister Minit chain, a locksmith and shoe-repair service located in all large shopping centers throughout the Inner City area, now offers a laundry service. I recommend **Shirt Express** ✆ **06/30-966-5480** (cellphone only). Pick up and delivery is free and the charges are very reasonable.

Liquor Laws Alcohol is sold everywhere and is available for purchase at all times. The legal drinking age in Hungary is 18.

Mail & Post Office The postal system is not the most efficient or honest, so take great care with sending or receiving packages. Most post offices are open Monday through Friday from 8am to 6pm. The post offices near Keleti and Nyugati stations have longer hours. The post office near Nyugati is at VI. Teréz krt. 51 (✆ **1/312-1480**), and is open Monday through Saturday 7am to 9pm. Keleti is at VIII. Baross tér 11/c (✆ **1/322-9013**), and is open Monday through Saturday 7am to 9pm and Sunday 8am to 8pm.

Newspapers & Magazines The *International Herald Tribune, USA Today, Guardian, Guardian Weekly,* the *Economist, Financial Times, Times of London, European, Newsweek,* the *Wall Street Journal Europe,* and *Time* are all commonly found in luxury hotels and at kiosks and bookstores in the central Pest neighborhood around Váci utca. For a listing of other English-language magazines, see "Visitor Information," p. 548.

Pharmacies The Hungarian word for pharmacy is *gyógyszertár,* or occasionally, *patika.* There are a number of 24-hour pharmacies in the city—every pharmacy posts the address of the nearest one in its window. Your best bet for 24-hour service year-round is Oktogon Patika on Teréz körút, next to Hotel Radisson (off Oktogon Sq., tram nos. 4 and 6).

Police Dial ✆ **107** for the police.

Restrooms The word for toilet in Hungarian is *WC* (pronounced vay-tsay), *mosdó,* or *toalett.* You are bound to find one of these names shown somewhere. *Női* means "women's"; *férfi* means "men's."

Smoking Smoking is forbidden in all public places, except in most restaurants and pubs, where smoking is considered to be an indispensable part of the ambience. Although a 1999 law requires all restaurants to have a nonsmoking section, the fact is that some still do not comply or do so by setting two tables right next to the smoking section, but not allowing smokers to sit there. Expect many restaurants to be smoky places and bars even worse. *Tilos a dohányzás* or *Dohányozni tilos* means "No Smoking."

Taxes Taxes are included in restaurant and hotel rates, and in shop purchases. International travelers are entitled, upon leaving the country, to a refund of the 25% VAT on certain purchases.

Telephone **To make local phone calls:** The **area code** for Budapest is 1, and all phone numbers in Budapest (except mobile phones) have seven digits. Most other towns in Hungary have a two-digit area code and six-digit telephone numbers. To make a call from one Hungary area code to another, first dial 06; when you hear a tone, dial the area code and number. Numbers that begin with 06/20, 06/30, or 06/70 followed by a seven-digit number are **mobile phone numbers.** Here it gets complicated, since the rates are different depending on whether the company servicing the phone you are using and the one you are calling is the same or different. The latter will be more expensive. Be aware that all phone calls made to a cellphone from a land line are charged at a higher rate than calls to a land line, regardless of the location of the caller or the receiver. Dial ✆ **191** for **local directory assistance** in English.

To call to Hungary from abroad: Dial the appropriate numbers to get an international dial tone (011 from the U.S.), then dial 36 (Hungary country code), followed by the appropriate city code (for Budapest, 1), followed by the six- or seven-digit telephone number. You will notice that cities outside of Budapest only have a six-digit phone number. Take note of their city code.

To make international calls: To make international calls from Hungary, first dial 00 and then the country code (U.S. or Canada 1, U.K. 44, Ireland 353, Australia 61, New Zealand 64). Next dial the area code and number. For example, if you want to call the British Embassy in Washington, D.C., dial ✆ 00-1-202/588-7800.

Those calling the U.S. can reach the **AT&T** operator at ✆ **06/800-01111,** the **MCI Worldcom** operator at ✆ **00/800-01411,** and the **Sprint operator** at

✆ 00/800-01877. Australia Direct (**✆ 06/800-06111**), **Canada Direct** (**✆ 00/800-01211**), **New Zealand Direct** (**✆ 06/800-06411**), and **U.K. Direct** (**✆ 06/800-04411** [BT], or **06/800-04412** [Mercury]) are direct-access numbers that connect you to operators in the country you're calling, with whom you can arrange your preferred billing.

For directory assistance: Dial **✆ 198** if you're looking for a number inside Hungary, and dial **✆ 199** for numbers to all other countries.

For operator assistance: If you need operator assistance in making a call, dial **✆ 199** if you're trying to make an international call and **✆ 198** if you want to call a number in Hungary.

Tipping The tipping rate is generally 10% to 15% and only higher if the service was above and beyond the call of duty. Among those who welcome tips are waiters, taxi drivers, hotel employees, barbers, cloakroom attendants, toilet attendants, masseuses, and tour guides. With restaurants there is some confusion and we don't want any waitstaff shortchanged; we did that work in our youth. According to reports in the English-language papers, there was an unclear law passed that service charges must be added to all restaurant bills; however, like many laws, they are ignored by some restaurants. To add to the mix of confusion, this law was called tax revenue for the city, not for the poor waitstaff that worked so hard at making your meal enjoyable. Some restaurant owners divide all of these proceeds among all of the staff, including the chef and kitchen help. Other restaurant owners, on the other hand, pocket the money. We prefer to hand our tip directly to the waiters to ensure they receive it.

Water Tap water in Budapest is safe to drink.

WHERE TO STAY IN BUDAPEST

Lodging rates in Budapest have risen considerably in the last few years, becoming more comparable to the rates of other European capitals. Air-conditioning can be a major concern during the summer months; the small hotels, pensions, and hostels are less likely to have it than the larger and more expensive places.

The most established accommodations agencies are the former state-owned travel agents **Ibusz** (**✆ 1/485-2700;** www.ibusz.hu), **MÁV Tours** (**✆ 1/182-9011**), and **Budapest Tourist** (**✆ 1/117-3555**).

All hotels charge a 12% value-added tax (VAT). Most build the tax into their rates, while a few tack it on top. When booking a room, ask whether the VAT is included in the quoted price. Unless otherwise indicated, prices below include the VAT.

Most hotels in Budapest list their prices in euros, both as a means of transition to the E.U. currency (Hungary is expected to adopt the euro sometime after 2010) and as a hedge against forint inflation.

THE INNER CITY & CENTRAL PEST

Very Expensive

Four Seasons Hotel Gresham Palace ★★★ This Art Nouveau building, one of the city's most elegant and majestic properties, stands as one of the finest in the world. Originally built as the Gresham Life Assurance Company in 1906, it awed the world even then with the craftsmanship provided by the most acclaimed craftsmen of the

Tips Staying in a Mellow Mood

Three moderately priced, highly recommended hotels in the inner city and Pest are run by the **Mellow Mood** (www.cityhotels.hu) hotel chain.

- For old-world charm: **City Hotel Mátyás,** V. Marcius 15 tér. ✆ **1/338-4711.**
- For a location convenient to Nyugati train station: **City Ring Hotel,** XIII. Szent István krt. 22. ✆ **1/340-5450.**
- For a charming atmosphere on a quiet pedestrian street: **Pilvax City Hotel,** V. Pilvax köz 1-3. ✆ **1/266-7660.**

Mellow Mood also runs 3 recommended **hostels** (p. 561).

time. Nearly destroyed by World War II and subsequent vandalism, it was restored, matching every single piece of remaining item of decor to bring it back to its original glory. While all rooms are beautifully decorated with mahogany furniture, the most expensive suites are equipped with bedroom sets made of mother-of-pearl. Each bathroom is fitted with Italian and Spanish marble with deep-soak bathtubs.

V. Roosevelt tér 5–6, 1051 Budapest. ✆ **800/819-5053** in the U.S. and Canada, or 1/268-6000. Fax 1/268-5000. www.fourseasons.com/budapest. 179 units. 320€–860€ ($464–$1,247/£219–£588) double; 1,050€–4,800€ ($1,523–$6,960/£718£–£3,284) suite. Rates do not include VAT. Children stay free in parent's room. Breakfast 7,200 Ft ($39/£21). AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 10,000 Ft ($54/£29) per day. Metro: Deák (all lines). **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; indoor swimming pool; sauna; exercise room; concierge; business center; salon; airport transfer; 24-hr. room service; massage; laundry service; dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, satellite TV, fax (on request), minibar, hair dryer, safe, high-speed Internet access (for a fee), robe, slippers.

NH Hotel ★★ This hotel has taken a modern, minimalist approach that still has a warm welcoming feeling. The use of textiles in the room decor in shades of browns and tans with rich dark wood, the variety of fabric from the drapes, the bed cover, and the fabric panels on the bed board, add a cozy warmth to the spacious room. Although the exercise room on the eighth floor is limited, it has modern exercise equipment, separate changing rooms for women and men, a solarium (for a fee), and a relaxation room with beautiful lounge chairs.

XIII. Vigszinház u. 3. ✆ **1/814-0000.** Fax 1/814-0100. www.nh-hotels.com. 160 units. 131€–191€ ($190–$277/£90–£131) double. Breakfast 16€ ($23/£11). AE, DC, MC, V. Secured parking 16€ ($23/£11) per day. Metro: Nyugati (Blue line) or tram 4 or 6. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; exercise room; bikes; room service; massage; laundry service; dry cleaning service; free Internet connection. *In room*: A/C, TV, minibar, coffeemaker, hair dryer, iron/ironing board (on request), safe, Wi-Fi (for a fee).

Moderate

Hotel Zara ★★ Located on a small side street off of Váci utca, this hotel is just 2 short blocks from the Great Market. It is a great location. The standard rooms seem small at 18 sq. m (194 sq. ft.) since most of them sport a queen-size bed, a rarity in less than a five-star hotel, but they are roomy enough to be comfortable. Superior rooms are 23 sq. m (248 sq. ft.) giving more room to spread out. Each corridor has only five rooms for an intimate feeling, with designated smoking and nonsmoking floors.

V. Só u. 6. ✆ **1/577-0700.** Fax 1/577-0710. www.zarahotels.com. 74 units. 95€–150€ ($138–$218/£65–£103) standard double, 105€–165€ ($152–$239/£72–£113) superior double; special season 165€ ($239/£215) standard, 185€ ($268/£127) superior. Children up to 12 stay free in parent's room. Rates include breakfast. AE, MC, V. Metro: Kálvin tér (Blue line). Parking 18€ ($26/£12). **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; room service; laundry service; dry cleaning (same day); Wi-Fi in public areas. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, safe, high-speed Internet access.

Mercure Hotel Budapest Nemzeti ★ *Finds* Formerly the Hotel Nemzeti, this hotel was built specifically for the National Theater on Blaha Lujza tér in the 1900s. The original Art Nouveau elegance has been restored and is lovely. The exterior and the lobby definitely draw attention for their charm, but the rooms have a simple decor and a nondescript print bedspread. The hotel is centrally located; it directly overlooks one of the busiest squares in the city. The rooms have high ceilings and some have spacious bathrooms. The original hotel had bathrooms at the end of the corridors, so some rooms have space for only a shower, while others have a tub/shower combo. Two floors are nonsmoking.

VIII. József krt. 4. ✆ **1/477-2000.** Fax 1/477-2001. www.mercure-nemzeti.hu. 74 units. 90€–120€ ($131–$174/£62–£82) double; 26€–36€ ($38–$52/£18–£25) extra bed. Breakfast 13€ ($19/£9). Children 12 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking available in neighborhood garage for 17€ ($25/£12) per day. Metro: Blaha Lujza tér (Red line). **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; room service; laundry service; wireless Internet in public areas (for a fee). *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, iron (on request), safe, Internet (for a fee).

Inexpensive

BudaBaB ★★ *Value* Located in the historic Jewish ghetto area, this small bed-and-breakfast is owned by two American expats. Up to five people can be accommodated at one time. Full breakfast is included in the rates. Two tram, metro, and bus lines are within 2 blocks in any direction and Keleti train station is one metro stop away. The flat has been remodeled and painted; the kitchen has a mural painted by American artist Scott Allen, who is known for his murals around the globe. Smoking is allowed in common rooms, but not bedrooms. ***Full disclosure:*** This bed-and-breakfast is owned and operated by the author of this chapter.

VII. Akácfa u. 18. ✆ **1/267-5240.** www.budabab.com. 2 units. 45€–55€ ($65–$80/£31–£38) double; 55€–70€ ($80–$102/£38–£48) triple; 85€ ($123/£58) quad. Rates are the same year-round. Rates include breakfast. No credit cards. Metro: Blaha Lujza (Red line). **Amenities:** Internet access; Wi-Fi; communal kitchen; washing machine. *In room:* Hair dryer (on request), iron (on request).

Medosz ★ This hotel, formerly a trade-union hotel for agricultural workers, retains its communist appearance with tread-worn carpeting and ugly halls. The rooms are simple, on the smallish side, but clean. The location cannot be beat. Jókai tér is less than 1 block from Oktogon and across from Liszt Ferenc tér with a dozen restaurants. Because of this, it can be noisy at night with the many restaurants and clubs in the area. Still, the hotel remains a great value given its location. A reader reports that his room had springs popping from the mattress. We advise you to look at the mattresses immediately upon checking in and ask for a room change if needed.

VI. Jókai tér 9. ✆ **1/374-3001.** Fax 1/332-4316. www.medoszhotel.hu. 68 units. 60€–70€ ($87–$102/£41–£48) double; 70€–80€ ($102–$116/£48–£55) triple; 86€–96€ ($125–$139/£59–£66) quad. 1 night discounted if 3 or more nights booked. Rates include breakfast. DC, MC, V. Metered on-street parking; indoor garage nearby. Metro: Oktogon (Yellow line). **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; laundry service. *In room:* TV, no phone.

THE CASTLE DISTRICT

Very Expensive

Hilton Budapest ★★ This Hilton has the most enviable piece of real estate in Budapest, sitting right next door to St. Matthias Church with part of the Fisherman's Bastion behind it. The hotel's award-winning design incorporated both the ruins of a 13th-century Dominican church (the church tower is alongside the hotel) and the baroque facade of a 17th-century Jesuit college, which makes up the hotel's main entrance. The corner suites are beautifully decorated with separate sitting areas, a dining area, and bedroom with oversize windows for a spectacular view of the Bastion and

Danube. The elegant Baroque Room is three levels and has a fully equipped kitchen. Two floors are nonsmoking.

I. Hess András tér 1–3. ✆ **1/899-6600.** Fax 1/899-6644. www.hilton.com. 322 units. 90€–160€ ($131–$232/£62–£110) advance purchase; 100€–170€ ($145–$247/£68–£116) value rate; 120€–220€ ($174–$319/£82–£151) flexible rate; 30€ ($44/£21) Danube view supplement; 60€ ($87/£41) executive floor supplement. Rates do not include VAT. 1 child per adult stays free in parent's room. Breakfast 27€ ($39/£19). AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 25€ ($36/£17) per day in public garage. Bus: 10 from Moszkva tér or 16 from Deák tér. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; exercise room; concierge; business center; shops; salon; 24-hr. room service; in-room massage; babysitting; laundry service; Wi-Fi in lobby. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, coffeemaker, hair dryer, iron/ironing board, safe, Wi-Fi (for fee in standard room).

Moderate

Berg Hotel ★★★ *Finds* An overlooked treasure on Castle Hill, this hotel sits on a corner directly across from St. Matthias Church. The rooms are spacious and beautifully decorated with modern comfortable furniture. The corner rooms are extra large, but any room would be comfortable. The blue-tiled bathrooms are simple, but sizeable. All have a view of Trinity Square. Breakfast is served in a large lovely decorated room with many windows overlooking the square.

I. Szentháromság tér 7–8. ✆ **1/212-0269.** Fax 1/212-3970. www.burghotelbudapest.com. 26 units. 99€–115€ ($144–$167/£68–£79) double, 29€–39€ ($42–$57/£20–£27) extra bed; special season 175€ ($254/£120) double, 39€ ($57/£28) extra bed. Children under 14 stay free in parent's room. Rates include breakfast. Parking 25€ ($36/£17) per day in public garage. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: 10 from Moszkva tér or 16 from Deák tér. **Amenities:** Bar; laundry service; dry cleaning; Wi-Fi in lobby. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Hotel Kulturinnov ★ *Value* For those with cultural interests or a burning desire to stay on Castle Hill, this is a modest alternative. The actual hotel is located on the first floor in the building of the Hungarian Culture Foundation. The building has an impressive entrance. Entering one long hall, the rooms are at the end. A total remodel was planned for March 2008, where the carpets, drapes, and all of the bathroom fixtures were to be replaced. The rooms are small, impeccably clean, with very high ceilings. None of the rooms have exceptional views, except perhaps number 10, which overlooks the garden. However, for the location, the price is a bargain.

I. Szentháromság tér 6. ✆ **1/224-8100.** Fax 1/375-1886. www.mka.hu. 16 units. 64€–80€ ($93–$116/£44–£55) double; 74€–100€ ($107–$145/£51–£89) triple; 10€–20€ ($15–$29/£7–£14) extra bed. Children under 10 stay free in parent's room. Rates include breakfast. MC, V. Parking 10€ ($15/£7) per day. Bus: 10 from Moszkva tér or 16 from Deák tér. **Amenities:** Laundry service; dry cleaning; Wi-Fi; safe; snack bar. *In room:* Minibar, hair dryer, iron (on request), fan.

HOSTELS

With over 85 hostels in the city, intense competition reigns between the leading youth hostel companies and various privately run hostels.

The leading company is **Travellers' Youth Way Youth Hostels,** also known as **Mellow Mood Ltd.** (✆ **1/413-2062;** www.mellowmood.hu). It runs three hostels: **Marco Polo** (✆ **1/413-2555;** www.marcopolohostel.com), **Domino Hostel** (✆ **1/235-0492;** www.mellowmoodhostel.com), and **Hostel Fortuna** (✆ **1/215-0600;** www.fortunahostel.hu), in addition to six summer-only hostels.

Mellow Mood Ltd. operates a youth hostel placement office for their own hostels at Keleti Station (✆ **1/343-0748**), near the international waiting room. This office, open daily 7am to 8pm, can help you book a bed.

A recommended independently owned option is the **Loft Hostel** (V. Veres Palne u. 19 IV/6 bell 44. ✆/fax **1/328-0916;** www.lofthostel.hu).

WHERE TO DINE IN BUDAPEST

Étterem is the most common Hungarian word for restaurant and is applied to everything from cafeteria-style eateries to first-class restaurants. A *vendéglő,* an inn or guesthouse, is a smaller, more intimate restaurant, often with a Hungarian folk motif. An *önkiszolgáló* indicates a self-service cafeteria, which is open for lunch only. *Büfés* (snack counters) are not to be confused with buffets in English. They are found all over the city, including transportation hubs. A *cukrászda* is a bakery for pastries and a coffee, while a *kávéház* is a coffeehouse with usually a limited selection of pastries. Traditionally, many coffeehouses are places to sit for hours to meet with friends, read a book, or just sit and people-watch. Today, some establishments use the word *kávéház* in their name, but really are restaurants.

The U.S. Embassy provides **a list of restaurants that engage in unethical business** practices such as excessive billing, using physical intimidation to compel payment of excessive bills, and assaulting customers for nonpayment of excessive bills. However, it states that this list is not comprehensive. At all costs, you should avoid these establishments. Check the embassy website for updated information: http://hungary.usembassy.gov/tourist_advisory.html.

THE INNER CITY & CENTRAL PEST

Expensive

Gresham Kávéház ★★ INTERNATIONAL Taking its name from the historic coffeehouse from 1906 and situated in the Gresham Palace Four Seasons Hotel, this is not a coffeehouse, but a lovely restaurant. The architectural restoration of the hotel has been carried over into this restaurant, representing its former and original glory. We tried the Wiener schnitzel, which is served with potatoes, a tomato, and arugula salad. The portions were more than generous for a lunch and cooked to perfection. The Italian chef likes to rotate the menu every 3 months, but they also have a full list of daily specials in addition to the regular menu. The ambience is further enhanced by the view of the Chain Bridge right outside the window.

V. Roosevelt tér 5–6. ☎ **1/268-5110.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 3,500 Ft–6,200 Ft ($19–$34/£10–£18). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat 7:30am–10pm; Sun 6:30–10:30pm. Metro: Deák tér (Red line) or tram 2 to Roosevelt tér.

Mátyás Pince ★★★ *Moments* HUNGARIAN TRADITIONAL Art, history, or music buffs will love this restaurant established in 1904, named for King Matyás. The frescoes and stained glass decorating the dining areas were registered as national monuments in 1973. Music is provided by the Lakatos Gypsy music dynasty every night but Monday from 7pm until closing, creating an all-around romantic experience. I sampled the cold blackberry soup, rich in creamy fruit flavor. The main entree was King Mátyás's favorite menu of sirloin of beef on a spit, leg of duck, gooseliver wrapped in bacon, roast sausage, potatoes, steamed cabbage, and *letcho.* (tomatoes, peppers, and onions). Beautifully presented, every morsel was delectable, and certainly fit for a king or anyone aspiring to eat like one.

V. Március 15 tér 7-8. ☎ **1/266-8008.** www.cityhotels.hu. Reservations recommended. Main courses 2,700 Ft–7,900 Ft ($15–$43/£7.75–£23). AE, MC, V. Daily 11am–midnight. Metro: Ferenciek tere (Blue line).

Moderate

Blue Tomato Pub ★★★ HUNGARIAN CONTEMPORARY Don't let the "Pub" in the name fool you, this is a serious place for treating your taste buds. The corn soup with bacon and almond slivers tempted me for a starter. It was bowl-licking delicious. Ordering rib steak with fried onions and oven-roasted potatoes turned out to be a pleasant surprise. The steak was pounded thin and covered with a mound of thin crispy onion rings. A fellow diner had walnut-coated, stuffed fried chicken breast. The only thing we regretted was not having come here before now.

XIII. Pannónia u. 5–7. ✆ **1/339-8099.** www.bluetomato.hu. Reservations recommended. Main courses 1,390 Ft–3,900 Ft ($7.50–$21/£4–£11). MC, V. Mon–Sat 11am–4am; Sun noon–midnight. Tram: 4 or 6 Jászai Mari tér.

Cream Restaurant and Music Pub ★★★ *Finds* INTERNATIONAL We were pleasantly shocked when entering here. Downstairs is a huge music pub and dance floor with different music genres on different nights, but it doesn't intrude in the main floor dining area. Our dish of beef steak with spiced butter and polenta in a sage merlot sauce, served with sautéed vegetables, was artistically presented and mouthwateringly tasty. The lemon sorbet with pink grapefruit looked picture-perfect with fresh lemony zest. The menu has a generous selection for all tastes including vegetarians. A cigar and pipe room is also available for those who just want to relax with a good smoke.

VII. Dohány u. 28. ✆ **1/413-6997.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 1,690 Ft–3,890 Ft ($9.15–$21/£4.80–£11). AE, MC, V. Restaurant daily 11am–midnight; pub 11am–4am. Free Wi-Fi. Metro: Blaha Lujza (Red line).

Fészek ★★ *Value* HUNGARIAN TRADITIONAL Fészek, which means nest, is situated in the center of an old grand building that has seen better days. Once you traipse through a rundown lobby and enter the interior courtyard do you realize there is a restaurant here. The inner ring has tables both in a covered circular terrace area as well as the center exposed courtyard, where 100-year-old chestnut trees canopy the tables. Meals are plentiful in the Hungarian tradition. The corn soup is excellent with a thin layer of toasted cheese covering the top. The veal paprika is creamy and delicious served with homemade Hungarian cheese noodles. In the winter, portable heaters make for a year-round dining adventure. Because of the quality and quantity, it is often filled with Hungarian diners, so be sure to reserve a table.

VII. Kertész u. 36 (corner of Dob u.). ✆ **1/322-6043.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 1,550 Ft–3,950 Ft ($8.40–$21/£4.40–£11). No credit cards. Daily noon–midnight. Tram: 4 or 6 to Király utca.

Gerlóczy Kávéház ★★★ *Value* HUNGARIAN CONTEMPORARY Two of us had coffee here once by accident, when caught unexpectedly in a sudden summer storm. Enjoying the atmosphere, we vowed to return. When we did return, we did so without reservations. The tables in front were occupied, and the host noticed our dilemma; he appeared with another table and set it with two chairs. This was the start of a perfect dinner, which included a half portion of two different ciabattas: pepperoni and walnuts. To accompany this, we had a plate of sliced tomatoes with mozzarella cheese. The smoked sheep cheese slices with grilled peppers and garlic were enormous, think slices grilled to a crusty coat, but soft on the inside. They left little room for the salad that came with it. The five huge pieces of grilled filet mignon of pork, was served with boiled potatoes, cut into chunks and formed into a ball with Swiss chard interlaced. Thank goodness for sudden storms.

V. Gerlóczy u. 1. ✆ **1/235-0953.** Reservations recommended. Cold main courses 890 Ft–1,980 Ft ($4.80–$11/£2.55–£5.65); hot main courses 1,680 Ft–4,200 Ft ($9.10–$23/£4.80–£12). MC, V. Mon–Fri 7am–11pm; Sat–Sun 8am–11pm. Metro: Deák tér (Red line).

Marquis de Salade ★★★ *Moments* AZERBAIJAN We discovered this restaurant on our first trip to Budapest in 1998 and loved it then. After 10 years, it has only improved. The entrance is on the street level, but the restaurant is downstairs in a cavelike atmosphere, decorated with Asian rugs on the walls and ceiling. Our group started with the Marquis's salads, which is a sampler platter of six different salads. Along with the bread, this about constituted a sumptuous meal, but we plunged forward with entrees; the Adajab sandal, a luscious lamb stew cooked with eggplant, tomato, and potato cooked in a clay pot was excellent. Another entree, eggplant stuffed with walnuts and other spices had all of us savoring the flavors and begging for more. This is a small intimate restaurant so the service is impeccable.

VI. Hajós u. 43. ✆ **1/302-4086.** www.marquisdesalade.hu. Reservations recommended. Main courses 2,500 Ft–3,900 Ft ($14–$21/£7.10–£11). No credit cards. Daily 11am–1am. Metro: Arany János (Blue line); bus: 70 or 78 to Bajcsy-Zsilinszky út.

Inexpensive

Főzelékfalo Ételbar ★★ *Value* HUNGARIAN TRADITIONAL Főzelék is a cross between a soup and a stew, though it is puréed and this wisp of a restaurant has been voted the best in the city by all who have been polled. Inside there are only bar tables and stools, but if the weather is good, the sidewalk will be packed with tables. Take it to go if you have to. The stew comes in a number of varieties, but green pea and potato are the most popular. If you want something more hearty, they sell fried chicken too. This is the cheapest, filling meal you will find in the city. If you still want some dessert, they serve *palacsinta* (Hungarian crepes).

VI. Nagymező 18. No phone. Main courses 320 Ft–480 Ft ($1.75–$2.60/90p–£1.40). Cash only. Mon–Fri 9am–10pm; Sat 10am–9pm; Sun 11am–6pm. Metro: Opera (Yellow line).

Kőleves Vendéglő (Stone Soup) ★★★ *Finds* HUNGARIAN CONTEMPORARY The decor will delight anyone who remembers the story of *Stone Soup,* but the real delight comes with the food. The matzo ball soup had shredded chicken with a baseball-size matzo ball, appealingly spiced. We could not resist the tenderloin steak in black pepper coated with chili and chocolate, which was mouth-watering from the first bite to the last. Each a la carte entree has a suggested side dish that costs extra, but at 360 Ft to 400 Ft ($1.95–$2.15/£1–£1.10) for a side, it is still a bargain for such delicious treats.

VII. Kazinczy u. 35. ✆ **1/322-1011.** www.koleves.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses 1,280 Ft–1,780 Ft ($6.90–$9.60/£3.65–£5.10). AE, MC, V. Daily 11am–midnight. Close to Dohány Synagogue on the corner of Kazinczy u. and Dob u.

CENTRAL BUDA

Expensive

Hemingway ★★★ *Moments* HUNGARIAN CONTEMPOARY You will feel like you are escaping the city when visiting this restaurant next to a small lake with plenty of trees. Opened seven years ago, it has never lost its popularity. We started with the grilled ewe cheese over a mixed olive-oil salad. Fortunately, it was the only starter we chose as it was large enough for two. For main courses, we recommend highly the Glenn Close pasta, spinach linguine with garlic, red peppers, cream sauce, and a touch of anise. The Mangalica pork was perfectly prepared with a tomato/brown sauce over mounds of fresh mashed potatoes. The white chocolate mousse was presented beautifully, but it was a little more sugary than chocolate. In clement weather, eat outside on the terrace overlooking the water.

XI. Kosztolányi D. tér 2, Feneketlen tó. ✆ **1/381-0522.** www.hemingway-etterem.hu. Reservations recommended. Main courses 2,390 Ft–5,990 Ft ($13–$32/£6.80–£17). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily noon–midnight. Bus: 7 toward Buda from Ferenciek tér to Feneketlen tó, a small "lake."

Coffeehouses: Historic & Traditional

As part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Budapest (just as in Vienna) developed a coffeehouse culture where people of like minds met to discuss politics, literature, or music. Each coffeehouse has its own story as to which literary movement or political circles favored their establishment. Of the old classics, we prefer **Centrál Kávéház,** V. Károlyi Mihály u. 9 (✆ **1/266-2110;** www.centralkavehaz.hu) in the Inner City; **Művész Kávéház,** VI. Andrássy út 29 (✆ **1/352-1337**), across from the Opera House, and **Rétesbar,** I. Balta köz 4 (no phone) in Castle Hill.

For a modern take on coffee culture, find a spot in **Aztek Choxolat Café,** V. Karoly korut 22 or Semmelweiss u. 19 (✆ **1/266-7113**), **Café Alibi,** V. Egyetem tér 4 (✆ **1/317-4209;** www.cafealibi.hu), or **Café Noé,** VII. Wesselényi u. 13 (✆ **1/321-7145;** www.torta.hu), all in Pest.

Moderate

Angelika Kaveház és Étterem ★★ HUNGARIAN CONTEMPORARY Angelika is housed in a historic building next to St. Anne's Church and was once part of the church's ministerial buildings. Better known as a place for drinks and pastries on a summer's day, their multilevel terrace has perfect views of Parliament across the Danube. The menu is not extensive, but our entree of pork wrapped in bacon with oven-baked potatoes was excellent. Surprisingly, we were served four full baked potatoes as well as two thick boneless chops. The pork was grilled and coated in spices keeping it moist and very flavorful.

I. Batthyány tér 7. ✆ **1/201–0668.** Main courses 1,990 Ft–3,290 Ft ($11–$18/£5.70–£9.35). No credit cards. Mon–Sat 9am–midnight; Sun and holidays 9am–11pm. Metro: Batthyány tér (Red line).

Inexpensive

Eden ★ *Finds* VEGETARIAN Vegans can celebrate for this is the first and only vegan restaurant in Buda. Their selection of 12 juices freshly squeezed from fruits or vegetables will quench anyone's thirst. When you order, take note that the price for salad is by weight and the drinks are by volume.

I. Iskola street 31, Batthyányi sq. ✆ **06/20-337-7575** cellphone. www.edenetterem.hu. 290 Ft–590 Ft ($1.55–$3.20/80p–£1.70). Cash only. Sun 11am–9pm; Mon–Thurs 7am–9pm; Fri 7am–6pm; Sat closed. Metro: Batthyányi (Red line).

SEEING THE SIGHTS

Historic Budapest is smaller than people realize. Since this is a great walking city, many attractions listed in this chapter are easily reached by foot from the city center or by public transport.

SIGHTSEEING SUGGESTIONS FOR FIRST-TIME VISITORS

If You Have 1 Day Spend a few hours in the morning exploring the **Inner City** and **central Pest.** Stroll along the Danube as far as the neo-Gothic **Parliament,** noting the **Chain Bridge** and **Gresham Palace** (now site of the Four Seasons Hotel, p. 558) along the way. In the afternoon, visit the major sites of **Castle Hill** and meander the cobblestone streets of the **Castle District.**

If You Have 2 Days Follow our suggestions for 1 day, described above. On day 2, walk the **Outer Ring Boulevard,** noting Nyugati Railway Station and stop for coffee and a slice of *dobos torta* (layer cake) in **Művész Kávéház**, diagonally across from the **Opera House** on grand Andrássy út. Later, head to Buda's **Rudas Baths** and unwind in the medicinal **spa** waters there. Refreshed, hike up the stairs of Gellért Hill to see the **Liberation Monument** and get an unparalleled panorama of the city. In the evening, explore the vibrant cafe and nightclub scene.

If You Have 3 Days or More On day 3, take a boat up the Danube to visit **Szentendre,** a charming riverside town. Take days 4 and 5 to visit some of the central sites you may have missed in Budapest, and after lunch cross the Chain Bridge to **Watertown** to explore Buda's historic riverside neighborhood. Or perhaps do some browsing in Pest's **Central Market** or head to **Margaret Island** for a relaxing end to a busy schedule.

PEST

Nemzeti Múzeum (Hungarian National Museum) ★★ The Hungarian National Museum was founded in 1802, thanks to the numismatic, book, and document collections of Count Ferenc Szénchényi. This enormous neoclassical structure was finished in 1846. It was here that the poet Sándor Petőfi and others of like mind are said to have roused the emotions of the people of Pest to revolt against the Habsburgs on March 15, 1848. The permanent exhibit holds over one million pieces of Hungarian historical artifacts, including the main attraction, a replica of the so-called crown of King St. Stephen.

VIII. Múzeum krt. 14. ✆ **1/338–2122.** www.hnm.hu. Free admission for permanent exhibits; temporary exhibits vary. Photo 3,000 Ft ($16/£8.50); video 5,000 Ft ($27/£14). Tues–Sun 10am–6pm. Metro: Kálvin tér (Blue line).

Szépművészeti Múzeum (Museum of Fine Arts) ★★★ During the 1896 millennial celebration of the Magyars settling and forming a nation in 896, the plans were proposed for the Museum of Fine Arts. Ten years later in the presence of Franz Josef, the king and emperor of Austria and Hungary, the Museum of Fine Arts was opened at the left side of Heroes' Square. This was the last great monument to be built during the most prosperous period of Hungary's history. Designed in the Beaux Arts style, the museum is the main repository of foreign art in Hungary and it houses one of central Europe's major collections of such works. The overall collection consists of over 3,000 paintings, 10,000 drawings, and 100,000 prints. Docents offer guided tours in English, free of charge. Go to the cashier's deck close to the starting time and a docent will announce the tour. They are offered Tuesday through Friday at 11am and 2pm and Saturday at 11am.

XIV. Hősök tere. ✆ **1/469-7100.** www.szepmuveszeti.hu. Free admission for permanent collection; temporary exhibits vary. Photo 300 Ft ($1.50/85p); video 1,500 Ft ($8/£4). Tues–Sun 10am–5:30pm. Metro: Hősök tere (Yellow line).

BUDA

Budapesti Történeti Múzeum (Budapest History Museum) ★ This museum, also referred to as the Castle Museum, is easily overlooked since it is tucked in the back courtyard behind the palace. Once you approach it, there are no lavish signs advertising it either. If you are interested in the history of this great city as well as the whole Carpathian basin from medieval times, you will love this museum.

What you should not miss is the third-floor exhibit where you will find historic maps of battle plans and weapons used in the liberation from the Turkish occupation. At the back of the main floor, you will find a statue area that has an outstanding collection of Roman and medieval-era pieces. The highlight is the lowest level; it is actually part of the old palace and hidden back there is a chapel.

I. In Buda Palace, Wing E., on Castle Hill. ✆ **1/224-3700.** Admission 1,100 Ft ($6/£3). Photo 800 Ft ($4.25/£2.25); video 1,600 Ft ($8.75/£4.50). Audio-guided tours 850 Ft ($4.50/£2.50). May 15–Sept 15 daily 10am–6pm; Nov 1–Feb 28 Wed–Mon 10am–6pm. Bus: 10 from Moszkva tér or 16 from Deák tér to Castle Hill. Funicular: From Clark Ádám tér to Castle Hill.

Nemzeti Galéria (Hungarian National Gallery) ★ With a collection of over 10,000 art objects, this museum is not for the cultural faint of heart. I have yet to see the entire collection. Permanent exhibitions include: medieval and Renaissance lapidariums, Gothic woodcarvings, Gothic winged altars, Renaissance and baroque art and the Hungarian celebrities Mihály Munkácsy, László Paál, Károly Ferenczy, and Pál Szinyei Merse.

I. In Buda Palace, Wings B, C, and D, on Castle Hill. ✆ **1/375-5567.** Free admission to permanent collection; temporary exhibits vary. Dome 300 Ft ($1.50/85p). Photo 1,500 Ft ($8/£4.25); video 2,000 Ft ($11/£5.75). Tues–Sun 10am–6pm. Bus: 10 from Moszkva tér or 16 from Deák tér to Castle Hill. Funicular: From Clark Ádám tér to Castle Hill.

CHURCHES

Mátyás Templom (Matthias Church) ★★★ Originally founded by King Béla IV in the 13th century, this church is officially named the Church of Our Lady and is a symbol of Buda's Castle District. It is popularly referred to as Matthias Church after the 15th-century king Matthias Corvinus who added a royal oratory and was twice married here. Renovation has been an ongoing process as financial considerations allow and it is currently half-covered with scaffolding. Regardless, it is a church not to be missed. Do not miss the museum upstairs, which details the interesting history of the royal crown and has a wonderful view of the church.

I. Szentháromság tér 2. ✆ **1/355-5657.** www.matyas-templom.hu. Admission 650 Ft ($3.50/£1.85) adults, 400 Ft ($2.15/£1.15) students. Photo free. Mon–Fri 9am–5pm; Sat depends on weddings; Sun 1–5pm. Metro: Moszkva tér, then bus no. 10; or Deák tér, then bus 16. Funicular: From Clark Ádám tér to Castle Hill.

Szent István Bazilika (St. Stephen's Church) ★★ The country's largest church, this basilica took more than 50 years to build (the 1868 collapse of the dome caused significant delay) and was finally completed in 1906, which explains the differences in architectural designs. As you wander into the church and to the left in the back chapel you can view St. Stephen's mummified hand or you can wait until August 20, his feast day and see it for free when it is paraded around the city. To get the box to light up to actually see it, you will have to spring for 100 Ft (55¢/25p).

V. Szent István tér 33. ✆ **1/318-9159.** www.basilica.hu. Church free admission; treasury 400 Ft ($2.15/£1.15); panorama tower 500 Ft ($2.70/£1.40). Photo free. Tour 2,000 Ft ($11/£5.70). Church daily 9am–7pm, except during services; treasury daily 9am–5pm; Szent Jobb Chapel Mon–Sat 9am–5pm, Sun 1–5pm; panorama tower daily 10am–5pm. Metro: Arany János u. (Blue line) or Bajcsy-Zsilinszky út (Yellow line).

HISTORIC SQUARES & BUILDINGS

Hősök tere (Heroes' Square) ★★ *Kids* If you want a really dramatic experience, come up from the yellow metro station at Hősök tere from the city center at night—when Hősök tere is majestic in its splendor. Located at the end of the grand World Heritage Boulevard, Andrássy út, the square is the entryway into the best-known park in the city, City Park (Városliget). Two of Budapest's major museums, the Museum of Fine Arts and the Exhibition Hall, flank Heroes' Square.

Metro: to Hősök tere (Yellow line).

Magyar Állami Operaház (Hungarian State Opera House) ★★★ Built in a neo-Renaissance style, this is the most beautiful building of this style on Andrassy út. The architect was Miklós Ybl, the most successful and prolific architect of his time. He created what many agree is one of the most beautiful opera houses in Europe. It was completed in 1884. It is Budapest's and Hungary's most celebrated performance hall; the opera house boasts a fantastically ornate interior featuring frescoes by two of the best-known Hungarian artists of the day, Bertalan Székely and Károly Lotz.

VI. Andrássy út 22. ✆ **1/331-2550.** www.opera.hu. Tour 2,500 Ft ($14/£7) adults, 1,300 Ft ($7/£3.75) students. Photo 500 Ft ($2.75/£1.40); video (with small camera) 500 Ft ($2.75/£1.40). Tours daily 3 and 4pm. Metro: Opera (Yellow line).

Parliament ★★★ Budapest's great Parliament, the second largest in Europe after London, is an eclectic design mixing the predominant Gothic-revival style with a neo-Renaissance dome. Standing on the Danube bank, visible from almost any riverside point, it has from the outset been one of Budapest's proud symbols, though until 1989 a democratically elected government had convened here only once (just after World War II, before the communist takeover). As you walk up the imposing staircase, you are led under the dome along a 16-sided hallway with 16 statues of rulers. In the center floor under the dome is a glass case with the legendary jeweled crown and scepter of King St. Stephen. Historical records have shown that the crown is of two parts and from two different eras, neither from King St. Stephen's time. Nevertheless, it is one of the oldest royal crowns in history.

V. Kossuth tér. ✆ **1/441-4415.** Tourist.office@parliament.hu. Admission (by guided tour only) 50 min. tour in English 2,300 Ft ($12/£6.55) adults, 1,150 Ft ($6.20/£3.25) students, free admission E.U. passport holders with passport. Photo free. Tickets available at gate X; prebook by e-mail or phone ✆ 1/441-4904 or 1/441-4415. Tours year-round Wed–Sun 10am, noon, 1pm, and 2pm. Closed when Parliament is in session, usually Mon and Thurs. Metro: Kossuth tér (Red line); tram 2 and 2A Szalay u.

PANORAMAS & PARKS

Gellért Hegy (Gellért Hill) ★★ towers 235m (750 ft.) above the Danube, and offers the city's best panorama on a clear day (bus 27 from Móricz Zsigmond körtér). It's named after the Italian bishop Gellért, who assisted Hungary's first Christian king, Stephen I, in converting the Magyars. Gellért became a martyr when vengeful pagans, according to legend, rolled him in a nail-studded barrel to his death from the side of the hill. An enormous statue now stands on the hill to celebrate his history. On top of Gellért Hill you'll find the **Liberation Monument,** built in 1947 to commemorate the Red Army's liberation of Budapest from Nazi occupation. Also atop the hill is the **Citadella,** built by the Austrians shortly after they crushed the Hungarian uprising from 1848 to 1849. Views of the city from both vistas are excellent, but the Citadella is spectacular. Don't bother paying the extra to traipse up to the upper part; the view is not that much higher, so don't waste your money.

Halászbástya (Fisherman's Bastion) ★★, behind Matthias Church and the Hilton Hotel on Castle Hill, has a spectacular panorama of the river and Pest beyond it. Built at the turn of the 20th century, it was included as part of the refurbishing of the church area. Local legend states that this stretch of medieval parapets was a protected area by the fishermen's guild, but the area was once a fish market area, so either

A Cave Tour

You can tour the Pál-völgyi–Mátyás-hegyi cave system under Budapest with **Barlangaszat** tours (☎ **06/20-928-4969** cellphone only; www.barlangaszat.hu; 3,800 Ft ($16/£8.50). All the necessary equipment is provided. Crawling, scrambling, and hunkering down will be done many times during the tour, but no previous caving experience is needed. It is not recommended for those who are claustrophobic or unable to squeeze through tight places.

could be true. The local city council imposed a fee of 3€ ($4.35/£2) to pass through the turnstile allowing you to climb to the top lookout points. If you happen to be in the area after 6pm, it is no longer manned and you can go up for free.

Popular **Margaret Island (Margit-sziget)** ★★★ has an interesting history going back to King Béla. He vowed that if he were successful in the Mongol invasion from 1242 to 1244, his daughter Margaret would be brought up as a nun. Well he was, so when she was ten, she was brought to the island to live a life of pious chastity. You can walk around what is left of the Dominican Convent where you will find signs mentioning St. Margaret, a 13th-century Franciscan church. The island holds many attractions including the Palatinus Strand open-air baths, the Alfréd Hajós Sport Pool, and the Open-Air Theater. Margaret Island is best reached by tram no. 4 or 6, which stops at the entrance to the island midway across the Margaret Bridge or bus no. 26 from Nyugati tér, which continues through the length of the island.

City Park (Városliget) ★ sits behind Heroes' Square and is just as popular as Margaret Island for lazy walks, picnics in the grass, and the many attractions located in and around the park. The **Vajdahunyad Castle,** located by the lake, is stunning when lit at night. Near the lake, an area is flooded to provide a frozen surface for ice skating in winter. The park also embraces **Animal Garden Boulevard (Állatkerti körút),** where a zoo, circus, and amusement park are all found. You will also find **Széchenyi Baths** (p. 570) on one outer rim of the park. The nearby **Petőfi Csarnok** is the venue for a variety of popular cultural events, concerts, and the **weekly flea market** (Sat–Sun 7am–2pm). The Yellow metro line makes stops at Hősök tere (Heroes' Sq.), and at Széchenyi fürdő, in the middle of the park.

Vidám Park (Amusement Park) ★★ This is a must if you're traveling with kids or are a child at heart. The 100-year-old **Merry-Go-Round** *(Körhinta),* constructed almost entirely of wood, has been restored to its original grandeur, though it still creaks mightily as it spins. The riders must actively pump to keep the horses rocking, and authentic Würlitzer music plays. The **Roller Coaster,** operating since 1926, has a wooden frame and is listed as a historic monument. The **Ikarus** will tickle your senses with its 30m (98-ft.) height and 30kmph (18 mph) speed making for a titillating 3-minute ride.

XIV. Állatkerti krt. 14–16. ☎ **1/343-9810.** www.vidampark.hu. Admission 3,100 Ft ($17/£8.80) adults, 2,100 Ft ($11/£6) children 100–140 centimeters (39–55 in.) tall. Admission includes all rides with the wristband provided. Apr–Sept Mon–Fri 11am–7pm, Sat–Sun 10am–8pm; Oct–Mar Mon–Fri noon–6pm, Sat–Sun 10am–6:30pm. Metro: Széchenyi fürdő.

BUS, BOAT & WALKING TOURS

EUrama Travel Agency (☎ **1/327-6690;** www.eurama.hu) operates the Budapest City Circle Sightseeing Tour. Tours on their red double-decker bus last 3 hours. They

Bathing in History: Budapest's Thermal Baths

Thermal baths were popularized by the Turks, who started building them in 1565. Budapest and other parts of Hungary are built over hot springs making this a natural way of acquiring the mineral rich waters for bathing.

You are generally required to pay for the longest possible duration (4 hr. or more) when you enter the bathhouse. You are refunded on the basis of the actual time you spent on the premises when you exit. You are given a chip card upon entry; keep careful track of the card because if you lose it you are assumed to have stayed for the maximum time and you will not receive a refund.

- **Király Baths** ★★, I. Fő u. 84; (✆ **1/201-4392;** metro: Batthyány tér, Red line), are some of the oldest baths in Hungary, dating from around 1563. The domed roof allows sunlight to filter through, giving the water a special glow. This bath is time limited; Monday through Friday, you are only allowed to stay for 1½ hours and on Saturday, only 1 hour. Bathing suits are required for both sexes and take a towel with you. Women can use the baths on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 7am to 6pm. Men are welcome on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday from 9am to 8pm.
- **Rudas Baths** ★★, I. Döbrentei tér 9 (✆ **1/356-1322;** bus: 7), are near the Erzsébet Bridge in Buda, is the second oldest of Budapest's classic Turkish baths, built in the 16th century. The centerpiece is an octagonal pool under a domed roof with some stained glass windows. These baths are for men only every day but Tuesday during the day or Friday and Saturday nights.
- **Széchenyi Baths** ★★★, XIV. Állatkerti út 11–14 (✆ **1/363-3210;** www.spasbudapest.com; metro: Széchenyi fürdő, Yellow line) are located in City Park, and are the most popular. From the outside, you'd never believe its enormity. Any tourist photo of older gentlemen playing chess on floating chess boards while half immersed in water is a photo of this bath.

will pick you up free at your hotel, otherwise there is a meeting point for alternative accommodations. EUrama also offers a 1-hour sightseeing tour by boat. Tours depart from Vigadó tér (on the Pest waterfront, between the Erzsébet Bridge and the Chain Bridge, near the Budapest Marriott hotel).

We highly recommend **Budapest Tour** ★★★ (✆ **06/70-455-0356** cellphone only; www.seebudapest.hu) for its personal service. You receive a 3-hour tour in a comfortable minivan (minimum one person or maximum 12 people), with an energetic guide.

MAHART (✆ **1/318-1704;** www.mahartpassnave.hu), the Hungarian state company, operates a daily 2-hour daytime sightseeing cruise on the Danube, using two-story steamboats. Boats depart frequently from Vigadó tér (on the Pest waterfront, between the Erzsébet Bridge and the Chain Bridge, near the Budapest Marriott hotel) on weekends and holidays in the spring and every day in summer. MAHART also offers evening cruises with and without dinner. Buffet dinner and cruise is 5,990 Ft ($32/£17) or cruise only 2,990 Ft ($16/£8.50).

For a walking tour, contact **Absolute Walking Tours** (✆ **1/266-8777;** www.discoverhungary.com). The tours are conducted by friendly and knowledgeable guides who meet you outside the Evangelical Church on Deák tér (all metro lines). Tours last 3½ hours taking you throughout both central Pest and central Buda.

BUDAPEST SHOPPING

MAIN SHOPPING DISTRICTS The hub of the tourist-packed capital is the pedestrian shopping street Váci utca, running from the stately Vörösmarty tér in the center of Pest, across Kossuth Lajos utca, all the way to Vámház körút. The street is largely occupied by Euro-fashion chain stores and an overwhelming number of folklore/souvenir shops, which might be nice to window-shop, but you may be paying more than you should. This area is home to many cafes and bars, but is notorious for tourist traps. Another popular shopping area for travelers is the **Castle District** in Buda, with its abundance of overpriced folk-art boutiques and art galleries.

The **Központi Vásárcsarnok** (**Central Market Hall;** X. Vámház krt 1–3; ✆ **1/217-6067**; metro: Kálvin tér, Blue line) is the largest and most spectacular of Budapest's market halls. Fresh produce, meat, and cheese vendors dominate this market located on the Inner Ring (Kiskörút), just on the Pest side of the Szabadság Bridge. The mezzanine level features folk-art booths, coffee and drink bars, and fast food. The basement level houses fishmongers, pickled goods, a complete selection of spices, and Asian import foods, along with a large grocery store. It's open Monday 6am to 5pm, Tuesday through Friday 6am to 6pm, and Saturday 6am to 2pm.

BEST BUYS **Folklore** Check out the second floor of the Central Market (see above) for a wide selection of popular hand-crafted Hungarian gifts. The vendors here are willing to bargain. The main folk-art store, **Folkart Centrum,** is at V. Váci u. 58 (✆ **1/318-5840**). One shop that has a wide selection and helpful staff is **Folkart Craftman's House** (✆ **1/318-5143**) on the side street, Régiposta u. 12 right off of Váci utca. An outstanding private shop on Váci utca is **Vali Folklór,** in the courtyard of Váci u. 23 (✆ **1/337-6301**).

Ethnic Hungarians from Translyvania come to Budapest with handmade craftwork and sell their goods to Hungarians and tourists alike on the street or in the metro plazas. They are unmistakable in their characteristic black boots and dark-red skirts, with red or white kerchiefs tied around their heads.

Food Hungarian salami is world famous. Connoisseurs generally agree that Pick Salami, produced in the southeastern city of Szeged, is the best brand. Herz Salami, from Budapest, is also very popular. Some people have reported difficulty in clearing U.S. Customs with salami; bring it home at your own risk. Another typical Hungarian food product is chestnut paste *(gesztenye püré),* available in a tin or block wrapped in foil; it's used primarily as a pastry filling but can also top desserts and ice cream. Paprika paste *(pirosarany)* is another product that's tough to find outside Hungary. It usually comes in a bright-red tube. Three types are available: hot *(csípős),* deli-style *(csemege),* and sweet *(édes).* Powdered paprika is also a popular gift and comes in the same three varieties as the paste. In the Central Market, you will find the powdered version in decorated bags, making it ready for gift giving.

Porcelain Another popular Hungarian item is porcelain, particularly from the country's two best-known producers, Herend and Zsolnay. Although both brands are available in the West, you'll find a better selection and lower prices in Hungary.

Ajka Crystal, V. József Attila u. 7 (✆ **1/317-8133**), is Hungary's renowned crystal producer from Lake Balaton. The **Herend Shop** is located at József nádor tér 11 (✆ **1/317-2622**); VI. Andrássy u. 16 (✆ **1/374-0006**); and I. Szentháromság u. 5 (✆ **1/225-1051**). An alternative to the classic Herend porcelain is **Herend Village Pottery,** II. Bem rakpart 37 (✆ **1/356-7899**), which is not associated with the Herend porcelain company. The majolika (village pottery) is a hand-painted folklore-inspired way of making pottery.

Wine The sweet white Tokaji Aszú, Tokaji Eszenzia, and Tokaji Szamorodni, and the mouthwatering Egri Bikavér, Villányi Cuveé, Szekszárdi Bikavér, and Kékfrankos are the most representative. At the **House of Hungarian Wines** ★★, in the Castle District, Szentháromság tér 6 (✆ **1/212-1030** or 1/212-1031; www.winehouse.hu) you get to taste your way through Hungary's 22 wine-growing regions in the convenience of one wine cellar. You are given a wine glass, a map of the cellar, and a 2-hour allotment of time in which to taste more than 50 wines. Or stop in at **Le Boutique des Vins,** V. József Attila u. 12 (✆ **1/317-5919** or 1/266-4397). Sophisticated, classy, and welcoming, this wine shop is a cut above the others.

The infamous Palinka is a strong fruit brandy that is a Hungarian treasure. Visit **The House of Hungarian Pálinka,** VIII. Rákóczi St. 17 (✆ **1/338-4219**), for an initiation.

BUDAPEST AFTER DARK

For the most up-to-date information, go to **www.jegymester.hu** for information on the opera house and the major theaters. A complete schedule of mainstream performing arts is found in the free bimonthly ***Koncert Kalendárium,*** available at any of the Tourinform offices or online at **www.koncertkalendarium.hu**. For more magazines and newspapers with cultural listings, see "Fast Facts: Budapest," p. 555.

The **Cultur-Comfort Ticket Office (Cultur-Comfort Központi Jegyiroda),** VI. Paulay Ede u. 31 (✆ **1/322-0000;** www.cultur-comfort.hu, Hungarian only), is open Monday through Friday 9am to 6pm. They sell tickets to just about everything, from theater and operettas to sports events and rock concerts.

THE PERFORMING ARTS The **Budapesti Operettszínház (Budapest Operetta Theater),** VI. Nagymező u. 17 (✆ **1/312-4866;** www.operettszinhaz.hu), is a highlight among Art Nouveau style buildings. The off season is mid-July to mid-August. The box office is open Monday through Friday 10am to 2:30pm and 3 to 7pm and Saturday 1 to 7pm. Take the metro to Opera or Oktogon. The season at the landmark **Magyar Állami Operaház (Hungarian State Opera House;** p. 568) runs from mid-September to mid-June. Summer visitors can take in the approximately 10 performances during the Summer Operafest, in July or August. The box office is open Tuesday to Saturday from 11am till the beginning of the performance, or to 5pm and Sunday from 11am to 1pm and 4pm till the beginning of the performance. Take the Yellow line metro to Opera. The main concert hall of the **Palace of Arts** ★★, IX. Komor Marcell u. 1 (✆ **1/555-3001;** www.mupa.hu), is the finest contemporary classical music venue in Budapest, and now hosts concerts from the most important orchestras from around the world. To get there, take tram no. 2 from downtown toward the Lágymányos Bridge.

FOLK-DANCE Authentic folk-music workshops are held at least once a week at several locations around the city. The leading Hungarian folk band is Muzsikás, who have toured the U.S. to great acclaim. Music is every Thursday (Sept–May only) from

8pm to midnight at the **Marczibányi Square Cultural House (Marczibányi tér Művelődési Ház),** II. Marczibányi tér 5/a (✆ **1/212-2820;** metro: Moszkva tér, Red line). **Budai Vigadó (Buda Concert Hall),** I. Corvin tér 8 (✆ **1/317-2754;** Bus: 86 till Szilágyi Dezső tér or tram 19 till Halász u. stop) is the home of the Hungarian State Folk Ensemble (Állami Népi Együttes Székháza). The **Fonó Budai Music Hall,** XI. Sztregova u. 3 (✆ **1/206-5300;** www.fono.hu; tram: 41 or 47 from Móricz Zsigmond körtér), was created with the mission to create: "a place where people could get together; get to know each other's joys, torments, thoughts, music, dance, words." In the City Park is **Petőfi Csarnok,** XIV. Zichy Mihály út 14 (✆ **1/363-3730;** www.pecsa.hu; metro: Hősök tere, Yellow line) an old-style no-frills hall that stages some of the best folk performances in the city.

DANCE CLUBS Budapest has a hot club scene that is constantly evolving. Try out **Barokko Club and Lounge,** Ferenc tér 5 (✆ **1/322-0700;** www.barokko.hu; metro: Oktogon, Yellow line). Currently one of the hot spots on Liszt Ferenc tér, where seeing and being seen is of the utmost importance. Meeting Hungarian guys or young fashionable ladies is not a problem at the huge and hedonistic **E-Klub,** X. Népligeti u. 2 (✆ **1/263-1614;** www.e-klub.hu; metro: Népliget, Blue line). Touted as the biggest and most famous of the university pubs, **School Club Közgáz,** IX. Fővám tér 8 (✆ **1/215-4359;** metro: Kálvin tér, Blue line or tram 2), is packed solid during weekends. Cheap drinks, all mix music, and the chance to test your singing with a karaoke tune, all add up for a ton of fun.

LIVE MUSIC The **A38 Boat** ★★, XI. Pázmány Péter sétány (✆ **1/464-3940;** www.a38.hu; tram: 4 or 6 to the Buda side of Petőfi bridge), is a former Ukrainian stone-carrying ship anchored at the foot of the Petőfi Bridge in Buda. Here you can get your fill of the city's best range of jazz, world, electronic, hip-hop, and rock music bands. For a sampling of the best jazz and blues in Hungary, head to **Old Man's Music Pub** ★★ Akácfa u. 13 (✆ **1/322-7645;** www.oldmans.hu; metro: Blaha Luzja tér, Red line). A list of current entertainment is posted inside the door. In the back of **Spinoza Étterem** ★★, VII. Dob u. 15 (✆ **1/413-7488;** www.spinozahaz.hu; bus: 74 to Dohány Synagogue), a small restaurant, is a small cabaret with nightly music performances from Klezmer to classical.

PUBS & CAFE BARS **Café Aloe,** VI. Zichy Jenő u. 37 (✆ **1/269-4536;** metro: Nyugati pu., Blue line), is a sizzling bar filled with attractive patrons and powerful, yet remarkably, cheap drinks. For a lounge, cafe, restaurant, and bar all rolled into one large party place, check out **Szilvuplé,** VI. Ó u. 33 (✆ **1/302-2499;** www.szilvuple.hu; metro: Opera, Yellow line). Talented DJs set the tone with rock and indie music; it also features karaoke nights and dance lessons during the week. For a cultural experience, you cannot pass up **Szimpla Kert** ★★, VII. Kertész u. 48 (✆ **1/342-1034;** metro: Oktogon, Yellow line; tram: 4 or 6 to Király u.), a former squatters' pub turned permanent establishment. Located in an abandoned apartment courtyard, Szimpla Kert mixes junkyard aesthetics with such modernisms like Wi-Fi, a daytime cafe, and evenings of live music and indie film screenings. **Vittula,** VII. Kertész u. 4 (no phone; metro: Blaha Lujza tér, Red line) is hidden and small, yet is a popular place for youthful travelers, expatriates, and locals alike who come to listen to retro-funky vibes or live music by local youth talent.

GAY & LESBIAN BARS Gay bars open and close in the blink of an eye. For reliable and up-to-date information, visit **www.budapestgaycity.net**, **www.gayguide.net**, or subscribe to the free Yahoo **Gay Budapest Information** group by sending an e-mail to gaybudapestinfo-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.

In the city center, **Árkádia,** V. Türr István u. 5 (no phone; www.arkadiagaybar.hu; metro: Vörösmarty tér, Yellow line), is a small, intimate sometimes packed bar with a popular backroom that is the perfect place to meet, dance, or get cozy with an attractive stranger. Sexual orientation is mixed at **Club Bohemian Alibi,** IX. Üllő út 45 (no phone; www.clubbohemian.hu; metro: Ferenc krt., Blue line). The Bohemian Transvestite team takes center stage performing a brilliant drag show at 11pm on Monday and Tuesday and at midnight Wednesday to Sunday with additional shows at 2am on Friday and Saturday. **Habrolo Bisztro,** V. Szep u. 1/b (no phone; metro: Astoria, Red line), is a small gay bar where locals hang out, so you can practice your Hungarian skills. Formerly the Mystery Bar, **Le Café M,** V. Nagysándor József u. 3 (✆ **1/312-1436;** metro: Arany János u., Blue line) was the first gay bar in the city. It is a very tiny, but friendly place that draws a large foreign clientele making it a great place to meet new people.

2 The Danube Bend

The small, but historic towns along the snaking Bend, in particular, Szentendre, Visegrád, and Esztergom, are easy day trips from Budapest. The great natural beauty of the area, where forested hills loom over the river, makes it a welcome haven for those weary of the city. Travelers with more time in Budapest can easily make a long weekend out of a visit to the Bend.

GETTING THERE By Boat From April to September, boats run between Budapest and the towns of the Danube Bend. All boats depart Budapest's Vigadó tér boat landing, which is located in Pest between Erzsébet Bridge and Szabadság Bridge, stopping to pick up passengers 5 minutes later at Buda's Batthyány tér landing, which is in Buda and is also a Red line metro stop, before it continues up the river.

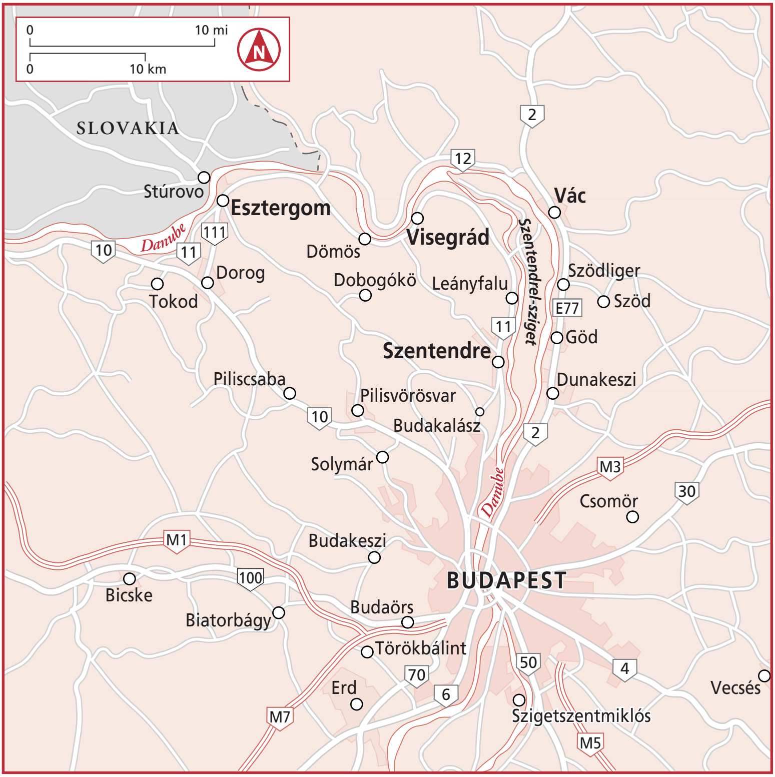
Schedules and towns served are complicated and change sometimes due to water levels of the river, so contact **MAHART,** the state shipping company, at the Vigadó tér landing (✆ **1/318-1704;** www.mahartpassnave.hu) for information. You can also get MAHART information from Tourinform.

Round-trip prices are 2,085 Ft ($11/£6) to Szentendre, 2,235 Ft ($12/£6.35) to Visegrád, and 1,460 Ft ($7.90/£4.15) to Esztergom. Children under 6 ride for free, children ages 6 to 15 receive a 50% discount, and students receive a 25% discount with the ISIC card.

By Train To Szentendre The HÉV suburban railroad connects Budapest's Batthyány tér station with Szentendre. On the Pest side, you can catch the HÉV from the Margit Híd, Budai Híd Fő stop on trams 4 or 6. Trains leave daily, year-round, every 20 minutes or so from 4am to 11:30pm. The one-way fare is 500 Ft ($2.75/£1.50); subtract 230 Ft ($1.25/75p) if you have a valid Budapest public transportation pass. The trip is 45 minutes.

To Visegrád There's no direct train service to Visegrád. Instead you can take 1 of 28 daily trains departing from Nyugati Station for Nagymaros (trip time: 40 min.–1 hr.). From Nagymaros, take a ferry across the river to Visegrád. The ferry dock (RÉV ✆ **26/398-344**) is a 5-minute walk from the train station. A ferry leaves every hour throughout the day. The train ticket to Nagymaros costs 900 Ft ($4.75/£2.50); the

The Danube Bend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ferryboat ticket to Visegrád costs 200 Ft ($1.10/55p) for adults and 100 Ft (55¢/25p) for students.

To Esztergom Twenty-five trains make the run daily between Budapest's Nyugati Station and Esztergom. Train tickets cost 900 Ft ($4.85/£2.55).

By Bus Approximately 30 daily buses travel the same route to Szentendre, Visegrád, and Esztergom, departing from **Budapest's Árpád híd bus station** (✆ **1/329-1450;** at the Blue line metro station of the same name). The one-way fare to Szentendre is 375 Ft ($2/£1.10); the trip takes about 45 minutes. The fare to Visegrád is 750 Ft ($4.05/£2.15), and the trip takes 1¼ hours. To Esztergom, take the bus that travels via a town called Dorog; it costs 675 Ft ($3.65/£1.90) and takes 1¼ hours. The bus going to Esztergom via Visegrád takes 2 hours and costs 750 Ft ($4.05/£2.15) (fare is determined by number of kilometers of travel, and this is a longer route).

SZENTENDRE Szentendre (pronounced *Sen*-ten-dreh, St. Andrew), 21km (13 miles) north of Budapest has been populated since the Stone Age by Illyrians, the Celtic Eraviscus tribe, Romans, Lombards, Avars, and naturally, Hungarians. Serbians settled here in the 17th century, embellishing the town with their unique characteristics. Szentendre, counts half a dozen Serbian churches among its rich collection of historical buildings. Since the turn of the 20th century, Szentendre has been home to an artist's colony, where today, about 100 artists live and work.

The town is an extremely popular tourist destination. This is sometimes a turn-off for other visitors, but the town is really is a treasure to be explored. To appreciate the rich flavor of the town, look beyond the touristy shops and wander the streets looking at the architecture, galleries, and churches if only from the outside.

Essentials One of Szentendre's information offices, **Tourinform,** is at Dumtsa Jenő u. 22 (✆ **26/317-965**), with maps of Szentendre (and the region), as well as concert and exhibition schedules. The office is open April through October, Monday to Wednesday from 9:30am to 6pm and Thursday to Sunday 9:30am to 7:30pm; in the off season it's open Monday to Friday from 9:30am to 5pm. To get here, just follow the flow of pedestrian traffic into town on Kossuth Lajos utca. If you arrive by boat, you may find the **Ibusz** office sooner, located on the corner of Bogdányi út and Gőzhajó utca (✆ **26/310-181**). This office is open April to October, Monday through Friday from 10am to 6pm and weekends 10am to 3pm. From November to March, it's open weekdays only, 10am to 5pm.

Exploring the Town The tiny **Blagovestenska Church** at Fő tér 4 dates from 1752, and was built on the site of a wooden church from the Serbian migration of 1690. It's open Tuesday to Sunday, 10am to 5pm; admission is 250 Ft ($1.35/70p). The **Margit Kovács Museum** ★★, Vastagh György u. 1 (✆ **26/310-244**), is an expansive museum featuring the work of Hungary's best-known ceramic artist, Margit Kovács. Admission costs 700 Ft ($3.80/£2); the museum is open March to September, Tuesday to Sunday from 9am to 5pm and October to February, Tuesday to Sunday, from 10am to 4pm. The **Marzipan Museum** ★★, Dumsta Jeno u. 12 (✆ **26/311-931**), is the most widely known museum in this village. Who could pass up this chance to see the 1.5m-long (5-ft.) Hungarian Parliament made entirely in marzipan? The museum is open May to September daily, 10am to 7pm and October to April, daily 10am to 6pm. Admission is 400 Ft ($2.15/£1.15).

Pap-sziget (Priest's Island), at the northern end of town provides a place to rest and relax, with thermal waters in the outdoor bathing pools. Bring a bathing suit and towel or rent towels there. Facilities include basic locker rooms. There is no entrance fee. Buses for Leányfalu and Visegrád pass the bridge to Pap-sziget.

Shopping **Blue Land Folklor** ★★★, Alkotmány u. 8. (✆ **26/313-610**), carries decorated eggs from 38 different regions of Hungary, plus some from the ethnic Hungarian areas prior to the Trianon Treaty's loss of land. If you want to find a unique shop while in Hungary, come to **Handpets** ★★★, Dumsta Jeno u. 15 (✆ **26/373-746;** www.handpets.hu). Handpets are the most creative hand puppets I have ever seen. Designed by Kati Szili, they are handmade and are sure to delight children of all ages. This is the only exclusive shop where the entire collection is available, though limited designs and poor imitations are sold elsewhere.

Where to Dine **Aranysárkány Vendéglő (Golden Dragon Inn)** ★, Alkotmány u. 1/a (✆ **26/301-479;** www.aranysarkany.hu), located just east of Fő tér on Hunyadi utca, is always filled to capacity. The crowd includes a good percentage of Hungarians, definitely a good sign in a heavily visited town like Szentendre.You can choose from such enticing offerings as alpine lamb, roast leg of goose, Székely-style stuffed cabbage, spinach cream, and venison steak. Vegetarians can order the vegetable plate, a respectable presentation of grilled and steamed vegetables in season. Set away from

Finds

The Best *Lángos* Ever

You will find the best *lángos* in Hungary, here in Szentendre at **Álom Lángos** ★★★ at Fő tér 8 (✆ **06/20-970-7827**), an unassuming little stand. *Lángos* is a favorite Hungarian snack of fried dough with toppings. When standing in Fő tér, there are yellow signs near an alley with LÁNGOS written on them. Halfway up the alley is a gate for the little shed. This is worth a trip to Szentendre alone. The stand is only open March to November Tuesday to Saturday 10am to 6pm and a *lángos* will run you 350 Ft to 500 Ft ($1.90–$2.70/£1–£1.50).

the bustle of the square, **Chez Nicolas** ★★★, Kígyó utca 10 (✆ **26/311-288**), is a charming restaurant with an outdoor terrace looking out to the river. We recommend the Pork Brasso with choice chunks of pork cooked smothered in paprika, oil, and potatoes. If you walk directly south from Fő tér, you'll find **Régimódi** ★, Futó u. 3. (✆ **26/311-105**). An elegant restaurant in a former private home, its menu offers a wide range of Hungarian specialties, with an emphasis on game dishes. Whatever you choose, the portions are hearty. The only drawback is that it gets crowded with tour groups.

Where to Stay **Róz Panzió** ★, located at Pannónia utca 6/b (✆ **26/311-737;** fax 26/310-979; www.hotelrozszentendre.hu), has 10 units and a nice garden overlooking the Danube. Rooms are 12,000 Ft ($65/£34) for a double during off season and 13,000 Ft ($70/£37) in high season; breakfast is included.

VISEGRÁD Halfway between Szentendre and Esztergom, Visegrád (pronounced *Vee*-sheh-grod) is a sparsely populated, sleepy riverside village, which makes its history all the more fascinating. The Romans built a fort here, which was still standing when Slovak settlers gave the town its present name (meaning "high castle") in the 9th or 10th century. After the Mongol invasion (1241–42), construction began on both the present ruined hilltop citadel and the former riverside palace. Eventually, Visegrád boasted one of the finest royal palaces ever built in Hungary.

Essentials **Visegrád Tours,** RÉV u. 15 (✆ **26/398-160**), is located across the road from the RÉV ferryboat landing. It is open daily 8am to 5:30pm; from November through March, but conduct business from the associated hotel next door.

Exploring the Palace & the Citadel Once covering much of the area where the boat landing and Fő utca (Main St.) are now found, the ruins of the Royal Palace and the Salamon Tower are all that remain today for visitors to explore. The entrance to the open-air ruins, the **King Matthias Museum** ★★, is at Fő u. 27 (✆ **26/398-026**). Admission is free. The museum is open Tuesday to Sunday from 9am to 5pm. The buried ruins of the palace, having achieved a near-mythical status, were not discovered until the 21st century. The Salamon Tower is open Tuesday to Sunday from 9am to 5pm, May through September.

The **Cloud Castle (Fellegvár)** ★★★ (✆ **26/398-101**), a mountaintop citadel above Visegrád, affords one of the finest views over the Danube. Admission is 800 Ft ($4.30/£2.25). It is open daily from 9:30am to 5:30pm. The "City Bus," a van taxi that awaits passengers outside Visegrád Tours, takes people up the steep hill for a steep fare of 2,000 Ft ($11/£5.70). If you stay less than 30 minutes, you can ride down for 1,000 Ft ($5.40/£2.85), otherwise, it is another 2,000 Ft ($11/£5.70). It is not a casual walk to the citadel; consider it a hike and pack accordingly with bottled water.

Where to Dine Set on a hilltop featuring one of the finest views of the Danube bend, **Nagyvillám Vadászcsárda (Big Lightning Hunter's Inn),** Fekete-hegy (✆ **26/398-070**), infuses a leafy, countryside dinner with an elegant and warm atmosphere. Although vegetarians may struggle with a menu comprised mainly of meat and game dishes, it is nevertheless an extensive menu combining Mediterranean influences with Hungarian recipes using 12 varieties of wild forest mushrooms.

Where to Stay Good accommodations can be found at **Honti Panzió and Hotel,** Fő utca 66 (✆ **26/398-120;** www.hotels.hu/honti). Double rooms run 11,000 Ft to 12,000 Ft ($59–$65/£31–£34) for the *panzio* and 13,000 Ft to 15,000 Ft ($70–$81/£37–£43) in the hotel. All rates include breakfast and VAT, but a 300 Ft ($1.60/85p) tax per person per night is not; parking is provided.

ESZTERGOM Formerly a Roman settlement, **Esztergom** (pronounced *Ess*-tair-gome), 46km (29 miles) northwest of Budapest, was the seat of the Hungarian kingdom for 300 years. Hungary's first king, István I (Stephen I) received the crown from the pope in A.D. 1000. He converted Hungary to Catholicism, and Esztergom became the country's center of the early church. Although its glory days are long gone due to invasions from the Mongols and later the Turks, it was rebuilt once again in the 18th and 19th centuries. This quiet town remains the seat of the archbishop primate, known as the "Hungarian Rome."

From Esztergom west all the way to the Austrian border, the Danube marks the border between Hungary and Slovakia; Esztergom has an international ferry crossing. There is not much to entice anyone to stay overnight, so I strongly recommend making this a day trip returning to Budapest at the end of the day.

Essentials **Gran Tours,** Széchenyi tér 25 (✆ **33/502-001**), is the best source of information. Summer hours are from Monday to Friday 8am to 4pm and Saturday 9am to noon; winter hours are from Monday to Friday 8am to 4pm. The station is on the outskirts of town, while the tourist info center is in the city center. Take bus no. 1 or 6 to Széchenyi tér. Local buses depart from outside the train station.

Exploring the Town The massive, neoclassical **Esztergom Cathedral** ★ (✆ **33/411-895**) on Szent István tér on Castle Hill, is the largest church in Hungary and one of the country's most impressive buildings. Built in the last century, it was to replace the cathedral ruined during the Turkish occupation. It claims the world's largest altarpiece painted on one continuous piece of canvas. The crypt, built in old Egyptian style with a magnificent statue of an angel, is the last resting place of bishops. The **treasury *(kincstár)*** ★ contains a stunning array of ecclesiastical jewels and gold works. If you brave the ascent of the cupola, you're rewarded with unparalleled views of Esztergom and the surrounding Hungarian and Slovakian countryside. Admission to the treasury is 350 Ft ($2/£1); admission to the cupola is 250 Ft ($1.25/75p). The cathedral is open daily in summer, 8am to 7pm and daily in winter 8am to 4pm; the treasury, crypt, and cupola are open daily in summer 9am to 4pm, and in winter, Tuesday to Sunday, noon to 4pm; the cupola is closed in winter. Take bus 6 from the train station and get off at the cathedral; in good weather, it is a nice walk. If you happen to be in town during the first week of August, don't miss out on one of the classical guitar concerts performed in the cathedral. The acoustics are sublime. The concerts are part of the annual **International Guitar Festival** ★★.

The **Keresztény Múzeum (Christian Museum),** Mindszenty tér 2 (✆ **33/413-880;** www.keresztenymuzeum.hu), in a neoclassical former primate palace, houses Hungary's largest collection of religious and medieval art outside the National Gallery in Budapest. Admission is 600 Ft ($3.25/£1.75) adults; 300 Ft ($1.50/75p) children. The museum is open mid-March to October 28, 10am to 6pm and October 30 to January 1, 11am to 3pm. It is closed all other dates.

To get to the museum, continue past the Watertown Parish Church on Berényi Zsigmond utca. Even if you don't plan on visiting this museum, it's definitely worth it to take a break from the crowds at the cathedral and take a stroll through the quiet, cobblestone streets of Esztergom's **Víziváros (Watertown).**

Where to Dine National specialties abound at **Anonim Vendéglő,** Berényi u. 4 (✆ **33/411-880**), an intimate restaurant housed in an ancient monument near the Basilica. The food at **Szalma Csárda** ★★★, Nagy-Duna sétány 2 (✆ **33/315-336**), is absolutely first rate, with everything made to order and served piping hot. The excellent house soups—fish soup *(halászlé),* goulash *(gulyásleves),* and bean soup *(babgulyás)*—are all large enough to constitute meals in themselves. For main courses, the stuffed cabbage *(töltött kaposzta)* and the stuffed pepper *(töltött paprika)* are both outstanding, though not always offered. Finish off your meal with a dish of sweet chestnut purée *(gesztenyepüré),* a Hungarian specialty prepared to perfection.

11

Ireland

by Christi Daugherty

Which Ireland do you want to visit? The old Emerald Isle of thatched cottages, craggy seascapes, and pubs that smell of polished mahogany and Guinness? Or do you imagine the hip, urban country of trendy bistros, sushi bars, and modern-art galleries? These days, both await you, and it's hard to predict which Ireland you'll encounter around the next bend.

Old Ireland is still there to some extent, and the country remains a land of breathtaking beauty. But today's Ireland is not a poor cousin to wealthy European nations. In recent years it's undergone a renaissance that made it rich and self-confident. Some "old Ireland" has disappeared, covered up in designer shops; stomped into oblivion by Manolo Blahniks.

Though the pace of the boom has slowed—and the country now frets about tumbling house prices—its newfound prosperity and sophistication are permanent additions to these shores. They've brought with them unwelcome cousins, however—inflation and intolerance. Inflation is the dark cloud behind the Irish economy's silver lining, as you'll discover when you book a hotel or dine in a restaurant. Forty-dollar entrees are the norm now, rather than the exception. And intolerance has reared its head in terms of fierce anti-immigration legislation designed to keep out eastern European immigrants, and ensure that Ireland is purely for the Irish.

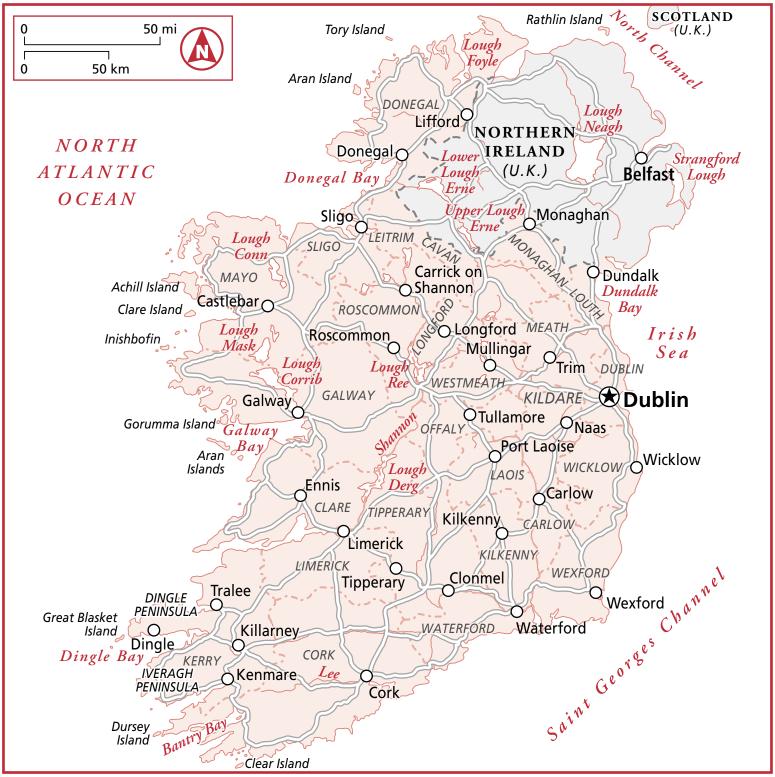
It all means that this is a fascinating time to visit Ireland—whether you're rushing to see old Ireland before it goes, or hoping to visit trendy new Ireland. Both of them await you, but keep your wallet at the ready. You're going to need it.

1 Dublin

"Seedy elegance" may have aptly described much, if not most, of Dublin until the mid-1990s, when the city's transformation from endearingly frumpy to cutting-edge cool began. The change was remarkably swift: In 1997 *Fortune* magazine named Dublin the number-one European city in which to do business—an accolade fueled no doubt by its reputation as the "Silicon Valley" of Europe and strategic Euro-headquarters for computer giants like Microsoft, Dell, Intel, and Sun Microsystems. Then, in 1998, Dublin became the fifth-most-visited city in Europe—nudging ahead of traditional tourist powerhouses like Rome and Amsterdam.

New restaurants and nightspots sprout up with startling speed. Dublin is the emotional and political center of the country, and undeniably the trendiest spot on the island.

Ireland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Lifford
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Lough Neagh
Donegal
Donegal Bay
Lower Lough Erne
Belfast
Strangford Lough
Sligo
Upper Lough Erne
Monaghan
Lough Conn
SLIGO
LEITRIM
CAVAN
MONAGHAN
LOUTH
MAYO
Carrick on Shannon
Dundalk
Dundalk Bay
Achill Island
Castlebar
Clare Island
ROSCOMMON
LONGFORD
Inishbofin
Lough Mask
Roscommon
Longford
MEATH
Irish Sea
Mullingar
Lough Corrib
Lough Ree
Trim
DUBLIN
WESTMEATH
Galway
GALWAY
KILDARE
Dublin
Gorumma Island
Galway Bay
Shannon
Tullamore
OFFALY
Naas
Aran Islands
Port Laoise
Wicklow
WICKLOW
LAOIS
Lough Derg
Ennis
Carlow
CLARE
TIPPERARY
Kilkenny
CARLOW
Limerick
KILKENNY
LIMERICK
Tipperary
WEXFORD
Clonmel
Tralee
DINGLE PENINSULA
Wexford
Great Blasket Island
Dingle
Killarney
WATERFORD
Waterford
Saint Georges Channel
Dingle Bay
KERRY
CORK
IVERAGH PENINSULA
Kenmare
Lee
Cork
Dursey Island
Bantry Bay
Clear Island

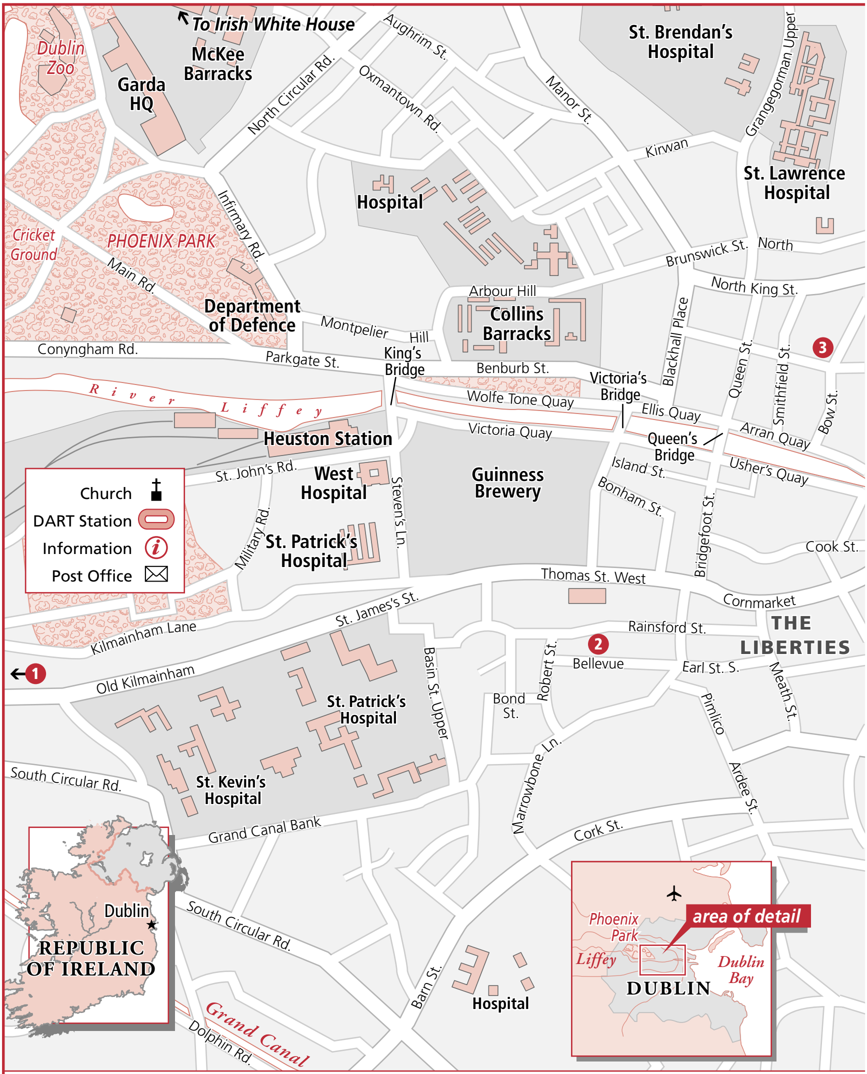
ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **By Plane** **Dublin International Airport** (✆ **01/814-1111;** www.dublin-airport.com) is 11km (6¾ miles) north of the city center. A Travel Information Desk in the Arrivals Concourse provides information on public bus and rail services throughout the country.

An excellent airport-to-city shuttle bus service called **AirCoach** operates 24 hours a day, making runs at 15-minute intervals. Its buses run direct from the airport to Dublin's city center and south side, stopping at O'Connell Street, St. Stephen's Green, Fitzwilliam Square, Merrion Square, Ballsbridge, and Donnybrook—that is, all the key hotel and business districts. The fare is €7 ($9.10) one-way or €12 ($16) round-trip (children under 12 travel free); buy your ticket from the driver. Although AirCoach is slightly more expensive than the Dublin Bus (see below), it makes fewer intermediary stops, so it is faster (the journey to the city center takes about 45 min.), and it brings you right into the hotel districts. To confirm AirCoach departures and arrivals, call ✆ **01/844-7118** or find it on the Web at **www.aircoach.ie**.

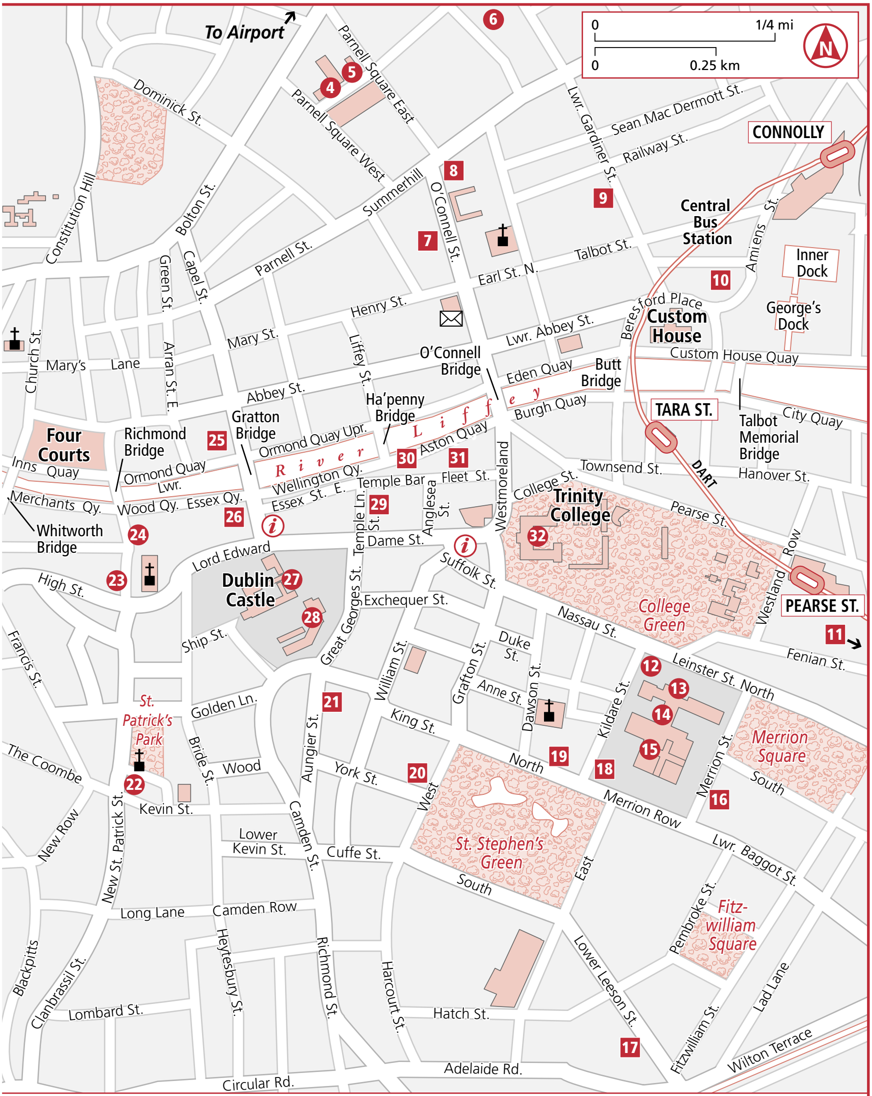
If you need to connect with the Irish bus or rail service, the **Airlink Express Coach** (✆ **01/844-4265**) provides express coach services from the airport into central Dublin and beyond. Routes 747 and 748 go to the city's central bus station, **Busáras,** on Store Street, and on to **Connolly** railway station, and route 748 makes an additional stop at

Dublin


To Irish White House
Dublin Zoo
Garda HQ
McKee Barracks
North Circular Rd.
Aughrim St.
Oxmantown Rd.
Manor St.
St. Brendan's Hospital
Grangegorman Upper
Kirwan
St. Lawrence Hospital
Hospital
PHOENIX PARK
Cricket Ground
Main Rd.
Infirmary Rd.
Department of Defence
Montpelier Hill
Arbour Hill
Collins Barracks
Brunswick St. North
North King St.
Blackhall Place
Queen St.
Smithfield St.
Bow St.
3
Conyngham Rd.
Parkgate St.
King's Bridge
Benburb St.
Victoria's Bridge
Wolfe Tone Quay
Ellis Quay
River Liffey
Heuston Station
Victoria Quay
Queen's Bridge
Arran Quay
Island St.
Usher's Quay
St. John's Rd.
West Hospital
Steven's Ln.
Guinness Brewery
Bonham St.
Bridgefoot St.
Cook St.
Church
DART Station
Information
Post Office
Military Rd.
St. Patrick's Hospital
Thomas St. West
Cornmarket
THE LIBERTIES
Kilmainham Lane
St. James's St.
Rainsford St.
2
Robert St.
Bellevue
Earl St. S.
Meath St.
1
Old Kilmainham
Basin St. Upper
St. Patrick's Hospital
Bond St.
Pimlico
Marrowbone Ln.
South Circular Rd.
St. Kevin's Hospital
Ardee St.
Grand Canal Bank
Cork St.
Dublin
REPUBLIC OF IRELAND
South Circular Rd.
Barn St.
Hospital
Grand Canal
Dolphin Rd.
Phoenix Park
area of detail
Liffey
Dublin Bay
DUBLIN

ACCOMMODATIONS ■

Abbott Lodge	**9**
Anglesea Town House	**11**
Avalon House	**21**
Browne's Townhouse	**19**
Butlers Town House	**11**
The Clarence	**26**
The Dylan	**11**
Eliza Lodge	**30**
The Fitzwilliam Hotel	**20**
Four Seasons	**11**
The Gresham	**8**
Isaac's Hostel	**10**
Merrion Hotel	**16**
The Morgan	**31**
The Morrison	**25**
Number 31	**17**
Royal Dublin Hotel	**7**
The Shelbourne	**18**
Temple Bar Hotel	**31**
25 Eustace Street	**29**
Waterloo House	**11**


To Airport
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Parnell Square East
Parnell Square West
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Constitution Hill
Bolton St.
Summerhill
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Sean Mac Dermott St.
Railway St.
CONNOLLY
9
O'Connell St.
7
Parnell St.
Green St.
Capel St.
Earl St. N.
Talbot St.
Central Bus Station
Amiens St.
Inner Dock
10
Henry St.
Beresford Place
Custom House
George's Dock
Mary St.
Liffey St.
Lwr. Abbey St.
Custom House Quay
Church St.
Mary's Lane
Arran St. E.
O'Connell Bridge
Eden Quay
Butt Bridge
Abbey St.
Ha'penny Bridge
Liffey
Burgh Quay
TARA ST.
City Quay
Gratton Bridge
Aston Quay
Talbot Memorial Bridge
Four Courts
Richmond Bridge
25
Ormond Quay Upr.
River
30
31
Inns Quay
Ormond Quay Lwr.
Wellington Qy.
Temple Bar
Fleet St.
Townsend St.
DART
Hanover St.
Merchants Qy.
Wood Qy.
Essex Qy.
26
Essex St. E.
Temple Ln. St.
29
Anglesea St.
Westmoreland
College St.
Trinity College
Pearse St.
Whitworth Bridge
24
Lord Edward
Dame St.
32
Row
High St.
23
Dublin Castle
27
Suffolk St.
Westland
PEARSE ST.
Exchequer St.
College Green
11
28
Great Georges St.
Nassau St.
Fenian St.
Ship St.
Francis St.
William St.
Duke St.
Grafton St.
Leinster St. North
12
13
Anne St.
Dawson St.
Kildare St.
St. Patrick's Park
Golden Ln.
21
King St.
14
Merrion Square
15
The Coombe
Bride St.
Wood
Aungier St.
North
19
18
Merrion St.
22
York St.
20
West
South
16
New Row
St. Patrick St.
Kevin St.
Merrion Row
Lower Kevin St.
Camden St.
Cuffe St.
St. Stephen's Green
Lwr. Baggot St.
New St.
Long Lane
Camden Row
South
East
Pembroke St.
Fitz-william Square
Heytesbury St.
Richmond St.
Harcourt St.
Lower Leeson St.
Blackpitts
Clanbrassil St.
Lombard St.
Hatch St.
Lad Lane
17
Fitzwilliam St.
Wilton Terrace
Adelaide Rd.
Circular Rd.

ATTRACTIONS ●

The Book of Kells	32
Chester Beatty Library	28
Christ Church Cathedral	24
Dublin Castle	27
Dublin Writers Museum	5
Dublinia	23
Guinness Storehouse	2
Heraldic Museum/ Genealogical Office	12
Hugh Lane Municipal Gallery of Modern Art	4
James Joyce Centre	6
Kilmainham Gaol Historical Museum	1
National Gallery of Ireland	13
National Museum	15
National Photographic Archive	14
Old Jameson Distillery	3
St. Patrick's Cathedral	22

Heuston railway station. Service runs daily from 5:45am until 11:30pm (Sun 7:15am–11:30pm), with departures every 20 to 30 minutes. One-way fare is €6 ($7.80) for adults and €3 ($3.90) for children under age 12.

Finally, **Dublin Bus** (✆ **01/872-0000;** www.dublinbus.ie) runs connections between the airport and the city center from 6am to 11:30pm. The one-way trip takes about 30 minutes, and the fare is €6 ($7.80). Nos. 16a, 41, 41b, 46x, 230, 746, 747, or 748 all serve the city center from Dublin Airport. Consult the Travel Information Desk in the Arrivals Concourse to figure out which bus will bring you closest to your hotel.

For speed and ease—especially if you have a lot of luggage—a **taxi** is the best way to get directly to your hotel or guesthouse. Depending on your destination in Dublin, fares average between €20 and €30 ($26–$39). Surcharges include €.50 (65¢) for each additional passenger and for each piece of luggage. Depending on traffic, a cab should take between 20 and 45 minutes to get into the city center. A 10% tip is standard. Taxis are lined up at a first-come, first-served taxi stand outside the arrivals terminal.

Major international and local car-rental companies operate desks at Dublin Airport.

By Ferry Passenger and car ferries from Britain arrive at the **Dublin Ferryport** (✆ **01/855-2222**), on the eastern end of the North Docks, and at the **Dún Laoghaire Ferryport** (✆ **01/842-8864**). Call **Irish Ferries** (✆ **0818/300-400;** www.irishferries.ie), **P&O Irish Sea** (✆ **01/800-409-049;** www.poirishsea.com), or **Stena Line** (✆ **01/204-7777;** www.stenaline.com) for bookings and information. There is bus and taxi service from both ports.

By Train **Irish Rail** (✆ **01/850-366222;** www.irishrail.ie), also called Ianród Éireann, operates daily train service to Dublin from Belfast, Northern Ireland, and all major cities in the Irish Republic, including Cork, Galway, Limerick, Killarney, Sligo, Wexford, and Waterford. Trains from the south, west, and southwest arrive at **Heuston Station,** Kingsbridge, off St. John's Road; from the north and northwest at **Connolly Station,** Amiens Street; and from the southeast at **Pearse Station,** Westland Row, Tara Street.

By Bus **Bus Éireann** (✆ **01/836-6111;** www.buseireann.ie) operates daily express coach and local bus service from all major cities and towns in Ireland into Dublin's central bus station, **Busáras,** Store Street.

By Car If you are arriving by car from other parts of Ireland or on a car ferry from Britain, all main roads lead into the heart of Dublin and are well signposted to An Lar (City Centre). To bypass the city center, the East Link (toll bridge €1.90/$2.50) and West Link are signposted, and M50 circuits the city on three sides.

VISITOR INFORMATION **Dublin Tourism** operates six walk-in visitor centers in greater Dublin that are open every day except Christmas. The principal center is on Suffolk Street, Dublin 2, open from June to August Monday to Saturday from 9am to 8:30pm, Sunday and bank holidays 10:30am to 3pm, and the rest of the year Monday to Saturday 9am to 5:30pm, Sunday and bank holidays 10:30am to 3pm. The Suffolk Street office has a currency exchange counter, a car-rental counter, an accommodations-reservations service, bus and rail information desks, a gift shop, and a cafe. For accommodations reservations throughout Ireland by credit card, contact Dublin Tourism at ✆ **01/605-7700** or www.visitdublin.com.

The five other centers are in the **Arrivals Hall** of Dublin Airport; **Exclusively Irish,** O'Connell Street, Dublin 1; **Baggot Street Bridge,** Baggot Street, Dublin 2; **The**

Square Towncentre, Tallaght, Dublin 24; and the ferry terminal at **Dún Laoghaire Harbor** (all telephone inquiries should be directed to the number listed above). All centers are open year-round with at least the following hours: Monday to Friday 9am to 5:30pm and Saturday 9am to 5pm.

For information on Ireland outside of Dublin, call **Bord Fáilte** (✆ **1850/230330** in Ireland; www.ireland.ie).

At any of these centers you can pick up the free ***Tourism News;*** or the free ***Event Guide,*** a biweekly entertainment guide, online at **www.eventguide.ie**. ***In Dublin,*** a biweekly arts-and-entertainment magazine selling for €3 ($3.90), is available at most newsstands, or online at www.indublin.ie.

CITY LAYOUT The city is neatly divided down the middle by the curves of the River Liffey, which empties into the sea at the city's farthest edge. To the north and south, the city center is encircled by canals: The Royal Canal arcs across the north and the Grand Canal through the south. Traditionally, the area south of the river has been Dublin's buzzing, prosperous hub. It still holds most of the best hotels, restaurants, shops, and sights, but the Northside is on the upswing, with hip new bars and trendy hotels making it the new place to be. Both north and south, Dublin is compact and easily walked in an hour. In fact, a 45-minute walk from the bucolic peace of St. Stephen's Green, up Grafton Street, and across the Liffey to the top of O'Connell Street offers a good overview of the city's prosperous present and troubled past.

The most interesting suburban towns tend to be along Dublin Bay—these include (heading north along the bay) Drumcondra, Glasnevin, Howth, Clontarf, and Malahide; and (heading south along the bay) Ballsbridge, Blackrock, Dún Laoghaire, Dalkey, Killiney, Rathgar, and Rathmines.

GETTING AROUND **By Bus** Dublin Bus operates a fleet of green double-deckers and single-deckers, and minibuses (the latter charmingly called "imps"). Most originate on or near O'Connell Street, Abbey Street, and Eden Quay on the Northside, and at Aston Quay, College Street, and Fleet Street on the south side. Bus stops, which resemble big blue or green lollipops, are located every 2 or 3 blocks on main thoroughfares. To tell where the bus is going, look at the destination street and bus number above its front window; those heading for the city center indicate that with an odd mix of Gaelic and Latin: VIA AN LAR.

Bus service runs daily throughout the city, starting at 6am (10am on Sun), with the last bus at 11:30pm. On Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights, **Nitelink** service runs from the city center to the suburbs from midnight to 3am. Buses operate every 10 to 15 minutes for most runs; schedules are posted on revolving notice boards at bus stops.

Inner-city fares are based on distances traveled. The minimum fare is €1 ($1.45); the maximum fare for journeys in the city center is €1.90 ($2.50). The Nitelink fare is a flat €4 ($5.20). Buy your tickets from the driver as you enter the bus; exact change is required, so have some change available. Following a rise in robberies of bus drivers in Dublin, all buses in the capital now operate an "Autofare" scheme. This means that fares must be paid with coins directly into a fare box next to the driver's cab, after which a ticket is issued. Notes are not accepted and no change is given. If you have to pay more than the cost of the ticket, the driver will issue you with a refund ticket, which must be presented along with your travel ticket at the Dublin Bus office on Upper O'Connell Street to claim a refund for the difference. Inevitably this is rarely worth the effort, so be sure to have plenty of handy change if you're going to travel by bus, or buy a **bus pass.** Discounted 1-day, 3-day, 5-day, and 7-day passes are available in advance. The 1-day bus-only pass costs €5 ($6.50); the 3-day pass costs €10 ($13); the 5-day pass goes for €16 ($21); and the 7-day pass costs €19 ($25). For more information, contact **Dublin Bus,** 59 Upper O'Connell St., Dublin 1 (✆ **01/873-4222;** www.dublinbus.ie).

By DART While Dublin has no subway in the strict sense, there is an electric rapid-transit train, known as the **DART** (Dublin Area Rapid Transit). It travels mostly at ground level or on elevated tracks, linking the city-center stations at **Connolly Station, Tara Street,** and **Pearse Street** with suburbs and seaside communities as far as Malahide to the north and Greystones to the south. Service operates roughly every 10 to 20 minutes Monday to Saturday from 7am to midnight and Sunday from 9:30am to 11pm. Typical adult fares cost around €1.60 ($2.10) for a single journey; combination rail and bus tickets, valid all day within the "short hop" zone of the city center, start from €8.80 ($11) adults, €14 ($18) families (although these are not accepted on Airlink buses). One-day, 3-day, and 10-trip passes, as well as student and family tickets, are available at reduced rates from ticket windows in stations. For further information, contact **DART** (Dublin Pearse Station; ✆ **01/703-3592;** www.dart.ie).

By Tram The newest addition to Dublin's public transportation network, the sleek light-rail tram system known as **LUAS** first opened in the summer of 2004. With trams traveling at a maximum speed of 70kmph (45 mph) and departing every 5 minutes in peak hours, LUAS has been popular enough to make at least a small impact on Dublin's appalling traffic congestion. Services run from 5:30am (6:30am Sat) to 12:30pm Monday to Saturday, and 7am to 11:30pm on Sundays. The lines link the city center at **Connolly Station** and **St. Stephen's Green** with the suburbs of Tallaght in the southwest and Dundrum and Sandyford to the south. For visitors, one of the handiest reasons to use the LUAS is to get between Connolly and Heuston stations. The one-way fare within the city center is €1.40 ($1.80) adults, €.80 ($1.05) children. One-day and multiple-day passes are also available. For further information, contact **LUAS** (✆ **01/800-300-604;** www.luas.ie).

On Foot Marvelously compact, Dublin is ideal for walking, as long as you remember to look right and then left (and in the direction opposite your instincts if you're from the U.S. or Canada) before crossing the street. Pedestrians have the right of way at specially marked, zebra-striped crossings (there are usually two flashing lights at these intersections). For some walking-tour suggestions, see "Seeing the Sights," later in this chapter.

By Taxi It's very difficult to hail a taxi on the street; instead, they line up at taxi stands (called "ranks") outside major hotels, at bus and train stations, and on prime thoroughfares such as Upper O'Connell Street, College Green, and the Northside of St. Stephen's Green.

You can also phone for a taxi. Some of the companies that operate a 24-hour radio-call service are **Co-Op** (✆ **01/677-7777**), **NRC** (✆ **01/677-2222**), and **VIP/ACE Taxis** (✆ **01/478-3333**). If you need a wake-up call, VIP offers that service, along with especially courteous dependability.

Taxi rates are fixed by law and posted in each vehicle. The following are typical travel costs in the city center: The starting fare for the first kilometer (⅔ mile) is €3.80 ($5) by day and €4.10 ($5.35) at night. For the next 14km the fare is €.95 ($1.25) per kilometer by day, €1.25 ($1.65) by night, rising to a maximum of €1.65 ($2.15) per kilometer thereafter. It costs an extra €2 ($2.60) if you order a cab by phone. ***Be***

warned: At some hotels, staff members will tack on as much as €5 ($6.50) for calling you a cab, although this practice violates city taxi regulations. Ask before you request a taxi if you'll be charged.

By Bicycle The steady flow of Dublin traffic rushing down one-way streets may be a little intimidating for most cyclists, but there are many opportunities for more relaxed pedaling in residential areas and suburbs, along the seafront, and around Phoenix Park. The Dublin Tourism office can supply you with bicycle touring information and suggested routes. Bicycle rental averages €20 ($24) per day, €70 ($84) per week, with a €65 ($78) deposit. In the downtown area, bicycles can be rented from **Raleigh Ireland,** Kylemore Road, Dublin 10 (✆ **01/626-1333;** www.raleigh.ie).

By Car Unless you plan to do a lot of driving from Dublin to neighboring counties, it's not practical or affordable to rent a car. In fact, getting around the city and its environs is much easier without a car. If you must drive in Dublin, remember to keep to the *left-hand side of the road,* and don't drive in bus lanes. The most reliable and safest places to park are at surface parking lots or in multistory car parks in central locations, such as Kildare Street, Lower Abbey Street, Marlborough Street, and St. Stephen's Green West. The speed limit in the city is 46kmph (29 mph), and seat belts must be worn at all times by drivers and passengers.

FAST FACTS: Dublin

American Express **American Express International,** 116 Grafton St., Dublin 2 (✆ **01/6772-874**), is a full-service travel agency that also offers currency exchange, traveler's checks, and (for members) mail holding. It is open Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm, Saturday 9am to noon. There is also an out-of-hours number that connects directly with the London office at no extra charge (✆ **01/8721-511**). American Express also has a desk at the **Dublin Tourism Office** on Suffolk Street (✆ **01/605-7700**). In an emergency, traveler's checks can be reported lost or stolen by dialing toll-free in Ireland ✆ **1800/964-868.**

Business Hours **Museums and sights** are generally open 10am to 5pm Tuesday to Saturday, and 2 to 5pm Sunday. **Shops** generally open 9am to 6pm Monday to Friday, with late opening on Thursday until 7 or 8pm. In the city center most department stores and many shops are open noon to 6pm on Sunday.

Currency The official currency of Ireland is the **euro** (€). At press time, the rate of exchange (and the rate used in this chapter) was US$1 = €.68 (or €1 = US$1.45).

Currency Exchange Currency-exchange services, signposted as BUREAU DE CHANGE, are in most Dublin banks and at many branches of the Irish post office system, known as **An Post.** A bureau de change operates daily during flight arrival and departure times at Dublin airport; a foreign-currency note-exchanger machine is also available on a 24-hour basis in the main arrivals hall. Some hotels and travel agencies offer bureau de change services, although the best rate of exchange is usually when you use your bank card at an ATM.

Dentists For dental emergencies, contact the Eastern Health Board Headquarters, Parkgate St. Business Centre, Dublin 8 (✆ **01/635-2500**), or try **Molesworth Clinic,** 2 Molesworth Place, Dublin 2 (✆ **01/661-5544**). See also "Dental Surgeons" in the Golden Pages (Yellow Pages) of the telephone book. The American Embassy (see "Embassies & Consulates," below) can provide a list of dentists in the city. Expect to be charged upfront for services.

Doctors If you need to see a physician, most hotels and guesthouses will contact a house doctor for you. The **American Embassy** (see "Embassies & Consulates," below) can provide a list of doctors in the city and you should contact them first. Otherwise, you can call either the **Eastern Health Board Headquarters,** Parkgate St. Business Centre, Dublin 8 (✆ **01/635-2500**), or the **Irish Medical Organization** (a doctors' union) at 10 Fitzwilliam Place, Dublin 2 (✆ **01/676-7273**). As with dentists, expect to pay for treatment upfront and when you return home, contact your insurance company to see if you are eligible for reimbursement.

Drugstores Centrally located drugstores, known locally as pharmacies or chemist shops, include **Dame Street Pharmacy,** 14 Dame St., Dublin 2 (✆ **01/670-4523**). A late-night chemist shop is **Hamilton Long & Co.,** 5 Lower O'Connell St. (✆ **01/874-8456**), and its sister branch, **Hamilton Long Byrnes** at 4 Merrion Rd., Dublin 4 (✆ **01/668-3287**). Both branches close at 9pm on weeknights and 6pm on Saturday.

Embassies The **American Embassy** is at 42 Elgin Rd., Ballsbridge, Dublin 4 (✆ **01/668-8777**); the **Canadian Embassy** at 65–68 St. Stephen's Green, Dublin 2 (✆ **01/417-4100**); the **British Embassy** at 29 Merrion Rd., Dublin 2 (✆ **01/205-3700**); and the **Australian Embassy** at Fitzwilton House, Wilton Terrace, Dublin 2 (✆ **01/664-5300**). In addition, there is an **American Consulate** at 223 Stranmillis Rd., Belfast BT9 5GR (✆ **028/9038-6100**).

Emergencies For police, fire, or other emergencies, dial ✆ **999.**

Hospitals For emergency care, two of the most modern are **St. Vincent's University Hospital,** Elm Park (✆ **01/221-4000**), on the south side of the city, and **Beaumont Hospital,** Beaumont (✆ **01/837-7755**), on the Northside.

Internet Access Internet access is everywhere in Dublin; look for signs in cafes, pubs, shopping malls, hotels, and hostels. Like all of Dublin's public libraries, the **Central Library,** in the ILAC Centre, off Henry Street, Dublin 1 (✆ **01/873-4333**), has a bank of PCs with free Internet access. Three centrally located cybercafes are **Planet Cyber Café,** 13 St. Andrews St., Dublin 2 (✆ **01/670-5183**), **The Connect Point,** 33 Dorset St. Lower, Dublin 1 (✆ **01/834-9821**), and the **Central Cybercafe,** 6 Grafton St., Dublin 2 (✆ **01/677-8298**), which also offers a left-luggage service. A half-hour online averages €4 ($5.20).

Post Office The Irish post office is best known by its Gaelic name, **An Post.** The **General Post Office (GPO)** is located on O'Connell Street, Dublin 1 (✆ **01/705-7000;** www.anpost.ie). Hours are Monday to Saturday 8am to 8pm. Branch offices, identified by the sign OIFIG AN POST/POST OFFICE, are open Monday to Saturday only, 9am to 5pm.

Taxes Sales tax is called VAT (value-added tax) and is often already included in the price quoted to you or shown on price tags. VAT rates vary—for hotels, restaurants, and car rentals, it's 13.5%; for souvenirs and gifts, it's 21%. If you're not a citizen of an E.U. country, you're entitled to have this money refunded. You can get your money back through **Global Refund** (✆ **800/566-9828;** www.globalrefund.ie), the world's largest private company offering VAT refunds. If a shop isn't part of the Global Refund network, get a full receipt at the time of purchase that shows the shop's name, address, and VAT paid. When you're ready to depart Ireland, go to the Customs office at the airport or ferry port and have your receipts stamped; then send the stamped receipts back to the store where you made your purchase, which will then mail you a VAT refund check.

Telephone The **country code** for the Republic of Ireland is **353.** The **city code** for Dublin is **01.** If you're calling from outside Ireland, drop the initial 0 (zero) from the city code. Thus, to call Dublin from the United States, you would dial ✆ 011-353-1, followed by the 7-digit local number. For direct-dial calls to the United States, dial the international access code **(00** from Ireland), and then the U.S. country code **(1),** followed by area code and number. To place a collect call to the United States from Ireland, dial ✆ **1-800/550-000** for USA Direct service. The toll-free international access codes are **AT&T** ✆ **1-800-550-000, Sprint** ✆ **1-800-552-001,** and **MCI** ✆ **1-800-551-001.**

Local calls from a phone booth require a **Callcard,** a prepaid computerized card that you insert into the phone instead of coins. Callcards can be purchased in a range of denominations at phone company offices, post offices, and many retail outlets (such as newsstands). There's a local and international phone center at the General Post Office on O'Connell Street. If you have difficulty reaching a party, the Irish toll-free number for **directory assistance** is ✆ **11811.**

Tipping Some hotels and guesthouses add a service charge to the bill, usually 12.5% to 15%, although some smaller places add only 10% or nothing at all. If you feel the service charge is sufficient, there is no need for more gratuities. If, however, staff members have provided exceptional service, by all means tip them extra. For taxi drivers, tip as you would at home, 10% to 15%. For restaurants, the policy is usually printed on the menu—either a gratuity of 10% to 15% is automatically added to your bill or it's left up to you (always ask if you are in doubt). As a rule, bartenders do not expect a tip, except when table service is provided.

WHERE TO STAY

HISTORIC OLD CITY & TEMPLE BAR/TRINITY COLLEGE AREA

Very Expensive

The Clarence ★★★ This has been the most famous hotel in Dublin since 1992, when U2's Bono and The Edge bought it. For some, knowing that a hotel is owned by rock stars might actually be a strike against the place, but don't be put off—this is one of the most sophisticated hotels in the city. The mid-19th-century, Regency-style building was beautifully renovated, keeping the best of its antique charm, but adding layers of contemporary elegance. Rooms are designed with lush fabrics in neutral tones of oatmeal and chocolate, light Shaker-style oak furniture, and exceptionally comfortable, firm, king-size beds. Suites and deluxe rooms have balconies, some with views over the Liffey. The cheery staff are on top of things, and always seem to remember who you are. The elegant **Tea Room** restaurant (p. 596) is one of the best in town

A Parking Note

The majority of Dublin hotels do not offer parking; if you have a car, you'll have to find (and pay for) street parking. In this section, we've provided parking information only for the few hotels that do offer parking arrangements or discounts for guests.

for contemporary Irish cuisine. The **Octagon Bar** has a good buzz, and the **Study,** which has the feel of an old style gentlemen's club, is a relaxing place to read the papers and sip a glass of wine. The Clarence is business-friendly, with big, well-lighted desks and interactive TV/DVD/broadband Internet systems in each room. The hotel has recently added a well-equipped fitness room and health spa, which offers a range of massage treatments starting from about €100 ($140) for an hour.

6–8 Wellington Quay, Dublin 2. ✆ **01/407-0800.** Fax 01/407-0820. www.theclarence.ie. 47 units. €350–€380 ($455–$495) double; €720 ($935) 1-bedroom suite; €930 ($1,210) 2-bedroom suite. Full Irish breakfast €28 ($36). AE, DC, MC, V. Valet parking/service. Bus: 51B, 51C, 68, 69, or 79. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; gym; spa; concierge; salon; 24-hr. room service; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms; foreign-currency exchange; study. *In room:* A/C, interactive TV/DVD/broadband system, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Moderate

Eliza Lodge ★★ This hotel opened a few years ago right beside the Liffey and embodies all the exuberance and zest of Temple Bar. The reception rooms aren't much to write home about, but guest rooms are simple and attractive, done up in neutral creams and blond woods, with big floor-to-ceiling windows—the better to take in the riverside vistas. At the top end, executive rooms have Jacuzzi tubs and bay windows looking out over the quay. But a better-value splurge is the smaller penthouse doubles that have balconies overlooking the river for €190 ($247).

23–24 Wellington Quay, Dublin 2. ✆ **01/671-8044.** Fax 01/671-8362. www.dublinlodge.com. 18 units. €125–€150 ($163–$195) double. AE, MC, V. Bus: 51B, 51C, 68, 69, or 79. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, tea/coffeemaker, hair dryer, iron, safe, Jacuzzi tubs in executive rooms.

The Morgan ★★ Sitting coolly amid Temple Bar's revelry, this trendy boutique hotel has a bit of a cult following among those in the fashion and music industries, so you never know who might sit next to you in the lobby on its fashionably uncomfortable chairs. It's easy to see what attracts guests: Rooms are airy and minimalist, with light beechwood furnishings, crisp, white bedspreads, and creamy neutral walls. The color scheme is enlivened with colorful paintings by Irish artists. The effect is understated elegance with a modern, luxurious twist. But the attraction here goes beyond mere good looks. Every detail—from the classy cutlery to the way the staff is unobtrusively attentive—is designed within an inch of its life. Bring your best Fendi bag if you're staying here.

10 Fleet St., Dublin 2. ✆ **01/643-7000.** Fax 01/643-7060. www.themorgan.com. 121 units. €160–€200 ($208–$260) double. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: 78A or 78B. **Amenities:** Cafe; bar; fitness center; room service; aromatherapy/masseuse; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning; video/CD library. *In room:* A/C (deluxe rooms only), TV/VCR, Wi-Fi, dataport, tea/coffeemaker, iron, safe, CD player, voice mail.

Temple Bar Hotel It may be twice as big and half as stylish as The Morgan, but this is still a trendy option. The five-story hotel was developed from a former bank building, and great care was taken to preserve the brick facade and Victorian mansard roof. Guest rooms are not so fancy and are quite plain, if comfortable. The orthopedic beds are firm, although the smallish rooms are a bit cramped. **Buskers,** the hotel's nightclub, is very popular and *very* loud. Bear that in mind before you book—if you're looking for peace and quiet, this is probably not the place for you.

Fleet St., Temple Bar, Dublin 2. ☎ **800/44-UTELL** in the U.S., or 01/677-3333. Fax 01/677-3088. www.towerhotelgroup.ie. 129 units. €145–€200 ($190–$260) double. Rates include full Irish breakfast. AE, MC, V. Tara St. Bus: 78A or 78B. **Amenities:** Restaurant; 2 bars; access to a nearby health club; concierge; room service; babysitting; laundry and dry cleaning service; foreign-currency exchange. *In room:* TV, tea/coffeemaker, hair dryer, garment press.

Self-Catering

25 Eustace Street *Finds* This wonderfully restored Georgian town house, dating from 1720, has an enviable location in the heart of Temple Bar. It is a showcase property for the Irish Landmark Trust, whose mission is to rescue neglected historic buildings and restore them, and that it does with aplomb. The three-story house has been faithfully restored, with a superb timber-paneled staircase, fireplaces in every room, mahogany furniture, and brass beds. There's a huge drawing room with a baby grand piano, full dining room, equipped galley kitchen, and three bedrooms (a double, a twin, and a triple). There are two bathrooms, one with a cast-iron claw-foot tub placed dead center. Bookshelves have been thoughtfully stocked with classics by Irish novelists. As with all ILT properties, there is no TV. All this, and Temple Bar at your doorstep. Some readers have reported that the house is a little too close for comfort to Temple Bar's party scene and the noise can be a bit much on weekends.

25 Eustace St., Dublin 2. Contact the Irish Landmark Trust ☎ **01/670-4733.** Fax 01/670-4887. landmark@iol.ie. 1 apt. From €1,089 ($1,415) or €1,952 ($2,538) per week during peak months. Weekly bookings only, July–Aug; rest of year 3- or 4-night stays. AE, MC, V. Bus: Any marked "An Lar." **Amenities:** Full kitchen. *In room:* No phone.

ST. STEPHEN'S GREEN/GRAFTON STREET AREA

Very Expensive

The Fitzwilliam Hotel ★★★ Take an unbeatable location with sweeping views over the Green, add a Michelin-starred restaurant, throw in contemporary design by Terence Conran, and you have a hit on your hands. Conran has a knack for easygoing sophistication, and in The Fitzwilliam he uses clean lines and only a few neutral colors (white, beige, gray) throughout the public rooms and guest rooms. The beauty is in the detail here—even the staff uniforms are custom-made by Irish designers Marc O'Neill and Cuan Hanly. Rooms are simply done in neutral tones with stripped-down furniture. **Thornton's,** the hotel restaurant, is very good, or you could try the more casual **Citron,** or linger over a pint at the **Inn on the Green** bar.

109 St. Stephens Green, Dublin 2. ☎ **01/478-7000.** Fax 01/478-7878. www.fitzwilliamhotel.com. 130 units. €300–€375 ($390–$490) double. Breakfast €22 ($29). AE, DC, MC, V. DART: Pearse. Bus: 10, 11A, 11B, 13, or 20B.

Tips Room-Booking Savvy

In general, rates for Dublin hotels don't vary as greatly with the seasons as they do in the Irish countryside. Hotels often charge higher prices, however, during special events, such as the Dublin Horse Show. For the best deals, try to reserve for more than a single night. Many Dublin hotels cut their rates drastically for midweek and weekend multinight stays. Significant reductions are often available when you book online, so check online booking sites and the hotel's website for special offers.

Amenities: 2 restaurants; bar; concierge; room service; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms; foreign-currency exchange; roof garden. *In room:* A/C, TV/VCR, fax, dataport, free broadband Internet access, minibar, tea/coffeemaker, hair dryer, CD player, garment press, voice mail, fresh flowers.

The Shelbourne ★★★ One of the city's true grande dame hotels, The Shelbourne has been a Dublin landmark since 1824. The hotel has played a significant role in Irish history—the Irish constitution was drafted here in 1922, in room no. 112—and it still attracts Irish politicians, especially to its bars and restaurants. To Dubliners, The Shelbourne symbolizes history and politics, and nothing—not even getting swallowed up by the Marriott Group—can change that. It therefore comes as a great relief that a major renovation that took more than a year was carried out with respect for the traditional charms of this place, while providing a much-needed face-lift at the same time. Rooms are air-conditioned and decorated in traditional style, with subtle yellows and pinks. The hotel claims to have "Ireland's most luxurious beds," with 300-thread-count Egyptian cotton linens wrapped around feather mattresses. Rooms also have international power sockets so your curling iron should not explode. The bars, restaurant, and lobby are still warmed by fireplaces and lighted by elegant Waterford chandeliers. The **Lord Mayor's Lounge** is still ideal for afternoon tea. Unsurprisingly, prices have risen since the face-lift.

27 St. Stephen's Green, Dublin 2. ☎ **1-888/236-2427** in the U.S., or 01/663-4500. Fax 01/661-6006. www.marriott.co.uk. 190 units. €285–€475 ($370–$620) double. Breakfast €20–€26 ($26–$34). AE, DC, MC, V. Limited free parking. DART: Pearse. Bus: 10, 11A, 11B, 13, or 20B. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; 2 bars; fitness center; concierge; room service; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning; barbershop; beauty and spa treatments; foreign-currency exchange; safe-deposit boxes; video library. *In room:* A/C, TV, dataport, minibar, radio.

Expensive

Browne's Townhouse ★★ If you love luxury but hate big chain hotels, look no further than this sumptuously restored Georgian town house right on St. Stephen's Green. Originally a gentleman's club, it is now a small, classy boutique hotel. Downstairs is all Georgian splendor: comfy wingback chairs, rich upholstery, ornate ceiling plasterwork. The 11 guest rooms come in all shapes and sizes, and are sumptuously decorated with period furnishings, marble bathrooms, and unique architectural details. If you splurge on the Thomas Leighton suite, you'll sleep on a magnificent king-size mahogany bed that once belonged to Marilyn Monroe. Downstairs, the elegant brasserie serves up excellent French fare.

22 St. Stephen's Green, Dublin 2. ☎ **01/638-3939.** Fax 01/638-3900. www.brownesdublin.com. 11 units. €250–€280 ($325–$364) double. Breakfast €13–€20 ($17–$26). MC, V. DART: Pearse. Bus: 10, 11A, 11B, 13, or 20B. **Amenities:** Restaurant. *In room:* A/C, TV, fax, dataport, tea/coffeemaker, hair dryer.

Number 31 A discreet plaque outside an elegant locked gate on a tiny side street is your only clue that what lies beyond is an award-winning guesthouse. It's actually two converted buildings—one a grand Georgian town house, the other a more modern coach house—with nice touches, like a sunken living room where seating is arranged around a peat-burning fireplace. In the main house, rooms are large and simply but classily decorated, while in the coach house rooms are elegant; some have their own patios. A recent renovation added marble tiles in bathrooms and handmade beds enveloped in natural linens. Unfortunately, with the renovation has come a substantial price increase that makes this place considerably more expensive than it's worth. Breakfast here is some consolation—mushroom frittatas, fresh-baked cranberry bread, homemade granola—but in terms of price and amenities you'd be better off looking for a good deal at a major hotel.

31 Leeson Close, Lower Leeson St., Dublin 2. ☎ **01/676-5011.** Fax 01/676-2929. www.number31.ie. 21 units. €240–€280 ($312–$364) double. Rates include breakfast. AE, MC, V. Free parking. Bus: 11, 11A, 11B, 13, 13A, or 13B. **Amenities:** Bar; lounge. *In room:* TV, hair dryer.

Inexpensive

Avalon House *Value* This warm and friendly hostel in a beautiful old red-brick building is well known among those who travel to Dublin on a budget. Its pine floors, high ceilings, and open fireplace make it a pleasant place in which to relax, and its cafe is a popular hangout for international travelers. Most accommodations are in dorms of varying sizes, with a few single and twin bedded rooms available, too. It's not exactly the Clarence, but it's got all you really need—clean, cheerful rooms in a safe location at a cheap price. This is one of the best budget options in town.

55 Aungier St., Dublin 2. ☎ **01/475-0001.** Fax 01/475-0303. www.avalon-house.ie. 12 units. €15–€38 ($20–$48) per person double with private bathroom. Includes light continental breakfast. AE, MC, V. Bus: 16, 16A, 19, 22, or 155. No curfew but passes must be shown on entry after 9pm. **Amenities:** Cafe; game room; nonsmoking rooms; TV lounge; foreign-currency exchange; cooking facilities; 24-hr. security; Internet access; luggage storage; safe.

FITZWILLIAM/MERRION SQUARE AREA

Very Expensive

Merrion Hotel ★ Housed in four restored Georgian houses, the Merrion is a deeply feminine, traditionally elegant hotel. Downstairs the lobby and lounges have formal furniture and fires glowing in hearths—the kinds of places where proper afternoon tea seems called for. The impressive contemporary art on the walls is part of one of the country's largest private collections. Service is discreetly omnipresent, and the spacious rooms overlook either the government buildings or the hotel's 18th-century-inspired gardens of acacia and lilac. Pamper yourself in the **Tethra Spa.** Stretch your credit card's limit at the Michelin-starred **Patrick Guilbaud** restaurant or save a few pennies at the somewhat cheaper and more atmospheric **Cellar** restaurant.

Upper Merrion St., Dublin 2. ☎ **01/603-0600.** Fax 01/603-0700. www.merrionhotel.com. 142 units. €470–€495 ($610–$640) double. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking €20 ($26) per night. DART: Pearse. Bus: 10, 13, or 13A. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; 2 bars; pool; gym; spa; concierge; car service; business services; conference facilities; salon; 24-hr. room service; babysitting; laundry service. *In room:* A/C, TV/DVD, minibar, iron, safe.

O'CONNELL STREET AREA

Very Expensive

The Gresham ★★ Along with The Shelbourne, this is one of Dublin's two most historic hotels, and it has welcomed visitors for 200 years. With a row of flags out front and its grand, up-lighted facade, The Gresham stands out, and the vast lobby is one of the best places in the city to have a cup of tea or a cocktail in elegant, but relaxed surroundings. A lengthy renovation lasting several years has recently been completed, giving it all a badly needed makeover, and redesigned rooms are coolly done in neutral tones, with big, firm beds and huge windows. It has a friendly, modern bar, but the hotel restaurant is fusty and old-fashioned.

23 Upper O'Connell St., Dublin 1. ☎ **01/874-6881.** Fax 01/878-7175. www.gresham-hotels.com. 289 units. €155–€290 ($195–$286) double. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking €14 ($18) per night. Bus: 11 or 13. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; 2 bars; concierge; room service; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning; nonsmoking floors. *In room:* A/C, TV, dataport (wireless in some rooms), minibar (some rooms), hair dryer, safe, U.S. voltage plug sockets (some rooms).

The Morrison ★★ This is really an oversize boutique hotel, with an ideal location just across the Liffey from Temple Bar. Fashion fans will surely have no trouble pegging the design as the work of design star John Rocha, who is responsible for everything from the crushed velvet bed throws in blood red, to the Waterford crystal vases.

Rocha uses a palette of neutral colors—cream, chocolate, and black—to achieve a kind of warm minimalism in the guest rooms, which have stereos, Egyptian-cotton linens, and cool Portuguese limestone in the bathrooms. The stylish atrium-style restaurant, **Halo,** is one of the most talked-about in town. A recent expansion has added a new wing of 48 bedrooms, significantly increasing The Morrison's capacity.

Lower Ormond Quay, Dublin 1. ☎ 01/887-2400. Fax 01/878-3185. www.morrisonhotel.ie. 138 units. €220–€450 ($286–$585) double. AE, DC, MC, V. DART: Connolly. Bus: 70 or 80. Amenities: 2 restaurants; 2 bars; concierge; room service; babysitting; dry cleaning; video/CD library. In room: A/C, dataport, minibar, hair dryer, safe, CD player, iPod docking station, voice mail.

Moderate

Royal Dublin Hotel This five-story Best Western–owned property near Parnell Square at the north end of Dublin's main thoroughfare, is within walking distance of all the main theaters and Northside attractions. The contemporary sky-lit lobby sits next to the historic, attractive lounges that were part of the original 1752 building. Guest rooms are, by comparison, quite plain, featuring light woods, plaid bedspreads, and windows overlooking a busy street below. If you can get one of its frequent Internet bargain rates, this can be a well-priced option, but at full rack rate, it's not great value.

40 Upper O'Connell St., Dublin 1. ☎ **800/528-1234** in the U.S., or 01/873-3666. Fax 01/873-3120. www.royaldublin.com. 120 units. €130–€225 ($170–$295) double. Rates include service charge, full Irish breakfast, and VAT. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. DART: Connolly. Bus: 36A, 40A, 40B, 40C, or 51A. **Amenities:** Restaurant; lounge; bar; concierge; room service; babysitting; laundry; foreign-currency exchange. *In room:* TV, tea/coffeemaker, hair dryer, radio.

Inexpensive

Abbott Lodge ★★★ *Finds* Historic Abbott Lodge has long been one of Dublin's most popular guesthouses, and for good reason. The rooms are simply decorated, but many have high ceilings or architectural details like original cornices, and nice touches like mahogany beds. The staff is genuinely friendly, and will happily fill you in on the neighborhood's offerings, including the best pubs and restaurants nearby. This place is good to know about if you're traveling on a budget.

87–88 Lower Gardiner St., Dublin 1. ☎ **01/836-5548.** Fax 01/836-5549. www.abbott-lodge.com. 17 units. €90–€120 ($117–$160) double. Rates include full Irish breakfast and VAT. MC, V. Parking €5 ($6.50) per night. DART: Connolly. Bus: All An Lar (cross-city) buses. **Amenities:** Lounge. *In room:* TV.

Isaac's Hostel ★ This friendly guesthouse takes the backpacker concept of humble frugality and turns it right on its head. Calling itself "Dublin's first V.I.P. hostel," it has the usual mix of bunk beds, lockers, and TV rooms. But it also has a heady cocktail of extras, including polished wood floors, a full restaurant, and the newest addition: an attractive sauna. It's a thoughtful hybrid hostel, with Internet access, a kitchen for guests' use, pool tables, and a friendly and relaxing atmosphere. Prices are liable to rise during "event" weekends, such as when big sports matches are on, but it's definitely one of the best options for those traveling on a tight budget.

2–5 Frenchman's Lane, Dublin 1. ☎ **01/855-6215.** Fax 01/855-6524. www.isaacs.ie. 54 units. €14–€24 ($18–$30) (per person) dormitory; €34–€41 ($44–$53) single; €31–€39 ($40–$50) double. Rates include light breakfast. MC, V. DART: Connolly. All cross-city buses. **Amenities:** Restaurant; deli; sauna; game room; laundry; foreign-currency exchange; cooking facilities; Internet lounge; TV lounge.

BALLSBRIDGE/EMBASSY ROW AREA

Situated south of the Grand Canal, this is the most prestigious part of town, known for its embassies, tree-lined streets, and historic buildings. If you're coming to Dublin specifically for a conference at the RDS show grounds or a match at the Lansdowne Rugby Ground, this neighborhood will put you right in the thick of things. The downside is that it's a good 20- to 30-minute walk to get into the city's best sightseeing and shopping areas.

Very Expensive

Four Seasons ★★★ Kids If money is no object, the Four Seasons lures you like a De Beers diamond. The beauty is in the details here: The indoor pool and whirlpool overlook a sunken garden; the lobby and guest rooms are equally smart and plush; the spa is outstanding and the restaurants elegant. This is an excellent option for families, as there are complimentary cribs, child-proof bedrooms, and a babysitting service. A menu of children's activities will keep the kids occupied while you have a romantic meal or just kick back for some quiet meditation (the better to prepare yourself for the bill). Always check the website's rates before booking; online discounts can be very good.

Simmonscourt Rd., Ballsbridge, Dublin 4. ✆ **800/819-5053** in the U.S., or 01/665-4000. Fax 01/665-4099. www.fourseasons.com. 259 units. €295–€445 ($380–$580) double. Breakfast €25 ($33). AE, DC, MC, V. Valet parking. DART: Sandymount (5-min. walk). Bus: 7, 7A, 7X, 8, or 45. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; lobby lounge; bar; indoor pool; health club/spa; whirlpool; salon services; children's programs; concierge; room service; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV/VCR, dataport, minibar, hair dryer, safe, CD player available, radio, voice mail.

Expensive

The Dylan ★ The latest incredibly trendy hotel in increasingly hip Dublin, this place puts its cards on the table the moment you walk in the door—here, only two things matter: how big your wallet is, and how good you look. Chanel bag? Prada skirt and $500 shoes? Welcome to your new home! This determinedly glamorous boutique hotel has transformed the former Royal Hospital Nurses' Home with vivid colors: bright carpets and curtains, Murano glass chandeliers, studded leather wallpaper, and lime-green sofas. Guest rooms are quite small, and the decor is disco chic, with Frette linens and 7th Heaven beds. Service here is excellent, but beauty's in the eye of the beholder, so this very hip, very adult hotel is certainly not for everyone. Families in particular might find its party-hearty atmosphere (it has a signature cocktail—vanilla vodka with crème de banana—as well as a thumping club soundtrack) a bit off-putting. But the young and single are lining up to spend hundreds of euro a night.

Eastmoreland Place, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4. ✆ **01/660-3000.** Fax 01/660-3005. www.dylan.ie. 44 units. €220–€300 ($286–$390) double. Breakfast €20 ($26). AE, MC, V. Bus: 10, 46A, 46B, 63, or 84. **Amenities:** Restaurant; lounge; bar; nightclub; concierge; salon; room service; laundry service; nonsmoking rooms; foreign-currency exchange. *In room:* TV, dataport, minibar, hair dryer, garment press, safe, robes, CD, radio, voice mail.

Moderate

Anglesea Town House ★ Everyone who stays at this 1903 Edwardian-style B&B raves about the same thing: the extraordinary breakfasts served by host Helen Kirrane. From freshly squeezed orange juice to homemade fruit compote, yogurt, and baked fruit, you can move on to home-baked cereals, then bacon, eggs, and sausages or a smoked salmon omelet. There's always a decadent dessert (the profiteroles are divine) and gallons of brewed coffee. The place is full of old-world comforts—rocking chairs, settees, a sun deck, and flowering plants—and guest rooms are attractive and comfortable.

63 Anglesea Rd., Ballsbridge, Dublin 4. ✆ **01/668-3877.** Fax 01/668-3461. 7 units. €130 ($169) double. Rates include full breakfast. AE, MC, V. DART: Lansdowne Rd. Bus: 10, 46A, 46B, 63, or 84. **Amenities:** Babysitting. *In room:* TV, hair dryer.

Butlers Town House ★★ Value This beautifully restored Victorian town house feels like a gracious family home. The atmosphere is elegant, but comfortable; rooms are richly furnished with four-poster or half-tester beds, draped in luxurious fabrics in rich colors. The gem here, in our opinion, is the Glendalough Room, with a lovely bay window and small library; it requires booking well in advance. Free tea and coffee are offered all day, and breakfast and afternoon tea are served in the atrium dining room.

44 Lansdowne Rd., Ballsbridge, Dublin 4. ✆ **800/44-UTELL** in the U.S., or 01/667-4022. Fax 01/667-3960. www.butlers-hotel.com. 20 units. €136–€196 ($180–$260) double. Rates include full breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Closed Dec 23–Jan 10. Secure free parking. DART: Lansdowne Rd. Bus: 7, 7A, 8, or 45. **Amenities:** Breakfast room; room service; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, TV, dataport, hair dryer.

Waterloo House ★ This classy guesthouse is charming in an old-world kind of way, with classical music wafting through the elegant, high-ceilinged drawing room where you can linger over the morning papers. Guest rooms are large (some have two double beds), but it's hard to decide whether the patterned carpet and box-pleated bedspreads are reassuringly traditional or just dated. The varied breakfast menu offers more than the usual fried eggs. Like many small establishments in Dublin, Waterloo House raises its prices during special events, such as major sports matches.

8–10 Waterloo Rd., Ballsbridge, Dublin 4. ✆ **01/660-1888.** Fax 01/667-1955. www.waterloohouse.ie. 17 units. €80–€180 ($104–$234) double. Rates include full breakfast. MC, V. Closed Christmas week. Free parking. DART: Lansdowne Rd. Bus: 5, 7, or 8. **Amenities:** Breakfast room. *In room:* TV, tea/coffeemaker, hair dryer, garment press.

Inexpensive

Bewley's Hotel Kids Value Bewley's occupies what was once a 19th-century brick Masonic school building adjacent to the RDS show grounds and next to the British embassy. A modern wing harmonizes well with the old structure and is indistinguishable in the interior. All the rooms are studios with a writing desk, an armchair, and a large double bed. An additional room contains a foldout couch, a table (seats six), a pullout kitchenette/bar hidden in a cabinet, and an additional bathroom (shower only). The basement restaurant **(O'Connell's)** is run by the Allen family of Ballymaloe fame and offers very good food at reasonable prices; there's also an informal Bewley's tearoom. The hotel is an excellent value for families—having maintained its €99-per-room rate ($119) for several years—but the downside is its location just outside the city center.

Merrion Rd., Ballsbridge, Dublin 4. ✆ **01/668-1111.** Fax 01/668-1999. www.bewleyshotels.com. 300 units. €99 ($119) studio double. Rates include service charge and taxes. AE, DC, MC, V. DART: Sandymount (5-min. walk). Bus: 7, 7A, 7X, 8, or 45. **Amenities:** Restaurant; tearoom; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV, dataport, kitchenette, beverage maker, hair dryer, garment press, safe.

WHERE TO DINE

HISTORIC OLD CITY & TEMPLE BAR/TRINITY COLLEGE AREA

Very Expensive

The Tea Room ★★★ INTERNATIONAL This ultrasmart restaurant, ensconced in the U2-owned Clarence hotel, is guaranteed to deliver one of your most memorable meals in Ireland. This gorgeous room's soaring yet understated lines are the perfect backdrop for the complex but controlled cooking that takes form in dishes like filet of John Dory with wild mushroom and razor clams, or red leg partridge with juniper flavored *jus.* New executive chef Fred Cordonnier has also introduced a fixed-price

"Simply Cooked" menu, offering more straightforward fare for €39 ($50), although this isn't available on Friday or Saturday nights.

In the Clarence, 6–8 Wellington Quay, Dublin 2. ☎ **01/407-0813.** Reservations required. Main courses €30–€40 ($39–$52); fixed-price "Simply Cooked" 3-course dinner Sun–Thurs €39 ($50). AE, MC, V. Mon–Fri 12:30–2pm; daily 6:30–9:45pm. Bus: 51B, 51C, 68, 69, or 79

Expensive

Jacob's Ladder ★★ *Value* MODERN IRISH Inspired cooking by chef-owner Adrian Roche and a stylish dining room with great views over Trinity College tend to keep this place booked up. Roche's forte is taking old Irish stalwarts and updating them into sublime signature dishes. You can start with a rich prawn bisque with sautéed spinach and move on to roast loin of wild boar with *tarte fine* of red onions. Service is terrific.

4–5 Nassau St., Dublin 2. ☎ **01/670-3865.** www.jacobsladder.ie. Reservations required. Main courses €21–€34 ($27–$44); fixed-price dinner €44 ($57). AE, DC, MC, V. Tues–Sat 12:30–2:30pm; Tues–Fri 6–10pm; Sat 7–10pm. Closed Dec 24–Jan 4. DART: Pearse. Bus: 7, 8, 10, 11, or 46A.

Mermaid Café ★★ MODERN Owned by a chef and an artist, this popular eatery is a mixture of good restaurant and classy hangout. This place is a lunchtime favorite of local professionals, and a good place to take a date in the evening. Dishes often found on the frequently changing menu range from slow-roasted pork belly to an array of excellent seafood dishes, including a rich Atlantic seafood casserole.

69–70 Dame St., Dublin 2. ☎ **01/670-8236.** www.mermaid.ie. Reservations required. Dinner main courses €20–€30 ($26–$39). MC, V. Mon–Sat 12:30–2:30pm and 6–11pm; Sun 12:30–3:30pm (brunch) and 6–9pm. Bus: 50, 50A, 54, 56A, 77, 77A, or 77B.

Moderate

Elephant & Castle ★★ AMERICAN You'd be forgiven for thinking you can find this kind of food—burgers, chicken wings, omelets—at any old Yankee-style joint, but give it a chance and you won't be disappointed: Noel Alexander works a stove as if he was brought up in American diners. His chicken wings are scrumptious, his burgers out of this world, and his omelets "spot on," as the Irish would say. It's a buzzing, immensely popular place for breakfast, brunch, lunch, afternoon nibble, dinner, or late dinner.

18 Temple Bar, Dublin 2. ☎ **01/679-3121.** Main courses €8–€22 ($9.60–$26). AE, MC, V. Mon–Fri 8am–11:30pm; Sat 10:30am–11:30pm; Sun noon–11:30pm. Bus: 51B, 51C, 68, 69, or 79.

Inexpensive

Juice ★ VEGETARIAN The best thing about Juice is that if nobody told you it was a vegetarian restaurant, you'd probably never notice, so interesting is the menu and so tasty is the food. The look of the place is lovely, with soaring 9m (30-ft.) ceilings softened by a suspended sailcloth and muted lighting. Brunch is classic here, with pancakes, huevos rancheros, and French toast topped with fresh fruit or organic maple syrup. The rest of the day, you can sample the homemade dips—hummus, baba ghanouj, tapenade, roasted carrot pâté—with crudités and pita-bread strips. True to its name, there are about 30 kinds of juices and smoothies on offer.

Castle House, 73–83 S. Great Georges St., Dublin 2. ☎ **01/475-7856.** www.juice.ie. Reservations recommended Fri–Sat. Main courses €7–€10 ($9.10–$13). AE, MC, V. Daily 11am–11pm. Bus: 50, 54, 56, or 77.

Leo Burdock's FISH AND CHIPS Established in 1913, this quintessential Irish take-away shop across from Christ Church Cathedral is a cherished Dublin institution. Cabinet ministers, university students, and Hollywood stars alike (Tom Cruise and Liam Neeson are both fans) can be found at the counter waiting for fish bought fresh that morning and good Irish potatoes, both cooked in "drippings" (none of that modern cooking oil!). There's no seating, but you can sit on a nearby bench or stroll down to the park at St. Patrick's Cathedral.

2 Werburgh St., Dublin 8. ✆ **01/454-0306.** Main courses €6–€8 ($7.80–$10). No credit cards. Mon–Sat noon–midnight; Sun 4pm–midnight. Bus: 21A, 50, 50A, 78, 78A, or 78B.

ST. STEPHEN'S GREEN/GRAFTON STREET AREA

Very Expensive

One Pico ★★★ MODERN EUROPEAN About a 5-minute walk from Stephen's Green, on a wee lane off Dawson Street, this is a sophisticated, grown-up, classy place, with excellent service and fantastic food. The food is a mixture of European influences in a menu that changes daily. If you're lucky, you might find the duck confit with red cabbage and beet chiffonade, or the roast pheasant with red-wine risotto. For dessert, a caramelized lemon tart is the end to a near-perfect meal.

5–6 Molesworth Place, Schoolhouse Lane, Dublin 2. ✆ **01/676-0300.** www.onepico.com. Reservations required. Fixed-price 2-course lunch €29 ($37); dinner main courses €30–€37 ($39–$48). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat 12:30–2:30pm and 6–11pm. DART: Pearse. Bus: 10, 11A, 11B, 13, or 20B..

Moderate

Fitzers Café INTERNATIONAL This is one branch of a chain of winning cafes that serve up excellent, up-to-date, and reasonably priced food. Nestled on a street known for its bookshops, this bright, airy Irish-style bistro has a multi-windowed facade and modern decor. Choices range from chicken breast with hot chile cream sauce or brochette of lamb tandoori with mild curry sauce to gratin of smoked cod. There are also tempting vegetarian dishes made from organic produce. Fitzers has two other Dublin locations: just a few blocks away at the National Gallery, Merrion Square West (✆ **01/661-4496**), and at Temple Bar Square (✆ **01/679-0440**). As with all chains, consistency is the operative word—the same menu, the same decor theme, and the same good service at each location.

51 Dawson St., Dublin 2. ✆ **01/677-1155.** Dinner main courses €15–€25 ($20–$33). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 11:30am–11:30pm. Closed Dec 24–27 and Good Friday. DART: Pearse. Bus: 10, 11A, 11B, 13, or 20B.

Mimo ★★ *Value* INTERNATIONAL Take a shopping break at this chic little cafe in the tony Powerscourt Townhouse mini-mall. It's a wonderfully classy and surprisingly budget-minded place to stop for terrific salads, pasta dishes, and inventive sandwiches. Against the old-world backdrop of a skylit Georgian town-house courtyard, Mimo exudes contemporary chic. Sink into an armchair and order the tasty salad of marinated flat mushrooms, piled high atop a bed of crisp green beans and Parmesan shavings with lemon-and-thyme dressing, and served with toasted ciabatta. Or go for the warm goat's-cheese crostini with caramelized figs, wild honey, and beet dressing. A piano player is a civilized touch on Thursday and Friday afternoons.

Powerscourt Townhouse, Dublin 2. ✆ **01/674-6712.** Main courses €9–€12 ($11–$14). MC, V. Daily noon–5:30pm. Bus: Any city-center bus.

Inexpensive

Caifé Trí-D ★★ *Value* SANDWICHES This unpretentious, eclectic little cafe just steps from the wrought-iron rails of the Trinity College campus is a great find on a street known for booksellers. The menu half-written *as gaeilge* is your clue that Caifé Trí-D is that Dublin rarity: a heart-on-its-sleeve Irish-language hangout. *Ceapairí* and *fillteáin* (sandwiches and wraps) tempt, like the winning combination of sharp

Dubliner cheese, tomato relish, lettuce, and tomato. Try Brie and cranberry sauce on toasted brown bread, and you'll be plotting a re-creation in your own kitchen.

3 Dawson St., Dublin 2. ☎ **01/474-1054.** Soups, sandwiches, and wraps €5 ($6) and under. No credit cards. Mon–Sat 9am–7pm. DART: Pearse. Bus: 10, 11A, 11B, 13, or 20B.

Cornucopia Wholefood Restaurant *Value* VEGETARIAN This little cafe just off Grafton Street is one of the best vegetarian restaurants in the city, and also serves wholesome meals for people on various restricted diets (vegan, nondairy, low sodium, low fat). Soups are particularly good here, as are the salads and the hot dishes such as baked lasagna made with eggplant. This place is a delicious healthy alternative.

19 Wicklow St., Dublin 2. ☎ **01/677-7583.** Main courses €9.50 ($12). MC, V. Mon–Sat 8:30am–8pm; Sun noon–7pm. Bus: Any city-center bus.

FITZWILLIAM/MERRION SQUARE AREA

Very Expensive

L'Ecrivain ★★ FRENCH This is one of Dublin's truly exceptional restaurants, from start to finish. The atmosphere is relaxed, welcoming, and unpretentious, and chef Derry Clarke's food is extraordinary. Most dishes consist of Irish ingredients, prepared without dense sauces. You might find, on the constantly changing menu, seared wild Irish venison loin with caramelized pear, or seared Bere Island scallops with lobster strudel. Dinner prices are terrifying (and regularly raised), but the two-course lunch menu allows a chance to try the menu for slightly less.

109 Lower Baggot St., Dublin 2. ☎ **01/661-1919.** www.lecrivain.com. Reservations required. Fixed-price 2-course lunch €35 ($46); 3-course lunch €45 ($59); dinner main courses €44–€45 ($57–$59). 10% service charge. AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri 12:30–2pm; Mon–Sat 7–10:30pm. Bus: 10.

Restaurant Patrick Guilbaud ★★ FRENCH/IRISH Ireland's most award-winning restaurant (including two Michelin stars) holds court in elegant quarters at the equally elegant Merrion Hotel. The menu is lavish; roast loin of Wicklow lamb with eggplant caviar and black sole with creamed brown morels are two representative options. This is one of the most absurdly priced restaurants in Dublin—several dishes are more than €90 ($117) each—so this place is only for some people.

In the Merrion Hotel, 21 Upper Merrion St., Dublin 2. ☎ **01/676-4192.** www.restaurantpatrickguilbaud.ie. Reservations required. Fixed-price 2-course lunch €35 ($46); fixed-price 3-course lunch €47 ($61); dinner main courses €42–€100 ($55–$130). AE, DC, MC, V. Tues–Sat 12:30–2:15pm and 7–10:15pm. DART: Westland Row. Bus: 10, 11A, 11B, 13, or 20B.

Expensive

Ely ★ ORGANIC IRISH This cosmopolitan, clever place does everything right. The owners get all the organic produce from their family farm in County Clare, so everything is as fresh as it possibly can be. The food is simple but expertly prepared, the crowd enthusiastic, the service attentive. Think "bangers and mash" (sausages and mashed spuds), delicious Clare oysters, superb Irish stew, and a great selection of cheeses from Sheridan's. Factor in a smashing wine list and you've got a winner.

22 Ely Place (off Merrion Row), Dublin 2. ☎ **01/676-8986.** Reservations recommended. Dinner main courses €14–€23 ($18–$30). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat noon–3pm and 6–10:30pm. Bus: 7, 7A, 8, 10, 11, or 13.

Inexpensive

National Museum Café CAFETERIA This is a great place to step out of the rain, warm yourself, and then wander among the nation's treasures. The cafe is informal, but has a certain elegance, thanks to an elaborate mosaic floor, marble tabletops, and tall windows that look across a cobbled yard. Everything is made fresh: beef salad, chicken salad, quiche, an abundance of pastries. The soup of the day is often vegetarian, and quite good. Admission to the museum is free, so you can visit without worry.

National Museum of Ireland, Kildare St., Dublin 2. ✆ **01/677-7444.** Soup €3 ($3.90); lunch main courses under €8 ($10). MC, V. Tues–Sat 10am–5pm; Sun 2–5pm. Bus: 7, 7A, 8, 10, 11, or 13.

O'CONNELL STREET AREA

Expensive

Chapter One ★★ MODERN IRISH Arguably the city's most atmospheric restaurant, this remarkable eatery fills the vaulted basement space of the Dublin Writers Museum. Artfully lighted and tastefully decorated, it's one of the best restaurants in town. Meals are prepared with local, organic ingredients, all cleverly used in remarkable dishes like the ravioli with Irish goat cheese and warm asparagus, and the Irish beef with shallot gratin.

18–19 Parnell Sq., Dublin 2. ✆ **01/873-2266.** www.chapteronerestaurant.com. Reservations recommended. Main courses €20–€35 ($26–$46); 3-course fixed-price dinner 6–7pm €35 ($46). AE, DC, MC, V. Tues–Fri 12:30–2:30pm and 6–11pm; Sat 6–11pm. Bus: 27A, 31A, 31B, 32A, 32B, 42B, 42C, 43, or 44A.

Moderate

101 Talbot ★ INTERNATIONAL This modest, second-floor eatery above a shop may be unassuming, but don't be fooled—it's actually a bright beacon of good cooking on the Northside. The menu features light, healthy food, with a strong emphasis on vegetarian dishes. Dishes change regularly, but mains might include seared filet of tuna, roast duck breast, or Halloumi cheese and mushroom brochette. The dining room is casually funky, with contemporary Irish art, big windows, and newspapers scattered about, if you should want one. The staff are endlessly friendly, making it a pleasure to visit.

101 Talbot St. (at Talbot Lane near Marlborough St.), Dublin 1. ✆ **01/874-5011.** Reservations recommended. Dinner main courses €16–€22 ($18–$25). AE, MC, V. Tues–Sat 5–11pm. DART: Connolly. Bus: 27A, 31A, 31B, 32A, 32B, 42B, 42C, 43, or 44A

Inexpensive

Epicurean Food Hall GOURMET FOOD COURT This wonderful food hall houses a wide variety of artisan produce, delicious local Irish meats, and regional specialties. Favorites include: **Caviston's,** Dublin's premier deli, for smoked salmon and seafood; **Itsabagel,** for its delicious bagels, imported from H&H Bagels in New York City; **Crème de la Crème,** for its French-style pastries and cakes; **Missy and Mandy's,** for its American-style ice cream; **Nectar,** for its plethora of healthy juice drinks; and **Christophe's Café** for its delicious gourmet sandwiches, wraps, and panini. There is some seating, but this place gets jammed during lunchtime midweek, so visit at off-peak times if possible.

Middle Abbey St., Dublin 1. ✆ **01/878-7016.** All items €3–€15 ($4–$20). No credit cards. Mon–Sat 10am–6pm. Bus: 70 or 80.

Soup Dragon SOUPS This place may be tiny, with less than a dozen stools alongside a bar, but it's big on drama: blue walls, black and red mirrors, orange slices and spice sticks flowing out of giant jugs. The menu changes daily, but usually features a few traditional choices (potato and leek, carrot and coriander) as well as the more exotic (spicy Indian spinach and potato concoctions, for example).

168 Capel St., Dublin 1. ✆ **01/872-3277.** All items €3–€8 ($3.60–$9.60). MC, V. Mon–Sat 9:30am–6pm; Sun 1–6pm. Bus: 70 or 80.

BALLSBRIDGE/EMBASSY ROW AREA

Expensive

Roly's Bistro IRISH/INTERNATIONAL This two-story, shop-front restaurant is a local institution, beloved for providing the kind of reliably good, tummy-warming food you never get tired of: roasted breast of chicken with orzo pasta and wild mushrooms or braised shank of lamb with root vegetable purée and rosemary *jus,* to name just two. The bright and airy main dining room can be noisy when the house is full, but there's also an enclave of booths for those who prefer a quiet tête-à-tête.

7 Ballsbridge Terrace, Dublin 4. ✆ **01/668-2611.** www.rolysbistro.ie. Reservations required. Main courses €20–€30 ($26–$39); 3-course set-price dinner €42 ($55); 3-course set-price lunch €23 ($30). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily noon–3pm and 6–9:45pm. DART: Lansdowne Rd. Station. Bus: 5, 6, 7, 8, 18, or 45.

Moderate

The French Paradox ★★★ *Value* WINE BAR This is just what Dublin needed: a price-conscious, darling little bistro and wine bar that endears itself to everyone. The wine's the thing here, so relax with a bottle of Bordeaux or Côte du Rhône and nibbles from the menu. There's a lovely cheese plate named for West Cork cheese maker Bill Hogan, superb Iberico hams from Spain, or, if you prefer, the small dining menu offers bistro favorites such as Gravad Lax and blinis or scrambled eggs with truffle butter.

53 Shelbourne Rd., Dublin 4. ✆ **01/660-4068.** www.thefrenchparadox.com. Reservations recommended. All items €10–€20 ($13–$26). Main dishes come with glass of wine. AE, MC, V. Mon–Fri noon–3pm and 6pm–midnight; Sat noon–midnight. DART: Lansdowne Rd. Bus: 5, 6, 7, 8, or 18.

SEEING THE SIGHTS

SIGHTSEEING SUGGESTIONS FOR FIRST-TIME VISITORS

If You Have 1 Day Start at the beginning—Dublin's medieval quarter, the area around **Christ Church** and **St. Patrick's Cathedral.** Tour these great churches and then walk the cobblestone streets and inspect the nearby old city walls at **High Street.** From Old Dublin, take a turn eastward and see **Dublin Castle** and then **Trinity College** with the famous Book of Kells. Cross over the River Liffey to **O'Connell Street,** Dublin's main thoroughfare. Walk up this wide street, passing the landmark General Post Office (GPO), to Parnell Square and the picturesque Garden of Remembrance. If time permits, visit the **Dublin Writers Museum,** and then hop on a double-decker bus heading to the south bank of the Liffey for a relaxing stroll amid the greenery of **St. Stephen's Green.** Cap the day with a show at the **Abbey Theatre** and maybe a drink or two at a nearby pub.

If You Have 2 Days On your first day, get oriented with a sightseeing tour—the most fun is the amphibious **Viking Splash Tour,** though the **Dublin City Tour** gives a broader overview of the city, plus it goes to some of the leading sights on the edge of the city, such as the **Guinness Brewery,** the **Royal Hospital,** and **Phoenix Park.** Later in the day, head for **Grafton Street** for some shopping. If time allows, stroll around **St. Stephen's Green** and **Merrion Square** for a sampling of the best of Dublin's Georgian architecture. Spend the evening in Temple Bar and end up with a few pints in a pub. On your second day, follow the 1-day itinerary, above.

If You Have 3 Days Make day 3 a day for Dublin's artistic and cultural attractions—visit the **National Museum** and **National Gallery,** the **Guinness Hop Store,** or a special-interest museum. Save time to walk around **Temple Bar**

by day, when the city's Left Bank district is all about art galleries and film studios, interesting secondhand shops, and casual eateries.

If You Have 4 Days On day 4, take a ride aboard DART to one of the southern suburbs, either **Dun Laoghaire** or medieval **Dalkey.** DART follows the rim of Dublin Bay, so you'll enjoy a scenic ride and get to spend some time in an Irish coastal village. Or take a trip to the **Boyne Valley** in nearby County Meath to visit the burial mounds at Newgrange, the site of the Battle of the Boyne, and King William's Glen. This trip is also worthwhile for the glimpses of Irish countryside it affords.

DUBLIN'S TOP ATTRACTIONS

Áras an Uachtaráin (The Irish President's House) Áras an Uachtaráin (Irish for "House of the President") was once the Viceregal Lodge, the summer retreat of the British viceroy, whose main digs were in Dublin Castle. From what were never humble beginnings, the original 1751 country house was expanded several times, gradually accumulating splendor. President Mary McAleese recently opened her home to visitors; guided tours originate at the Phoenix Park Visitors Centre every Saturday. After an introductory historical film, a bus brings visitors to and from Áras an Uachtaráin. The focus of the tour is the state reception rooms. The entire tour lasts 1 hour. Only 525 tickets are given out, first-come, first-served; arrive before 1:30pm, especially in summer.

Note: For security reasons, no backpacks, travel bags, strollers, buggies, cameras, or cell phones are allowed on the tour.

In Phoenix Park Visitor Centre, Dublin 8. ✆ **01/670-9155.** Free admission. Sat 10am–5pm summer, 10:30am–4pm winter. Closed Dec 24–26. Same-day tickets issued at Phoenix Park (see below). Bus: 10.

The Book of Kells ★ This extraordinary hand-drawn manuscript of the four gospels, dating from the year 800, is one of Ireland's jewels, and with elaborate scripting and colorful illumination, it is undeniably magnificent. It is displayed, along with another early Christian manuscript, at Trinity College's Old Library. Unfortunately, the need to protect the books for future generations means that there's little for you to actually see. The volumes are very small and displayed inside a wooden cabinet shielded by bulletproof glass. So all you really see here are the backs of a lot of tourists, leaning over a small table trying to get a peek at two pages of the ancient books. It's quite anticlimactic, but the Library's Long Room goes some way toward making up for that, at least for bibliophiles. The grand, chained library holds many rare works on Irish history and has frequently changing displays of rare works. Still, it's hard to say that it's all worth the large admission fee.

College Green, Dublin 2. ✆ **01/608-2320.** www.tcd.ie. Admission to Book of Kells €8 ($10) adults, €7 ($9) seniors/students, free for children under 12. Combination tickets for the Library and Dublin Experience also available. Mon–Sat 9:30am–5pm; Sun noon–4:30pm (opens at 9:30am June–Sept). Bus: any cross-city bus marked "An Lar."

Chester Beatty Library ★★★ *Finds* Sir Alfred Chester Beatty was an American of Irish heritage who made a fortune in the mining industry and collected rare manuscripts. In 1956, he bequeathed his extensive collection to Ireland, and this fascinating museum inside the grounds of Dublin Castle was the ultimate result of his largesse. The breathtaking array of early illuminated gospels and religious manuscripts outshines the Book of Kells, and there are endless surprises here: ancient editions of the Bible and other religious books, beautiful copies of the Koran, and endless icons from Western, Middle Eastern, and Far Eastern cultures. Best of all, it's free.

Clock Tower Bldg., Dublin Castle, Dublin 2. ☎ **01/407-0750.** Free admission. Tues–Fri 10am–5pm (Mon–Fri May–Sept); Sat 11am–5pm; Sun 1–5pm. Free guided tours Wed and Sat 2:30pm. Closed Dec 24–26, Jan 1, and holidays. DART: Sandymount. Bus: 5, 6, 6A, 7A, 8, 10, 46, 46A, 46B, or 64.

Christ Church Cathedral ★ This magnificent cathedral is difficult to appreciate fully if you walk up the street that runs in front of it, as it is actually below street level. It was designed to be seen from the river, so walk to it from the river side in order to truly appreciate its size and the way it dominates the neighborhood. It dates from 1038, when Sitric, Danish king of Dublin, built the first wooden Christ Church here. In 1171, the original foundation was extended into a cruciform and rebuilt in stone by the Norman warrior Strongbow. The present structure dates mainly from 1871 to 1878, when a huge restoration took place that is controversial to this day, as much of the old detail was destroyed in the process. Still, magnificent stonework and graceful pointed arches survive. There's also a statue of Strongbow inside, and some believe his tomb is here as well, although historians are not convinced. Look out for a heart-shaped iron box in the southeast chapel, which is believed to contain the heart of St. Laurence O'Toole. The best way to get a glimpse of what the original building must have been like is to visit the crypt, which is original to the 12th-century structure.

Christ Church Place, Dublin 8. ☎ **01/677-8099.** Admission €5 ($6.50) adults, €2.50 ($3.25) students and children under 15. June–Aug daily 9am–6pm; Sept–May 9:45am–5:30pm daily. Closed Dec 26. Bus: 21A, 50, 50A, 78, 78A, or 78B.

Dublin Castle This 13th-century structure was the center of British power in Ireland for more than 7 centuries, until the new Irish government took it over in 1922. You can walk the grounds for free, although this is largely municipal office space now and is disappointingly dominated by parking lots. Still, it's worth a wander; highlights include the 13th-century Record Tower; the State Apartments, once the residence of English viceroys; and the Chapel Royal, a 19th-century Gothic building with particularly fine plaster decoration and carved-oak gallery fronts and fittings. If they're open, check out the Undercroft, an excavated site on the grounds where an early Viking fortress stood, and the Treasury, built in the early 18th century. There are also a vaguely interesting on-site craft shop, heritage center, and restaurant.

Palace St. (off Dame St.), Dublin 2. ☎ **01/677-7129.** Admission €4.50 ($5.85) adults, €3.50 ($4.50) when state apts. aren't available, €3.25 ($4.25) seniors and students, €2 ($2.60) children under 12. Mon–Fri 10am–4:45pm; Sat–Sun and holidays 2–4:45pm. Guided tours every 20–25 min. Bus: 50, 50A, 54, 56A, 77, 77A, or 77B.

Dublin Writers Museum ★★ *Moments* This is an excellent little museum that represents the best of what literary galleries can be, and lovers of Irish literature will find it hard to tear themselves away. The attraction is more than just seeing Joyce's typewriter or reading early playbills for the Abbey Theatre when Yeats was involved in running it. The draw is also long letters from Brendan Behan talking about parties he was invited to with the Marx Brothers in Los Angeles after he hit the big time, and scrawled notes from Behan, Joyce, and Beckett about work, life, and love. This museum opens a window and lets in light on Ireland's rich literary heritage, and it is wonderful to walk in that glow.

18–19 Parnell Sq. N., Dublin 1. ☎ **01/872-2077.** www.writersmuseum.com. Admission €7 ($9) adults, €5.95 ($8) seniors and students, €4.40 ($6) children, €20 ($26) families (2 adults and up to 4 children). Combined ticket with Shaw Birthplace €12 ($16) adults, €10 ($13) seniors and students, €7.40 ($10) children. Mon–Sat 10am–5pm (until 6pm June–Aug); Sun and holidays 11am–5pm. DART: Connolly Station. Bus: 11, 13, 16, 16A, 22, or 22A.

Dublinia Kids This museum aims to teach the little ones about the medieval history of Dublin through a series of interactive exhibits. With visual effects, background sounds (some on an annoying loop seem to follow you around repeating the same phrase over and over, until you can hear it in your sleep 2 weeks later), and aromas ostensibly from that time, it's designed to stimulate, but will probably bore anybody over the age of 14. Worse, on my visit, the displays hadn't been well maintained, some were not working or were visibly missing parts, and there were no signs indicating that repairs were planned. It was disappointing. This seems to be one of those museums largely directed at kids on school field trips.

St. Michael's Hill, Christ Church, Dublin 8. ☎ **01/679-4611.** www.dublinia.ie. Admission €6 ($7.80) adults; €5 ($6.50) seniors, students, and children; €15 ($20) families. Apr–Sept daily 10am–5pm; Oct–Mar Mon–Fri 11am–4pm, Sat–Sun and holidays 10am–4:30pm. Closed Dec 23–26 and Mar 17. Bus: 50, 78A, or 123.

Hugh Lane Municipal Gallery of Modern Art ★ This little gallery has a strong collection of Impressionist works led by Degas's *Sur la Plage* and Manet's *La Musique aux Tuileries,* and also holds sculptures by Rodin, a marvelous collection of Harry Clarke stained glass, and numerous works by modern Irish artists. One room holds the complete studio of the Irish painter Francis Bacon, which the gallery purchased and moved to Dublin piece by piece from London, and then reconstructed it behind glass. Everything was moved, right down to the dust. It's an excellent, compact art museum, and a great place to spend an afternoon.

Parnell Sq. N., Dublin 1. ☎ **01/222-5550.** Fax 01/872-2182. www.hughlane.ie. Free admission to museum; Francis Bacon studio €7.50 ($10) adults, €3.50 ($4.55) seniors and students, €2.50 ($3) children. Tues–Thurs 10am–6pm; Fri–Sat 10am–5pm; Sun 11am–5pm. DART: Connolly or Tara stations. Bus: 3, 10, 11, 13, 16, or 19.

Kilmainham Gaol Historical Museum ★★★ This is a key sight for anyone interested in Ireland's struggle for independence from British rule. Within these walls, political prisoners were incarcerated, tortured, and killed from 1796 until 1924. The leaders of the 1916 Easter Uprising were executed here, along with many others. Future *Taoiseach* (prime minister) Eamon de Valera was its final prisoner. To walk along these corridors, through the grim exercise yard, or into the walled compound is a moving experience that lingers in your memory.

Kilmainham, Dublin 8. ☎ **01/453-5984.** www.heritageireland.ie. Guided tour €5.30 ($6.90) adults, €3.70 ($4.70) seniors, €2.10 ($2.60) children, €12 ($14) families. Apr–Sept daily 9:30am–4:45pm; Oct–Mar Mon–Fri 9:30am–4pm, Sun 10am–4:45pm. Bus: 51B, 78A, or 79.

National Gallery of Ireland ★ This museum houses Ireland's national art collection, as well as a collection of European art spanning the 14th to the 20th centuries. Every major European school of painting is represented, including selections by Italian Renaissance artists (especially Caravaggio's *The Taking of Christ*), French Impressionists, and Dutch 17th-century masters. The highlight of the Irish collection is the room dedicated to the mesmerizing works of Jack B. Yeats, brother of the poet W. B. Yeats. All public areas are wheelchair accessible. The museum has a shop and an excellent self-service **cafe**.

Merrion Sq. W., Dublin 2. ☎ **01/661-5133.** Fax 01/661-5372. www.nationalgallery.ie. Free admission. Mon–Sat 9:30am–5:30pm (Thurs until 8:30pm); Sun noon–5:30pm. Closed Dec 24–26 and Good Friday. Free guided tours (meet in the Shaw Room) Sat 3pm, Sun 2, 3, and 4pm. DART: Pearse. Bus: 5, 6, 7, 7A, 8, 10, 44, 47, 47B, 48A, or 62.

National Museum ★★ Established in 1890, this museum is a reflection of Ireland's heritage from 2000 B.C. to the present. It is the home of many of the country's greatest historical finds, ranging from an extensive collection of Irish Bronze Age gold and the Ardagh Chalice, Tara Brooch, and Cross of Cong. Other highlights include the artifacts from the Wood Quay excavations of the Old Dublin Settlements. The only place where it falls flat is on interactive exhibits, which are well thought out and *could* be excellent, but which have not been, on my visits, well maintained.

Kildare St. and Merrion St., Dublin 2. ✆ **01/677-7444.** Free admission. Tours (hours vary) €2 ($2.60) adults, free for seniors and children. Tues–Sat 10am–5pm; Sun 2–5pm. Closed Dec 25 and Good Friday. DART: Pearse. Bus: 7, 7A, 8, 10, 11, or 13.

St. Patrick's Cathedral ★ This is the largest church in Ireland, and one of the best-loved churches in the world. The present cathedral dates from 1190, but because of a fire and 14th-century rebuilding, not much of the original foundation remains. It is mainly early English in style, with a square medieval tower that houses the largest ringing peal bells in Ireland, with an 18th-century spire. The 90m-long (295-ft.) interior allows for sweeping perspectives of soaring vaulted ceilings and the vast nave. Consecrated by its namesake, it acts as a memorial to Irish war dead (represented in banners and flags throughout the building, some literally rotting away on their poles), and holds a memorial to the Irish soldiers who died fighting in the two world wars (although Ireland was neutral in World War II, an estimated 50,000 Irish soldiers died fighting with the British army in that war). St. Patrick's is closely associated with the writer Jonathan Swift, who was dean here from 1713 to 1745, and he is buried here alongside his longtime partner, Stella. St. Patrick's is the national cathedral of the Church of Ireland.

21–50 Patrick's Close, Patrick St., Dublin 8. ✆ **01/475-4817.** Fax 01/454-6374. www.stpatrickscathedral.ie. Admission €5 ($6.50) adults, €4 ($5.20) students and seniors, €15 ($20) families. Year-round Mon–Fri 9am–6pm; Nov–Feb Sat 9am–5pm, Sun 10–11am and 12:45–3pm; Mar–Oct Sat 9am–6pm, Sun 9–11am, 12:45–3pm, and 4:15–6pm. Closed except for services Dec 24–26. Bus: 65, 65B, 50, 50A, 54, 54A, 56A, or 77.

MORE ATTRACTIONS

Guinness Storehouse ★ Founded in 1759, the Guinness Brewery is one of the world's largest breweries, producing a distinctive dark stout, famous for its thick, creamy head. You can explore the Guinness Hopstore, a converted 19th-century four-story building housing the World of Guinness Exhibition, an audiovisual presentation showing how the stout is made; then move on to the Gilroy Gallery, dedicated to the graphic design work of John Gilroy; and last but not least, stop in at the breathtaking Gravity Bar where you can sample a glass of the famous brew in the glass-enclosed bar 60m (197 ft.) above the ground, with 360-degree views of the city.

St. James's Gate, Dublin 8. ✆ **01/408-4800.** www.guinness-storehouse.com. Admission €14 ($18) adults, €9.50 ($13) seniors and students, €5 ($6.50) children 6–12, €30 ($39) families. Daily 9:30am–5pm. Guided tours every half-hour. Bus: 51B, 78A, or 123.

Heraldic Museum/Genealogical Office This museum is an excellent resource for families trying to track down their Irish heritage. Exhibits on display include shields, banners, coins, paintings, porcelain, and stamps depicting Irish coats of arms. In-house searches by the office researcher are billed at the rate of €56 ($73) per hour.

2 Kildare St., Dublin 2. ✆ **01/603-0200.** Fax 01/676-6690. Free admission. Mon–Wed 10am–8:30pm; Thurs–Fri 10am–4:30pm; Sat 10am–12:30pm. DART: Pearse. Bus: 5, 7A, 8, 9, 10, 14, or 15.

National Photographic Archive The newest member of the Temple Bar cultural complex, this archive houses the extensive (with more than 300,000 items) photo collection of the National Library, and serves as its photo exhibition space. It's an excellent

Native Behavior: The Art of Pouring Guinness

No trip to Ireland is complete without sampling the national beverage, whether you call it Guinness or simply "the black stuff." Despite its thick-as-pitch color, don't be afraid of it; Guinness isn't a heavy beer, only 11 calories per ounce or about 150 calories per pint, about the same as domestic beer. Draft Guinness is actually lower in alcohol than Coors Light. To the Irish, it's a classic "session beer," one with low alcohol and a great taste that can be enjoyed without leaving you feeling bloated. There are plenty of hops thrown in to give it a robust taste, and the Irish will vouch for the old advertising slogan that "Guinness is good for you."

Yet the Guinness ritual doesn't begin in the drinking; it starts in the pouring. And pouring the perfect pint is, as any respectable Irish barman will tell you, an art form known as the "two-shot pour." Watch as he quickly fills the pint glass three-quarters of the way with swirling stout, and then sets the glass on the counter for about a minute and a half so that the gas can break out. It's the 75% nitrogen to 25% carbon dioxide mix that builds the famous Guinness head. Next, the barman tops up the pint, and serves it while a sepia-colored storm brews inside. Patience, patience: No sipping until the pint has settled into a distinct line between the black stout and the honey-colored head. Classically, the head should stand "proud," just slightly above the rim of the glass and quite thick and moussey. And with a "Cheers!" or *"Slainte!"* (pronounced *slahn*-chuh, Irish for "To your health!") you're finally ready to enjoy your pint.

space, and photos are rotated out regularly, so there's always something new to see. In addition to the exhibition area, there are a library and a small gift shop.

Meeting House Sq., Temple Bar, Dublin 2. ✆ **01/603-0374.** www.nli.ie. Free admission. Mon–Fri 10am–5pm; Sat 10am–2pm. DART: Tara St. Bus: 21A, 46A, 46B, 51B, 51C, 68, 69, or 86.

James Joyce Centre Near Parnell Square and the Dublin Writers Museum, the Joyce center is in a restored 1784 Georgian town house, once the home of Denis J. Maginni, a dancing instructor who appears briefly in *Ulysses.* The Ulysses Portrait Gallery on the second floor has a fascinating collection of photographs and drawings of characters from *Ulysses* who had a life outside the novel. The Paul Leon Exhibition Room holds the writing table used by Joyce in Paris when he was working on *Finnegans Wake.* There are talks and audiovisual presentations daily. Guided walking tours through the neighborhood streets of "Joyce Country" in Dublin's north inner city are offered daily.

35 N. Great George's St., Dublin 1. ✆ **01/878-8547.** www.jamesjoyce.ie. Admission €4.50 ($5.40) adults; €3.50 ($4.20) seniors, students, and children 9 and under; €13 ($16) family. Separate fees for walking tours and events. AE, MC, V. Mon–Sat 9:30am–5pm; Sun 12:30–5pm. Closed Dec 24–26. DART: Connolly. Bus: 3, 10, 11, 11A, 13, 16, 16A, 19, 19A, 22, or 22A.

The Joyce Tower Museum ★ Sitting on the edge of Dublin Bay about 10km (6¼ miles) south of the city center, this 12m (39-ft.) granite monument is one of a series of Martello towers built in 1804 to withstand an invasion threatened by Napoleon.

The tower's great claim to fame is that James Joyce lived here in 1904. He was the guest of Oliver Gogarty, who had rented the tower from the army. Joyce, in turn, made the tower the setting for the first chapter of *Ulysses,* and it has been known as Joyce's Tower ever since. Its collection of Joycean memorabilia includes letters, documents, first and rare editions, personal possessions, and photographs.

Sandycove, County Dublin. ✆ **01/280-9265.** Admission €6 ($7.20) adults; €5 ($6) seniors, students, and children; €17 ($20) family. Apr–Oct Mon–Sat 10am–1pm and 2–5pm; Sun 2–6pm. Closed Nov–Mar. DART: Sandycove. Bus: 8.

The Old Jameson Distillery This museum illustrates the history of Irish whiskey, known in Irish as *uisce beatha* (the water of life). Learn as much as you can bear from the film, whiskey-making exhibitions, and right-in-front-of-your-eyes demonstrations. At the conclusion of the tour, you can sip a little of the firewater and see what you think. A couple of lucky people on each tour are selected to be "tasters" and sample different Irish, Scotch, and American whiskeys.

Bow St., Smithfield Village, Dublin 7. ✆ **01/807-2355.** www.whiskeytours.ie. Admission €9.75 ($13) adults, €8 ($10) students and seniors, €5 ($5.20) children, €23 ($30) families. Daily 9:30am–6pm (last tour at 5pm). Closed Good Friday and Christmas holidays. Bus: 67, 67A, 68, 69, 79, or 90.

PARKS & ZOOS

Phoenix Park The vast green expanses of Phoenix Park are Dublin's playground, and it's easy to see why. This is a well-designed, user-friendly park crisscrossed by a network of roads and quiet pedestrian walkways that make its 704 hectares (1,739 acres) easily accessible. It's a gorgeous place to spend a restful afternoon, but there's plenty to do here should you feel active. The homes of the Irish president and the U.S. ambassador are both in the park. Livestock graze peacefully on pasturelands, deer roam the forested areas, and horses romp on polo fields. The Phoenix Park Visitors Centre has background information on the park's history, for the particularly curious. The cafe/restaurant is open 10am to 5pm weekdays, 10am to 6pm weekends. Free car parking is adjacent to the center. The park is 3km (2 miles) west of the city center on the north bank of the River Liffey.

The **Dublin Zoo** (✆ **01/677-1425;** www.dublinzoo.ie), also located in the park, provides a naturally landscaped habitat for more than 235 species of wild animals and tropical birds. Highlights for youngsters include the Children's Pets' Corner and a train ride around the zoo. There are playgrounds interspersed throughout the zoo, as well as several restaurants, coffee shops, and gift shops.

Phoenix Park, Dublin 8. ✆ **01/677-0095.** www.heritageireland.ie. Visitors Centre admission €2.75 ($3.60) adults, €2 ($2.60) seniors and students, €1.25 ($1.65) children, €7 ($9) families. Zoo: ✆ **1800/924-848.** www.dublinzoo.ie. Admission €14 ($17) adults, €11 ($14) seniors, €12 ($15) students, €9 ($11) children 3–16, free for children under 3, €40–€49 ($52–$64) families, depending on number of children. Summer Mon–Sat 9:30am–6pm, Sun 10:30am–6pm; winter Mon–Sat 9:30am–dusk, Sun 10:30am–dusk. Bus: 10, 25, or 26.

ORGANIZED TOURS

BUS TOURS The city bus company, **Dublin Bus** (✆ **01/873-4222;** www.dublinbus.ie), operates several tours of Dublin, all of which depart from the Dublin Bus office at 59 Upper O'Connell St., Dublin 1. You can buy your ticket from the bus driver or book in advance at the Dublin Bus office or at the Dublin Tourism ticket desk on Suffolk Street. The following are the best options:

The 75-minute guided **Dublin City Tour** operates on a hop-on, hop-off basis, connecting 10 major points of interest, including museums, art galleries, churches and cathedrals, libraries, and historic sites. Rates are €14 ($18) for adults, €13 ($16) seniors and students, €6 ($7.80) for children under 16. Tours operate daily from 9:30am to 6:30pm.

The 2¼-hour **Dublin Ghost Bus** is a spooky evening tour run by Dublin Bus, departing Monday to Thursday at 8pm, Friday at 8 and 8:30pm, and Saturday and Sunday at 7 and 9:30pm. The tour addresses Dublin's history of felons, fiends, and phantoms. You'll see haunted houses, learn of Dracula's Dublin origins, and even get a crash course in body snatching. It's properly scary, though, and not recommended for children who do not have "teen" in their age. Fares are €25 ($32) for adults only (not recommended for those under age 14).

The 3-hour **Coast and Castle Tour** departs daily at 10am and 2pm traveling up the north coast to Malahide and Howth. Fares are €22 ($28) for adults, €12 ($15) for children under 14. Visiting Malahide Castle will require an additional charge.

The 3¾-hour **South Coast Tour** departs daily at 11am and 2pm, traveling south through the seaside town of Dún Laoghaire, through the upscale "Irish Riviera" villages of Dalkey and Killiney, and farther south to visit the vast Powerscourt Estate. Fares are €25 ($32) for adults, €12 ($15) for children under 14.

Gray Line (✆ **01/605-7705;** www.guidefriday.com) operates its own hop-on, hop-off city tour, covering all the same major sights as the Dublin Bus's Dublin City Tour. The first tours leave at 10am from 14 Upper O'Connell St., and run every 10 to 15 minutes thereafter. The last departures are at 4:30pm. You can also join the tour at any of a number of pickup points along the route and buy your ticket from the driver. Gray Line's Dublin city tour costs €16 ($21) for adults, €13 ($17) for seniors and students, €7 ($9) for children, €38 ($49) families.

Gray Line also offers a range of full-day excursions from Dublin to such nearby sights as Glendalough, Newgrange, and Powerscourt. Adult fares for their other tours range from €20 to €40 ($26–$52).

WALKING TOURS You can set out on your own with a map, but the best way to avoid any hassles or missed sights is to follow one of the four signposted and themed **"tourist trails":** Old City Trail for historic sights; Georgian Trail for the landmark buildings, streets, squares, terraces, and parks; a "Rock 'n Stroll Guide" for a walking tour with a music theme; and Cultural Heritage Trail for a circuit of the top literary sites, museums, galleries, theaters, and churches. Each trail is mapped out with commentary in a handy booklet available at the tourist office or as a free printable guide from Dublin Tourism's website (www.visitdublin.com).

A number of firms offer guided tours led by knowledgeable locals. Tour times and charges vary, but many last about 2 hours and cost between €9 ($11) and €10 ($12). A complete listing of walking tours is available from Dublin Tourism, but here are some of the best.

Historical Walking Tours of Dublin (✆ **01/878-0227;** www.historicalinsights.ie; €12/$15) delivers your best introductory walk, an award-winning 2-hour primer on Dublin's historic landmarks, from medieval walls and Viking remains around Wood Quay to Christ Church, Dublin Castle, City Hall, and Trinity College. Guides are history graduates of Trinity College, and participants are encouraged to ask questions.

If you prefer an evening tour, there's the **Literary Pub Crawl** (✆ **01/670-5602;** www.dublinpubcrawl.com; €12/$15), a winner of the "Living Dublin Award." The tour follows in the footsteps of Joyce, Behan, Beckett, Shaw, Kavanagh, and other Irish literary greats to local pubs, with actors providing humorous performances and commentary between stops. Throughout the night, there is a Literary Quiz with prizes for the winners.

Zosimus Ghostly Experience (☎ **01/661-8646;** €10/$13) is the latest rage on the walking-tour circuit. Its creators describe it as a "cocktail mix" of ghosts, murderous tales, horror stories, humor, circus, history, street theater, and whatever's left, all set in medieval Dublin. Your storyteller is the blind and aging Zosimus, and you help guide him down the austere alleyways. It's essential to book this tour in advance, when you'll receive the where (gate of Dublin Castle, opposite the Olympia Theatre) and the when (7pm in winter, 9pm in summer). The experience lasts approximately 1½ hours.

HORSE-DRAWN CARRIAGE TOURS If you don't mind being conspicuous, you can tour Dublin in style in a handsomely outfitted horse-drawn carriage while your driver points out the sights. To arrange a ride, consult with one of the drivers stationed with carriages on the Grafton Street side of St. Stephen's Green. Rides range from a short swing around the Green to an extensive half-hour Georgian tour or an hour-long Old City tour. Rides are available on a first-come, first-served basis from April to October (weather permitting) and cost anywhere from €18 to €60 ($22–$72) for one to four passengers, depending on the duration of the ride.

LAND & WATER TOURS The immensely popular **Viking Splash Tour** (☎ **01/707-6000;** www.vikingsplashtours.ie) brings you aboard a reconditioned World War II amphibious landing craft, or "duck." The tour begins on land (from Bull Alley St. beside St. Patrick's Cathedral) and eventually splashes into the Grand Canal. Passengers wear horned Viking helmets (a reference to the original settlers of the Dublin area) and are encouraged to issue war cries at appropriate moments. Tours last 75 minutes and depart roughly every half-hour Monday through Saturday from 10am to 5pm and Sunday from 11am to 6:30pm. It costs €20 ($26) for adults, €10 ($13) for children 11 and under, and €60 ($78) for a family of five.

THE SHOPPING SCENE

In recent years, Dublin has surprised everyone by becoming a good shopping town. You'll find few bargains, but for your money you will get excellent craftsmanship in the form of hand-woven wool blankets and clothes in a vivid array of colors, Belleek china and Waterford crystal, and chic clothes from the seemingly limitless line of Dublin designers.

While the hub of mainstream shopping south of the Liffey is **Grafton Street,** crowned by the city's most fashionable department store, Brown Thomas (known as BT), and the jeweler Weirs, there's much better shopping on the smaller streets radiating out from Grafton, like **Duke, Dawson, Nassau,** and **Wicklow.** On these streets proliferate the smaller, interesting shops that specialize in books, handicrafts, jewelry, gifts, and clothing. For clothes, look out for tiny **Cow Lane,** off Lord Edward Street—it is popular with those in the know for its excellent clothing boutiques selling the works of local designers.

Generally, Dublin shops are open from 9am to 6pm Monday to Saturday, and Thursday until 9pm. Many of the larger shops have Sunday hours from noon to 6pm.

Major department stores include, on the Northside, **Arnotts,** 12 Henry St., Dublin 1 (☎ **01/805-0400**), and the marvelously traditional **Clerys,** Lower O'Connell Street, Dublin 1 (☎ **01/878-6000**); and, on the south side, **Brown Thomas,** 15–20 Grafton St., Dublin 2 (☎ **01/605-6666**).

Dublin also has several clusters of shops in **multistory malls** or ground-level **arcades,** ideal for indoor shopping on rainy days. On the south side, there's the **Royal Hibernian Way,** 49–50 Dawson St., Dublin 2; **St. Stephen's Green Centre,** at the top of Grafton Street, Dublin 2; and the aforementioned **Powerscourt Townhouse,** 59 William St. South, Dublin 2

BOOKS This city of literary legends has quite a few good bookstores. For fine new and used books, including first editions of works by famous Irish authors, try **Hodges Figgis,** 57 Dawson St., Dublin 2 (✆ **01/677-4754**); more affordable used books can be found at **Greene's Bookshop,** 16 Clare St., Dublin 2 (✆ **01/676-2554**).

CHINA & CRYSTAL If you're specifically looking for Waterford Crystal, don't bother shopping around because it has fixed pricing. You'll find the best selections at **Brown Thomas** (Grafton St., Dublin 2), **Weirs** (Grafton St., Dublin 2), and **House of Ireland** (Nassau St., Dublin 2). If brand names aren't important, check out other native crystal makers, including Galway, Tipperary, Cavan, and Tyrone. Don't forget to get your cash-back forms if you want to reclaim the VAT.

CRAFTS & GIFTS A fairyland of color fills **Avoca Handweavers** (11-13 Suffolk St., Dublin 2), which is filled with soft, intricately woven fabrics, blankets, throws, light woolen sweaters, children's clothes, and toys, all in a delightful shopping environment spread over three floors near Trinity College. The top-floor **cafe** is a great place for lunch. In a restored 18th-century townhouse, **Powerscourt Townhouse Centre** (59 S. William St., Dublin 2) has 60 boutiques, as well as craft shops, art galleries, snack bars, wine bars, and restaurants. If you're serious about taking home quality, contemporary crafts, **Whichcraft** (4 Cows Lane, Dublin 2) is an essential stop for the best contemporary art from around Ireland.

FASHION **Alias Tom,** Duke House, Duke Street (✆ **01/671-5443**), is Dublin's best small, men's designer shop. The emphasis is on Italian (Gucci, Prada, Armani) labels, but chic designers from the rest of Europe and America are also represented. **Claire Garvey,** 6 Cow's Lane (✆ **01/671-7287**), is a Dublin native with a talent for creating romantic, dramatic, and feminine clothing with Celtic flair. A favorite designer of Irish divas Enya and Sinead O'Connor, Garvey transforms hand-dyed velvet and silk into sumptuous garments that beg to be worn on special occasions. Her one-of-a-kind bijou handbags are a white-hot fashion accessory. **Design Centre,** Powerscourt Townhouse (✆ **01/679-4144**), is the city's best one-stop shop for finding apparel from Ireland's hottest contemporary designers—including Louise Kennedy, Mary Gregory, Karen Millen, Mary Grant, and Sharon Hoey. Prices are generally high, but good bargains can be had during sale seasons and on the seconds rack.

KNITWEAR **Avoca**, mentioned above, is an excellent option for delicate knits, while **Blarney Woollen Mills,** 21–23 Nassau St. (✆ **01/671-0068**), is known for its competitive prices, and stocks a wide range of woolen knitwear made at its home base in Blarney, as well as crystal, china, pottery, and souvenirs. **Dublin Woollen Mills,** 41 Lower Ormond Quay (✆ **01/677-0301**), is on the north side of the River Liffey next to the Ha'penny Bridge, a leading source of Aran hand-knit sweaters as well as vests, hats, jackets, and tweeds. For cashmere, go to **Monaghan's,** 15–17 Grafton Arcade, Grafton Street (✆ **01/677-0823**), which has the best selection of colors, sizes, and styles for both men and women anywhere in Ireland. It's also located at 4–5 Royal Hibernian Way, off Dawson Street (✆ **01/679-4451**).

DUBLIN AFTER DARK

Nightlife in Dublin is a mixed bag of traditional old pubs, where the likes of Joyce and Behan once imbibed and where traditional Irish music is often reeling away, and cool modern bars, where the repetitive rhythms of techno now fill the air and the crowd knows more about Prada than the Pogues. There's little in the way of crossover, although there are a couple of quieter bars and a few with a rock music angle, so you take your pick. Aside from the eternal elderly pubs, things change rapidly on the nightlife scene, so pick up a copy of *In Dublin* and the *Event Guide* at local cafes and shops if you're looking for the latest club scene. Both have good listings.

The award-winning website of the ***Irish Times*** (**www.ireland.com**) offers a "what's on" daily guide to cinema, theater, music, and whatever else you're up for. The **Dublin Events Guide,** at www.dublinevents.com, also provides a comprehensive listing of the week's entertainment possibilities.

Advance bookings for most large concerts, plays, and so forth can be made through **Ticketmaster Ireland** (✆ **01/677-9409;** www.ticketmaster.ie), with ticket centers in most HMV stores, as well as at the Dublin Tourism Centre, Suffolk Street, Dublin 2.

THE PERFORMING ARTS

Concert & Performance Halls

National Concert Hall, Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin 2 (✆ **01/475-1572;** www.nch.ie), is home to the National Symphony Orchestra and Concert Orchestra, and is host to an array of international orchestras and performing artists. In addition to classical music, there are evenings of Gilbert and Sullivan, opera, jazz, and recitals. The box office is open Monday through Saturday from 10am to 3pm and from 6pm to the concert's close. Tickets are €10 to €32 ($12–$38). Lunchtime concerts are €5 ($6).

For more than 90 years, the **Abbey Theatre,** Lower Abbey Street, Dublin 1 (✆ **01/878-7222;** www.abbeytheatre.ie), has been the national theater of Ireland. The Abbey's artistic reputation within Ireland has risen and fallen many times and is at

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Traditional Irish Entertainment

Culturlann Na hEireann, 32 Belgrave Sq., Monkstown (✆ **01/280-0295;** www.comhaltas.com), is the home of Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann, an Irish cultural organization that has been the prime mover in encouraging the renewal of Irish traditional music. An authentic fully costumed show featuring traditional music, song, and dance is staged mid-June through early September, Monday through Thursday at 9pm. No reservations are necessary. Year-round, ceili dances are performed Friday from 9pm to midnight; informal music sessions are held Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday at 9pm. Tickets for ceilis are €6 to €10 ($7–$14); informal music sessions €2.50 ($3.50) from Friday to Saturday, free Wednesday; stage shows €20 ($28).

Jury's Irish Cabaret, Pembroke Road, Ballsbridge (✆ **01/660-5000**), Ireland's longest-running show (over 30 years), offers a mix of traditional Irish music and Broadway classics, set dancing, humorous monologues, and audience participation. Shows take place May through October, Tuesday through Sunday, with dinner at 7:15pm and the show at 8pm. Dinner and show are €52 ($62); show with two drinks €37 ($44).

present reasonably strong. The box office is open Monday through Saturday from 10:30am to 7pm; performances begin at 8 or 8:15pm. Tickets are €15 to €26 ($18–$31).

The **Andrews Lane Theatre,** 12–16 Andrews Lane, Dublin 2 (✆ **01/679-5720**), has a growing reputation for fine theater. It consists of a main theater where contemporary works from home and abroad are presented, and a studio geared for experimental productions. The box office is open Monday through Saturday from 10:30am to 7pm. Tickets are €13 to €20 ($16–$24).

With a seating capacity of 3,000, **The Point Depot,** East Link Bridge, North Wall Quay (✆ **01/836-3633**), is one of Dublin's larger indoor theater/concert venues, attracting top Broadway-caliber shows and international stars such as Neil Young and Justin Timberlake. The box office is open Monday through Saturday from 10am to 6pm. Tickets are €13 to €65 ($16–$78).

THE PUB SCENE

Pubs for Conversation & Atmosphere

The brass-filled and lantern-lit **Brazen Head,** 20 Lower Bridge St. (✆ **01/679-5186**), has atmosphere in spades. It's a tad touristy, which isn't surprising when you consider that it's the city's oldest pub—licensed in 1661 and occupying the site of an earlier tavern dating from 1198. On the south bank of the River Liffey, it's at the end of a cobblestone courtyard and was once the meeting place of Irish freedom fighters such as Robert Emmet and Wolfe Tone.

Try for one of the comfy booths in the back of the **Mercantile,** Dame Street (✆ **01/679-0522**), an ultratrendy watering hole that draws a mixed crowd of locals and in-the-know out-of-towners. Despite being very big, it's always buzzing and tends to get overjammed on weekends, so midweek nights are the best. U2 members The Edge and Larry Mullen are regulars. Converted from an old merchant's warehouse, the **River Club,** in the Ha'penny Theatre, 48 Wellington Quay (✆ **01/677-2382**), is a wine bar–cum–supper club with soaring ceilings, an enviable position overlooking the river, and contemporary furnishings for an overall feeling of easygoing sophistication. It's a favorite of Ireland's film glitterati for a late drink, so don't be surprised to spy author-screenwriter Roddy Doyle, actor Pierce Brosnan, or director Jim Sheridan.

Referred to as a "moral pub" by James Joyce in *Ulysses,* **Davy Byrnes,** 21 Duke St., just off Grafton Street (✆ **01/677-5217**), has drawn poets, writers, and lovers of literature ever since. Davy Byrnes first opened the doors in 1873; he presided here for more than 50 years and visitors today can still see his likeness on one of the turn-of-the-20th-century murals hanging over the bar.

Flannery's Temple Bar, 47–48 Temple Bar (✆ **01/497-4766**), in the heart of the trendy Temple Bar district on the corner of Temple Lane, was established in 1840. The decor is an interesting mix of crackling fireplaces, globe ceiling lights, old pictures on the walls, and shelves filled with local memorabilia. Tucked into a busy commercial street, **The Long Hall,** 51 S. Great George's St. (✆ **01/475-1590**), is one of the city's most photographed pubs, with a beautiful Victorian decor of filigree-edged mirrors, polished dark woods, and traditional snugs (cozy little partitioned areas once reserved for women). The hand-carved bar is said to be the longest counter in the city.

Adjacent to the back door of the Gaiety Theatre, **Neary's,** 1 Chatham St., Dublin 2 (✆ **01/677-7371**), is a favorite with stage folk and theatergoers. Three generations of the Ryan family have contributed to the success of **J. W. Ryan,** 28 Parkgate St. (✆ **01/677-6097**), on the north side of the Liffey near Phoenix Park. The pub is a

Victorian gem featuring a pressed tin ceiling and domed skylight, etched glass, brass lamp holders, a mahogany bar, and four old-style snugs.

Pubs with Traditional & Folk Music

Tucked between St. Stephen's Green and Merrion Street, **O'Donoghue's,** 15 Merrion Row, Dublin 2 (✆ **01/660-7194**), is a much-touristed, smoke-filled kingpin of traditional music pubs, and impromptu music sessions happen almost every night. In the heart of Temple Bar and named for one of Ireland's literary greats, **Oliver St. John Gogarty,** 57–58 Fleet St. (✆ **01/671-1822**), has an inviting old-world atmosphere, with shelves of empty bottles, stacks of dusty books, a horseshoe-shaped bar, and old barrels for seats. There are traditional music sessions every night from 9 to 11pm. A Saturday session is at 4:30pm, and a Sunday session from noon to 2pm.

THE CLUB & MUSIC SCENE

The club and music scene in Dublin is confoundingly complex and changeable. Jazz, blues, folk, country, traditional, rock, and comedy move from venue to venue, night by night. The first rule is to get the very latest listings and see what's on and where (see the introduction to "Dublin After Dark," above, for suggested resources).

Dozens of clubs and pubs all over town feature rock, folk, jazz, and traditional Irish music. This includes the so-called "late-night pubs"—pubs with an exemption allowing them to remain open past the usual closing time, mandated by law (11pm in winter, 11:30pm in summer). Check *In Dublin* magazine or *The Event Guide* for club schedules. One of the most popular rock clubs is **Whelan's,** 25 Wexford St., Dublin 2 (✆ **01/478-0766**); the second-oldest pub in Dublin, **Bleeding Horse,** 24–25 Camden St., Dublin 2 (✆ **01/475-2705**).

Dance clubs include **Lillie's Bordello** (Adam Court, Dublin 2), with its well-deserved reputation for posers and boy-band celebrities, and a callous door policy. More friendly is **Rí-Rá** (Dame Court, Dublin 2), which is both trendy and laid back. **Spy Club** (Powerscourt Townhouse Centre, Dublin 2) is popular with fashionable 30-somethings who like the fact that the emphasis here is off dance and firmly on socializing. **Voodoo Lounge** (38 Arran Quay, Dublin 7) is out of the way on the Northside of town, but deeply cool, and partly owned by New York's Fun Lovin' Criminals. It prefers R&B and hip-hop over traditional dance beats.

The city's largest gay bar is the **George,** 89 S. Great George's St., Dublin 2 (✆ **01/478-2983**), a two-story venue where both the decor and the clientele tend toward camp. It's open daily from 12:30pm to 2:30am; check listings magazines for theme nights, which start around 10pm.

2 Kerry & the Dingle Peninsula

With its softly rolling green fields, long, sweeping seascapes, and vibrant little towns, it's easy to see why so many tourists make a beeline for County Kerry, and more of them do so every year. Tourism figures for the county have jumped from fewer than 800,000 visitors per year a decade ago to nearly two million each year. Given that only 126,000 people live in the county, you can see how this could be problematic.

The influx has been great for Kerry businesses, but it has also turned the county into a strange hybrid place, where spectacular rural scenery coexists uncomfortably with crass tourism. In July and August, tour buses struggle to share narrow mountain roads with local traffic, and at the best vantage points, the view is often blocked by two or three of the behemoths. Given that, it's easy to feel like the whole place is on the verge of being overrun. Luckily, it's still easy to escape the crowds. If you're driving along the congested Ring of Kerry and the crowds are getting to you, simply turn off onto a small country lane and you'll find yourself virtually alone and in the peaceful Irish wilderness within seconds.

GETTING TO COUNTY KERRY **By Train** **Irish Rail** (✆ **01/836-6222;** www.irishrail.ie) operates daily train service from Dublin, Limerick, Cork, and Galway to the **Killarney Railway Station** (✆ **064/31067**) on Railway Road, off East Avenue Road.

By Bus **Bus Eireann** (✆ **01/836-6111;** www.buseireann.ie) operates daily express coach and local bus services to Killarney from Dublin and other parts of Ireland. The bus depot (✆ **064/34777**) is adjacent to the train station at Railway Road, off East Avenue Road. Once you're there, there's also limited daily service from Killarney to Caherciveen, Waterville, Kenmare, and other towns on the Ring of Kerry. Some private, Killarney-based companies offer daily sightseeing tours of the Ring of Kerry by bus.

By Car Roads leading into Kerry include N6 from Dublin, N21 and N23 from Limerick, and N22 from Cork. The best way to do the Ring of Kerry (comprising the N70 and N71) is by car.

KILLARNEY TOWN

Perhaps the busiest tourist hub in rural Ireland, Killarney's sidewalks are spacious enough in the winter, but in the summertime, they're packed, as the streets become one giant tour-bus traffic jam and horse-and-buggy drivers risk life and limb to push their way through. The locals are well practiced at dispensing a professional brand of Irish charm, even as they hike up the hotel and restaurant prices to capitalize on the hordes descending from the buses. It all feels a bit cynical, with a few too many cheesy leprechaun-heavy gift shops for its own good. It's a bit much for some people, but luckily, it's easy enough to resist Killarney's gravitational pull and spend your time exploring the quieter countryside around it. You can always sneak into town from time to time for dinner or a night out in the pub with lots of people from your home nation.

In truth, Killarney's popularity has nothing to do with the town itself; the attraction is the valley in which it nestles—a verdant landscape of lakes and mountains. Exploring its glories is certainly easy—just walk (or drive) from the town parking lot toward the cathedral and turn left. In a matter of minutes, you'll forget all that Killarney stress amid the quiet rural splendor of the 65-sq.-km (25-sq.-mile) **Killarney National Park.** Here the ground is a soft carpet of moss and the air fragrant with wildflowers.

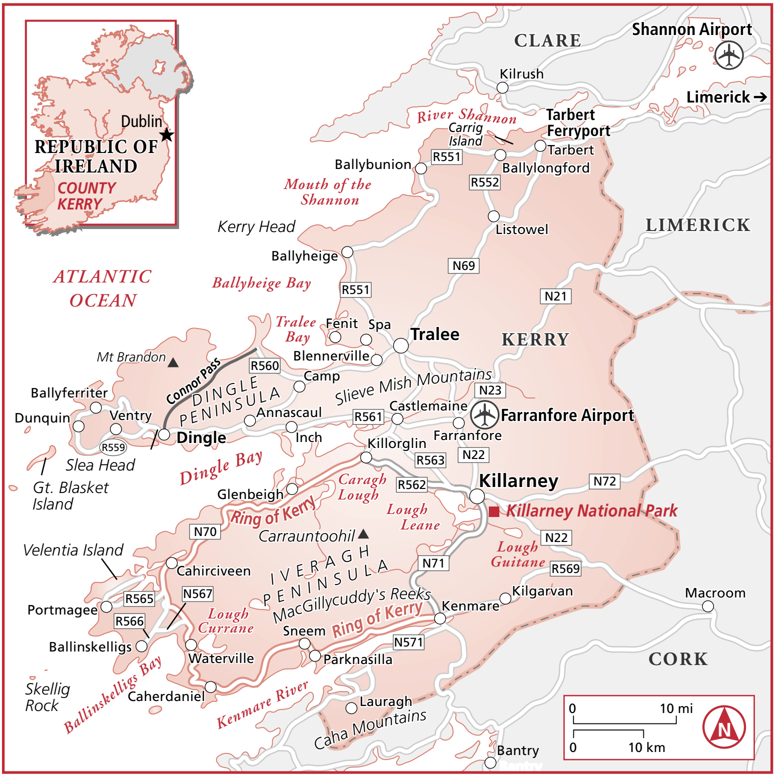
ESSENTIALS

VISITOR INFORMATION The **Killarney Tourist Office,** Aras Fáilte, is at the town center on Beech Road (✆ **064/31633**). It's open October to May, Monday to Saturday 9:15am to 5:15pm; June and September daily 9am to 6pm; July to August daily 9am to 8pm. During low season, the office occasionally closes for lunch from 1 to 2pm. It offers many helpful booklets, including the *Tourist Trail* walking-tour guide and the *Killarney Area Guide,* with maps.

Useful local publications include ***Where: Killarney,*** a quarterly magazine distributed free at hotels and guesthouses. It is packed with current information on tours, activities, events, and entertainment.

GETTING AROUND Killarney Town is so small and compact that there is no local bus service; the best way to get around is on foot. For a quick and easy tour,

County Kerry


Dublin
REPUBLIC OF IRELAND
COUNTY KERRY
CLARE
Shannon Airport
Kilrush
Limerick →
River Shannon
Carrig Island
Tarbert Ferryport
Tarbert
R551
Ballybunion
Ballylongford
R552
Mouth of the Shannon
Kerry Head
Listowel
LIMERICK
ATLANTIC OCEAN
Ballyheige
Ballyheige Bay
R551
N69
N21
Tralee Bay
Fenit
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KERRY
Mt Brandon
R560
Blennerville
Connor Pass
DINGLE PENINSULA
Camp
Slieve Mish Mountains
N23
Ballyferriter
Castlemaine
Farranfore Airport
Dunquin
Ventry
Annascaul
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Farranfore
Dingle
Inch
R559
Killorglin
N22
Slea Head
R563
Gt. Blasket Island
Dingle Bay
Caragh Lough
R562
Killarney
N72
Glenbeigh
Killarney National Park
Ring of Kerry
Lough Leane
Carrauntoohil
N70
N22
Velentia Island
Lough Guitane
N71
R569
Cahirciveen
IVERAGH PENINSULA
Kilgarvan
Macroom
Portmagee
R565
N567
MacGillycuddy's Reeks
Kenmare
R566
Lough Currane
Sneem
Ring of Kerry
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follow the signposted "Tourist Trail" for the highlights of the main streets. It takes less than 2 hours to complete. A booklet outlining the sights along the trail is available at the tourist office.

Taxi cabs line up at the rank on **College Square** (✆ **064/31331**). You can also phone for a taxi from **Killarney Taxi** (✆ **064/30444**), **Dero's Taxi Service** (✆ **064/31251**), or **O'Connell Taxi** (✆ **064/31654**).

There are a couple of large public parking lots near the town center, where parking costs €1 ($1.45) per hour. It's a good idea to leave your car in one of these unless you're heading out to Killarney National Park on the Muckross and Kenmare road (N71).

If you need to rent a car in Killarney, contact **Avis,** the Glebe Arcade (✆ **064/35544;** www.avis.ie); **Budget,** c/o International Hotel, Kenmare Place (✆ **064/34341;** www.budget.ie); **Hertz,** 28 Plunkett St. (✆ **064/34126;** www.hertz.ie); or **Randles Bros.,** Muckross Road (✆ **064/31237**).

Horse-drawn **buggies,** called "jarveys," line up at Kenmare Place in Killarney Town. They offer rides to Killarney National Park sites and other scenic areas. Depending on the time and distance, prices range from €16 to €40 ($21–$52) per ride (up to four persons).

KILLARNEY NATIONAL PARK ★★★

This is Killarney's centerpiece: a 10,000-hectare (25,000-acre) area of natural beauty. The park's three misty lakes are Killarney's main attraction. The first, the Lower Lake, is sometimes called "Lough Leane" or "Lough Lein," which means "the lake of learning." It's the largest, more than 6.5km (4 miles) long, and is dotted with 30 small islands. The second lake is aptly called the "Middle Lake" or "Muckross Lake," and the third "Upper Lake." Upper Lake, the smallest, is full of storybook islands covered with leafy trees.

The park also contains a large variety of wildlife, including a rare herd of red deer. You can't drive through the park (parking lots are available, however, if you want to drive *to* it), so touring is best done by foot, bicycle, or horse-drawn jaunting car. The park offers four signposted walking and nature trails along the lakeshore.

Access to the park is available from several points along the Kenmare road (N71), with the main entrance being at Muckross House. Admission is free, and the park is open year-round during daylight hours.

VIEWS & VISTAS The journey through the **Gap of Dunloe** ★★ is gorgeous. The winding and rocky mountain pass sits amid rocky mountains and cool lakes about 10km (6¼ miles) west of Killarney. The route through the gap passes a kaleidoscope of sharp cliffs, meandering streams, and deep valleys. The route through the gap ends at Upper Lake. Horse fanciers may want to take one of the excursions offered by **Castlelough Tours,** 7 High St. (✆ **064/31115**); **Corcoran's Tours,** Kilcummin (✆ **064/36666**); **Dero's Tours,** 22 Main St. (✆ **064/31251** or 064/31567); or **Tangney Tours,** Kinvara House, Muckross Road (✆ **064/33358**).

Aghadoe Heights ★, on the Tralee Road (off N22), is a spectacular viewing point over the lakes and town. To your left is the ruin of the 13th-century Castle of Parkavonear, erected by Norman invaders and well worth a visit. In the nearby churchyard are the remains of a stone church and round tower dating from 1027.

MORE ATTRACTIONS

Muckross House and Gardens ★★

This estate is the focal point of the Middle Lake and, in many ways, of the entire national park. It's often called "the jewel of Killarney." The property consists of a gracious ivy-covered Victorian mansion and its elegant surrounding gardens. Dating from 1843, the 20-room Muckross House has been converted into a museum of County Kerry folk life, showcasing locally carved furniture, prints, maps, paintings, and needlework.

The ruin of the 15th-century **Muckross Abbey,** founded about 1448 and burned by Cromwell's troops in 1652, is also near the house. The abbey's central feature is a vaulted cloister around a courtyard that contains a huge yew tree, said to be as old as the abbey itself. A combination ticket includes Muckross Traditional Farms (see below).

Kenmare Rd. (N71), Killarney, County Kerry. ✆ **064/31440.** www.muckross-house.ie. Admission €5.75 ($6.90) adults, €4.50 ($5.40) seniors, €2.35 ($2.80) students and children, €15 ($17) family. July–Aug daily 9am–6pm; Nov–June and Sept–Oct daily 9am–5:30pm. Combination ticket with Muckross Farms €8.65 ($10) adults, €6.50 ($7.80) seniors, €3.90 ($4.70) students and children, €22 ($26) family.

Muckross Traditional Farms ★ Kids

Located just across from Muckross House, this 28-hectare (69-acre) park is home to displays of traditional farm life and artisans' shops so authentically detailed that visitors feel they are dropping in on working farms and lived-in houses. It's a fascinating place, especially for families with children. You'll be able to watch sowing and harvesting or potato picking and hay making, depending on the season. Farmhands work in the fields and tend the animals, while the blacksmith, carpenter, and wheelwright ply their trades in the old manner.

Kenmare Rd. (N71), Killarney, County Kerry. ✆ **064/31440.** www.muckross-house.ie. Admission €5.75 ($6.90) adults, €4.50 ($5.40) seniors, €2.35 ($2.80) students and children, €15 ($17) family. Mar–Apr and Oct Sat–Sun 1–6pm; May daily 1–6pm; June–Sept daily 10am–6pm. Closed Nov– Feb. Combination ticket with Muckross House €8.65 ($10) adults, €6.50 ($7.80) seniors, €3.90 ($4.70) students and children, €22 ($26) family.

Ross Castle This 15th-century restored fortress sits on the edge of the Lower Lake, 3km (1¾ miles) outside Killarney Town. Built by the O'Donoghue chieftains, this castle distinguished itself in 1652 as the last stronghold in Munster to surrender to Cromwell's forces. All that remains today is a tower house, surrounded by a fortified bawn (enclosure) with rounded turrets. The tower has been furnished in the style of the late 16th and early 17th centuries and offers a magnificent view of the lakes and islands from its top. Access is by guided tour only. A lovely lakeshore walk stretches for 1.6km (1 mile) between Killarney and the castle. Lake cruises are run from the castle (see "Boat Tours," below), including boats to **Innisfallen Island,** which has the ruins of a 7th-century monastery and a 12th-century oratory.

Ross Rd., off Kenmare Rd. (N71), Killarney, County Kerry. ✆ **064/35851.** Admission €6 ($7.20) adults, €4 ($4.80) seniors, €2 ($2.40) students and children, €11 ($13) family. Apr daily 10am–5pm; May and Sept daily 10am–6pm; June–Aug daily 9am–6:30pm; Oct Tues–Sun 10am–5pm. Last admission 45 min. before closing. Closed Nov–Mar.

SIGHTSEEING TOURS

BUS TOURS **Dero's Tours,** 7 Main St., Killarney (✆ **064/31251** or 064/31567; www.derostours.com), offers a 3-hour tour showing off Killarney's lakes from the best vantage points, including Aghadoe, the Gap of Dunloe, Ross Castle, Muckross House and Gardens, and Torc Waterfall. The tour is offered May through September daily at 10:30am, but schedules vary, so check in advance. It costs €25 ($32).

Castlelough Tours, 7 High St., Killarney (✆ **064/31115;** www.castlelough-tours.com), offers a tour through the spectacularly scenic Gap of Dunloe that includes a boat tour of the Killarney lakes for €18 ($22). It's offered May through September; call for current hours and bookings.

In addition to Killarney's main sights, some bus tours also venture into the two prime scenic areas nearby: the Ring of Kerry and Dingle Peninsula. From May to September, tours are offered daily; prices average €18 to €23 ($22–$30) per person. Check the following companies if that's the kind of tour for you: **Bus Eireann,** Bus Depot, Railway Road, off East Avenue Road (✆ **064/34777;** www.buseireann.ie); **Castlelough Tours,** 7 High St. (✆ **064/31115**); **Corcoran's Tours,** 10 College St. (✆ **064/36666;** www.corcorantours.com).

JAUNTING-CAR TOURS If you prefer walking or bicycling, just say no to the numerous jaunting-car drivers who will inevitably offer their services as you make your way around the Killarney lakes. These quaint horse-driven buggies are one of the main features of the landscape here, and if at some point you decide to give one a try, keep in mind that jaunting-car rates are set and carefully monitored by the Killarney Urban District Council. Current rates, all based on four persons to a jaunting car, run roughly from €20 ($26) per person, depending on destinations that may include Ross Castle, Muckross House and Gardens, Torc Waterfall, Muckross Abbey, Dinis Island, and Kate Kearney's Cottage, gateway to the Gap of Dunloe. To arrange a tour in advance, contact Kinvara House, Muckross Road, Killarney (✆ **064/33358**).

BOAT TOURS There is nothing quite like seeing the sights from a boat on the Lakes of Killarney. Two companies operate regular boating excursions, with full commentary. **MV *Pride of the Lakes* Tours,** Scotts Gardens, Killarney (✆ **064/32638**), sails daily in an enclosed boat from the pier at Ross Castle from April to October at 11am, 12:30pm, 2:30pm, 4pm, and 5:15pm. The trip lasts just over an hour, and reservations are suggested. The cost is €8 ($9.60) adults, €4 ($4.80) children. **MV *Lily of Killarney* Tours,** 3 High St., Killarney (✆ **064/31068**), sails from April to October at 10:30am, noon, 1:45pm, 3:15pm, and 4:30pm for €8 ($9.60) adults, €4 ($4.80) children, €20 ($24) family.

ENJOYING THE GREAT OUTDOORS

BICYCLING **Killarney National Park,** with its many lakeside and forest pathways, trails, and byways, is a paradise for bikers. Various vehicles are available for rent, from 21-speed touring bikes and mountain bikes to tandems. Rental charges average €15 ($18) per day, €70 ($84) per week. Bicycles can be rented from **David O'Sullivan's Cycles,** Bishop Lane, New Street (✆ **064/31282**). Most shops are open year-round daily 9am to 6pm, until 8 or 9pm in the summer.

FISHING Fishing for salmon and brown trout in Killarney's unpolluted lakes and rivers is a big attraction. Brown trout fishing is free on the lakes, but a permit is necessary for the rivers Flesk and Laune. A trout permit costs €6 to €14 ($7.20–$17) per day.

Salmon fishing anywhere in Ireland requires a license; the cost is €10 ($12) per day, €20 ($24) for 21 days. In addition, some rivers also require a salmon permit, which costs €10 to €14 ($12–$17) per day. Permits and licenses can be obtained at the Fishery Office at the **Knockreer Estate Office,** New Street (✆ **064/31246**).

For fishing tackle, bait, rod rental, and other fishing gear, as well as permits and licenses, try **O'Neill's,** 6 Plunkett St. (✆ **064/31970**). The shop also arranges rentals of boats and ghillies (fishing guides) for €80 ($96) per day on the Killarney Lakes, leaving from Ross Castle.

GOLF Visitors are always welcome at the twin 18-hole championship courses of the **Killarney Golf & Fishing Club,** Killorglin Road, Fossa (✆ **064/31034;** www.killarney-golf.com), 4.8km (3 miles) west of the town center. Widely praised as one of the most scenic golf settings in the world, these courses, known as "Killeen" and "Mahony's Point," are surrounded by lake and mountain vistas. Greens fees are €80 ($96) daily.

HORSEBACK RIDING Many trails in the Killarney area are suitable for horseback riding. Hiring a horse costs about €20 ($24) per hour at **Killarney Riding Stables,** N72, Ballydowney (✆ **064/31686**), and **Rocklands Stables,** Rockfield, Tralee Road (✆ **064/32592**). Lessons and weeklong trail rides can also be arranged.

WALKING Killarney is ideal for hiking. On the outskirts of town, the **Killarney National Park** offers four signposted nature trails. The **Mossy Woods Nature Trail** starts near Muckross House, by Muckross Lake, and rambles 2.4km (1.5 miles) through yew woods along low cliffs. **Old Boat House Nature Trail** begins at the 19th-century boathouse below Muckross Gardens and leads half a mile around a small peninsula by Muckross Lake. **Arthur Young's Walk** (4.8km/3 miles) starts on the road to Dinis, traverses natural yew woods, and then follows a 200-year-old road on the Muckross Peninsula. The **Blue Pool Nature Trail** (2.4km/1.5 miles) goes from Muckross village through woodlands and past a small lake known as the Blue Pool. Leaflets with maps of the four trails are available at the park visitor center.

THE SHOPPING SCENE: KERRY GLASS & MORE

Shopping hours are normally Monday through Saturday from 9am to 6pm, but May through September most shops stay open to 9 or 10pm. Although there are more souvenir and crafts shops in Killarney than you can shake a stick (or shillelagh) at, here are a few of the best.

Christy's Irish Stores, 10 Main St. (✆ **064/33222**), this large store on the corner of Plunkett Street in the center of town carries an array of wares ranging from cheesy leprechaun souvenirs to genuinely attractive hand-knit or hand-loomed sweaters, crystal, china, and pottery. Prices are reasonable. **Quill's Woolen Market,** 1 High St. (✆ **064/32277**), is one of the best shops in town for hand-knit sweaters of all kinds, as well as tweeds, mohair, and sheepskins.

The **Mucros Craft Centre,** on the grounds of Muckross House (✆ **064-3144;** www.muckross-house.ie), is a studio and shop carrying on many County Kerry craft traditions that features an on-premises weaver's workshop as well as a working pottery. There is also a wide selection of quality crafts from all over Ireland, and a skylit cafeteria overlooking the walled garden area. In town, **Serendipity,** 15 College St. (✆ **064/31056**), offers a wide range of unusual crafts from local artisans, such as hand-thrown pottery from the likes of Nicholas Mosse and Stephen Pearce, Jerpoint glass, and handcrafted jewelry.

WHERE TO STAY

Expensive

Aghadoe Heights Hotel & Spa ★★ A few miles outside of town, and with spectacular views of the lake, Aghadoe Heights is a jarringly modern structure sitting rudely by an ancient ruined church, but inside it's a five-star oasis of luxury. Rooms are spacious and calming in neutral tones, with big, orthopedic beds. Many rooms have breathtaking views of the lake and surrounding hills through floor-to-ceiling, wall-to-wall windows. Nothing is impossible here, with 24-hour room service and the excellent **spa** available at the push of a button. Guests can book a relaxing hour in the many steam rooms and saunas for €25 ($33). Breakfast is silver service, and the in-house **restaurant** specializes in modern Irish cuisine.

Lakes of Killarney, Killarney, County Kerry. ✆ **064/31766.** Fax 064/31345. www.aghadoeheights.com. 74 units. €280–€450 ($364–$585) double. Rates include full breakfast. MC, V. Free parking. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; indoor pool; gym; full-service spa; salon; Internet room; free shuttle. *In room:* TV/DVD, minibar, hair dryer, iron, safe.

Moderate

Earl's Court House A 5-minute walk from the town center, Earl's Court is the kind of genteel place where guests are greeted with tea and scones. The spacious guest rooms are tastefully furnished with Irish antiques, and have a distinct Victorian flair. Some have half-tester beds, others king-size beds and sitting areas, and nearly all have private balconies—the second-floor rooms have clear mountain views. The breakfast menu has a range of selections, from apple crepes to kippers and tomatoes.

Signposted off N71, Woodlawn Junction, Muckross rd., Killarney, County Kerry. ✆ **064/34009.** Fax 064/34366. www.killarney-earlscourt.ie. 24 units. €120–€160 ($156–$210) double. Rates include service charge and full Irish breakfast. MC, V. Closed Nov 6–Feb 5. Free parking. **Amenities:** Room service; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV, dataport, hair dryer, radio.

Fuchsia House This modern house built in classic Victorian style is a darling guesthouse, beautifully run by Mary and Tommy Treacy. The owners are former teachers, and they've decorated the guest rooms in Provençal style, with wallpaper in delicate French designs, well-chosen fabrics in pastel colors. Families are welcome since most of the rooms are designed with space for both parents and children. Breakfast is served in a sunny conservatory, and the food is excellent.

Muckross Rd., Killarney, County Kerry. ✆ **064/33743.** Fax 064/36588. www.fuchsiaguesthouse.com. 9 units. €90–€118 ($117–$153) double. Rates include full breakfast. MC, V. **Amenities:** Lounge; nonsmoking rooms; conservatory. *In room:* TV, hair dryer.

Gleann Fia Country House Although it's only 1.6km (1 mile) from town, this modern, Victorian-style guesthouse feels pleasantly secluded, with thick forests surrounding it like a blanket. Rooms are spacious and have firm, comfortable beds, but the main attraction is the great outdoors. You can enjoy nature walks through the woods, along with peace and quiet to soothe your soul.

Deerpark, Killarney, County Kerry. ✆ **064/35035.** Fax 064/35000. www.gleannfia.com. 19 units. €140–€180 ($182–$230) double. Rates include full breakfast. AE, MC, V. Free parking. **Amenities:** Lounge; nonsmoking rooms; conservatory. *In room:* TV.

Kathleen's Country House ★ About 1.6km (1 mile) north of town amid acres of sprawling gardens next to a dairy farm, this pleasant guesthouse is a two-story contemporary stone building with lots of big windows. Enthusiastic, efficient hostess Kathleen O'Regan-Sheppard has created attractive guest rooms with antique pine furniture and light floral fabrics. ***Note:*** The guesthouse is off a busy highway—ask for rooms at the back if you might be disturbed by road noise.

Madam's Height, Tralee rd. (N22), Killarney, County Kerry. ✆ **064/32810.** Fax 064/32340. www.kathleens.net. 17 units. €100–€140 ($130–$182) double. Rates include full breakfast. AE, MC, V. Closed mid-Nov to mid-Mar. Free parking. **Amenities:** Nonsmoking rooms; drawing room; sunroom. *In room:* TV, tea/coffeemaker, hair dryer, garment press.

Randles Court ★ A former rectory dating from the early 20th century, this attractive yellow, gabled four-story house sits just outside Killarney Town on the road to Muckross House. With marble floors and chandeliers, and warmed by open fireplaces, the lounges and lobby are quite elegant. Rooms have traditional decor, including heavy armoires, antique desks, and vanities, and are tastefully decorated.

Muckross rd. (N71), Killarney, County Kerry. ✆ **800/4-CHOICE** in the U.S., or 064/35333. Fax 064/35206. www.randleshotels.com. 55 units. €150–€170 ($195–$221) double. Rates include service charge and full breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; swimming pool; fitness center; limited room service; babysitting; laundry service. *In room:* TV.

WHERE TO DINE

Very Expensive

Gaby's Seafood Restaurant ★★ SEAFOOD The walls at Gaby's are filled with commendations and awards, which could be a bit tacky if the food weren't so good. Gaby's is known for its succulent lobster, served grilled or in a house sauce of cream, cognac, and spices. Other choices include haddock in wine, a delectable tempura of prawns, and a giant Kerry shellfish platter—a veritable feast of prawns, scallops, mussels, lobster, and oysters.

27 High St., Killarney, County Kerry. ✆ **064/32519.** Reservations recommended. Main courses €23–€40 ($30–$52). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat 6–10pm. Closed late Feb to mid-Mar and Christmas week.

Moderate

Bricín ★ TRADITIONAL IRISH Seafood dishes and old-time Kerry *boxty* (a traditional dish of potato pancakes filled with chicken, seafood, curried lamb, or vegetables) are the trademarks of this relaxed restaurant above a craft-and-book shop. Don't be put off by the fact that you enter through the shop—the building dates from the 1830s, and the dining room has a pleasant rustic feel, with wood-paneled walls, turf fireplaces, and wood floors. The seafood is excellent and the service is charming.

26 High St., Killarney, County Kerry. ✆ **064/34902.** Reservations recommended for dinner. Fixed-price 2-course dinner €24 ($31); dinner main courses €17–€26 ($22–$34). AE, DC, MC, V. Year-round Tues–Sat 10am–4:30pm; Easter–Oct Mon–Sat 6–9:30pm.

Cooperage ★ MODERN IRISH For better or worse, the Cooperage has dragged the 21st century to Killarney, with its urban decor (black and white with lots of glass and aluminum) and its menu that focuses on local Irish seafood and wild game. Menu options include wild pheasant, grilled swordfish and salmon, wild sea trout, and baked cod. The array of desserts includes crumbles and tarts, and it requires rare strength to say no to the dark chocolate and pistachio mousse.

Old Market Lane, off High St. (at New St.), Killarney, County Kerry. ✆ **064/37716.** Reservations recommended. Main courses €16–€24 ($21–$31). MC, V. Mon–Sat 12:30–3pm; Mon–Thurs 6:30–9:30pm; Fri–Sat 6:30–10pm; Sun 4–9:30pm.

IVERAGH PENINSULA/THE RING OF KERRY

The Iveragh Peninsula is nearly 1,820 sq. km (700 sq. miles) of wild splendor, which you'll notice once you get off the tourist strip. Admittedly, almost everyone who gets this far feels compelled to "do" the Ring of Kerry; so, once it's done, why not take an unplanned turn, get truly lost, and let serendipity lead you to the unexpected and the unspoiled?

ESSENTIALS

MAKING THE DRIVE **By Bus** **Bus Eireann** (✆ **064/34777**) provides limited daily service from Killarney to Caherciveen, Waterville, Kenmare, and other towns on the Ring of Kerry.

By Car This is by far the best way to get around the Ring. For the most part, the route follows N70.

VISITOR INFORMATION Stop in at the **Killarney Tourist Office,** Aras Fáilte, at the Town Centre Car Park, Beech Road, Killarney (✆ **064/31633**), before you explore the area. For hours, see "Visitor Information," under "Killarney Town," earlier in this chapter. The **Kenmare Tourist Office,** Market Square, Kenmare (✆ **064/41233**), is open daily Easter through September, 9:15am to 5:30pm, with extended hours in July and August. The rest of the year (Oct–Easter), it's open Monday to Saturday.

EXPLORING THE RING OF KERRY

Although it's possible to circle the peninsula in as little as 4 hours, the only way to get a feel for the area and the people is to leave the main road, get out of your car, and explore some of the inland and coastal towns. **Portmagee** is a lovely seaside town, connected by a bridge to **Valentia Island,** which houses the informative Skellig Heritage Centre.

The most memorable and magical site to visit on the Iveragh Peninsula is **Skellig Michael,** a rocky pinnacle towering over the sea, where medieval monks built their monastery in ascetic isolation. The crossing to the island can be rough, so you'll want to visit on a clear and calm day, if possible. Seabirds nest here in abundance, and more than 20,000 pairs of gannets inhabit neighboring Little Skellig during the summer nesting season.

Kenmare is by far the most enchanting town on the Ring of Kerry route. Originally called Neidin (pronounced Nay-*deen,* meaning "little nest" in Irish), Kenmare is indeed a little nest of verdant foliage tucked between the River Roughty and Kenmare Bay. It's an ideal base for Kerry sightseeing, as it is well laid out and immaculately maintained—flower boxes in the windows, litter-free sidewalks—and full of excellent restaurants and places to stay.

Departing Killarney, follow the signs for **Killorglin.** When you reach this little town, you're on N70. You might want to stop and walk around Killorglin, a spot that's widely known for its annual mid-August horse, sheep, and cattle fair. It's officially called the **Puck Fair,** because a goat (symbolizing the *puka* or *puki,* a mischievous sprite) is enthroned in the center of town as a sign of unrestricted merrymaking.

Continue on N70, and vistas of Dingle Bay will soon appear on your right. **Carrantuohill,** at 1,024m (3,360 ft.) Ireland's tallest mountain, is to your left. The open bog land constantly comes into view. From it, the local residents dig pieces of peat, or turf, to burn in their fireplaces.

Watch for signs to **Staigue Fort,** about 3km (1¾ miles) off the main road. The well preserved ancient circular fort is constructed of rough stones without mortar of any kind. The walls are 4m (13 ft.) thick at the base, and the diameter is about 27m (89 ft.). Experts think it dates from around 1000 B.C.

Sneem, the next village on the circuit, is a colorful little hamlet with twin parklets. Its houses are painted in vibrant shades of blue, pink, yellow, purple, and orange, like a little touch of the Mediterranean plunked down in Ireland.

WHERE TO STAY

Very Expensive

The Park Hotel Kenmare ★★★ *Finds* Ensconced in a palm-tree-lined garden beside Kenmare Bay, this imposing 19th-century building is a grand, luxury hotel. In the high-ceilinged sitting rooms, fires crackle in the open fireplaces and original oil paintings decorate the walls. Guest rooms have exquisite Georgian and Victorian furnishings, and some have four-posters, all with firm mattresses, rich fabrics, and peaceful waterfront or mountain views. The hotel restaurant is acclaimed for its modern Irish cuisine. The hotel spa, **Sámas,** is famed in Ireland for its creative use of the gorgeous, bucolic setting.

Kenmare, County Kerry. ✆ **800/323-5463** in the U.S., or 064/41200. Fax 064/41402. www.parkkenmare.com. 46 units. €300–€500 ($390–$650) double. AE, DC, MC, V. Closed Nov 30–Dec 22 and Jan 4–Feb 12. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; 18-hole golf course; tennis court; spa and beauty treatments; concierge; room service; babysitting; laundry service; nonsmoking rooms; croquet lawn; drawing room; joggers' trail; salmon fishing. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer, garment press, CD player.

Sheen Falls Lodge ★★★ Originally the 18th-century home of the earl of Kerry, this salubrious resort sits beside a natural waterfall amid vast, sprawling grounds filled with a mixture of smooth lawns and lush gardens. The public areas are decorated in lemony tones, with plenty of polished woodwork, open fireplaces, and original oil paintings. Guest rooms are spacious, decorated in rich, contemporary style; each overlooks the falls (stunning when floodlit at night) or the bay. There are self-catering cottages and villas available for those with deep pockets and a desire for privacy.

Kenmare, County Kerry. ✆ **800/537-8483** in the U.S., or 064/41600. Fax 064/41386. www.sheenfallslodge.ie. 66 units. €280–€425 ($364–$552) double. Full breakfast €24 ($31). AE, DC, MC, V. Closed Jan 2–Feb 1. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; indoor swimming pool; tennis; gym; spa; Jacuzzi; concierge; room service; laundry/dry cleaning; billiard room; croquet; library; health and beauty treatments; helicopter pad; horseback riding; library; private salmon fishing. *In room:* A/C, TV/VCR, minibar, hair dryer, garment press, radio.

Moderate

Iskeroon ★★ *Finds* This is as good as it gets for this price. David and Geraldine Hare's charming B&B sits amid an arrestingly beautiful natural setting overlooking the sailboats of Derrynane Harbour and the Skelligs beyond. The Hares have renovated their villa in a fresh, Cape Cod style, with flagstone floors and a deep blue palette. There are extras, including portable DVD players and a vast DVD library. Breakfasts are exceptional, with homemade bread and free-range eggs and bacon. They've changed the rules here recently to require a minimum 2-night stay.

Bunavalla (near pier), Caherdaniel, County Kerry. ✆ **066/947-5119.** Fax 066/947-5488. www.iskeroon.com. 3 units, all with private bathroom. €150 ($195) double. Rates include service charge and full Irish breakfast. MC, V. Closed Oct–Apr. **Amenities:** Lounge. *In room:* TV.

Sallyport House ★★ This country-house B&B has many things going for it—a great location, a 2-minute walk into Kenmare, and its extensive manicured grounds. It's a handsome manor with a sophisticated, luxurious feel. The spacious guest rooms are furnished with well-chosen antiques and have grand bathrooms. The rooms are made even more desirable by their gorgeous views of the surrounding countryside.

Glengarriff Rd., Kenmare, County Kerry. ✆ **064/42066.** Fax 064/42067. www.sallyporthouse.com. 5 units. €150 ($190) double. Rates include service charge and full breakfast. No credit cards. Closed Nov–Mar. **Amenities:** Lounge; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV, hair dryer.

Shelburne Lodge ★★ This Georgian farmhouse has been transformed into one of the most original, stylish, and comfortable B&Bs in Killowen. Every room has polished wood parquet floors, quality antique furnishings, contemporary art, and a luxurious but homey feel. The guest rooms are all large and gorgeously appointed, and breakfasts are virtually decadent.

Killowen, Cork Rd., Kenmare, County Kerry. ✆ **064/41013.** Fax 064/42067. www.shelbournelodge.com. 9 units. €100–€150 ($130–$190) double. Rates include service charge and full breakfast. MC, V. Closed Dec to mid-Mar. **Amenities:** Tennis court; drawing room. *In room:* TV.

Inexpensive

Hawthorn House ★ *Value* On a quiet side street in Kenmare, this town-house B&B is an excellent value and has a huge following. Mary O'Brien is a congenial hostess, and her guest rooms have a feminine feel with floral touches and pale walls. Rooms here may be slightly smaller than you'd find at rural B&Bs, but they are comfortable and attractive. Breakfasts are bountiful and delicious.

Shelbourne St., Kenmare, County Kerry. ✆ **064/41035.** Fax 064/41932. www.hawthornhousekenmare.com. 8 units. €80–€90 ($104–$117) double. Rates include service charge and full breakfast. MC, V. Closed Christmas. **Amenities:** Sitting room. *In room:* TV, hair dryer.

WHERE TO DINE

Expensive

Lime Tree ★★ MODERN IRISH Innovative cuisine is the focus at this Kenmare restaurant in an 1821 landmark renovated schoolhouse next to The Park Hotel. Paintings by local artists line the stone walls in the atmospheric dining room. The menu offers modern interpretations of classic Irish dishes and European cuisine in such dishes as the warm salmon tartlet, steamed Irish mussels with coconut milk, and free-range Irish duck with sweet potato. The restaurant shows a sense of humor in its variation on the Caesar salad, with fresh greens and capers—called the "Brutus salad."

Shelbourne Rd., Kenmare, County Kerry. ✆ **064/41225.** Reservations recommended. Main courses €20–€28 ($26–$36). MC, V. Apr–Nov daily 6:30–10pm.

Moderate

The Blue Bull TRADITIONAL IRISH Sneem is so small that if you blink, you miss it. Yet it has several good pubs, and this one serves excellent food. There are three small rooms, each with an open fireplace, plus a sky-lit conservatory in the back. Traditional Irish fare, like smoked salmon and Irish stew, shares the menu with such dishes as salmon stuffed with spinach and Valencia scallops in brandy. There's traditional Irish entertainment most evenings.

South Sq., Ring of Kerry rd. (N70), Sneem, County Kerry. ✆ **064/45382.** Reservations recommended. Main courses €10–€20 ($13–$26). AE, MC, V. Bar food daily year-round 11am–8pm. Restaurant Mar–Oct daily 6–10pm.

Packie's MODERN IRISH If you're looking for a stylish place to have a great meal that won't break the bank, this is the place. There's always a buzz here, and the smart crowd fits in perfectly with the bistro look—colorful window boxes, slate floors, stone walls filled with contemporary art. Everyone comes for the food: tried-and-true favorites such as Irish lamb stew, crisp potato pancakes, seafood sausages, and crab claws in garlic butter. Desserts are terrific, too.

Henry St., Kenmare, County Kerry. ✆ **064/41508.** Reservations recommended. Main courses €12–€30 ($16–$39). MC, V. Mid-Mar to Dec Tues–Sat 6–10pm (also Mon 6–10pm in summer). Closed Jan to mid-Mar.

Inexpensive

Prego ★ *Value* ITALIAN When you're craving a break from all that heavy Irish cuisine, head here for fresh, tasty Italian cuisine. The pasta is all homemade, and served with a light touch on the sauce. Salads are big and crisp, and the thin-crust pizzas are all made from scratch to order. All the classics are here and are well made.

Henry St., Kenmare, County Kerry. ✆ **064/42350.** All items €6–€12 ($7.80–$16). MC, V. Daily 9am–10:30pm.

Purple Heather ★ IRISH This lovely little eatery is *the* place to lunch in Kenmare. The food consists of tearoom classics with a gourmet twist—wild smoked salmon or prawn salad; smoked trout pâté; vegetarian omelets; Irish cheese platters; and fresh, homemade soups.

Henry St., Kenmare, County Kerry. ✆ **064/41016.** All items €4–€17 ($5.20–$22). No credit cards. Mon–Sat 11am–7pm. Closed Sun and bank holidays.

SHOPPING IN KENMARE

De Barra Jewellery, Main St. (✆ **064/41867**), talented jeweler Shane de Barra makes lovely freshwater pearl concoctions in silver and gold, and his restrained touch on gold rings and bangles mark this place as special. **Quills Woolen Market,** Market Square and Main St. (✆ **064/45277**), has two locations, both good for chunky, Aran hand knits, traditional Donegal tweed, delicate Irish linen and Celtic jewelry, **Avoca Handweavers at Moll's Gap,** N71 (✆ **064/34720**), is a branch of the famous tweed makers of County Wicklow. This outlet is set on a high mountain pass between Killarney and Kenmare. The wares range from colorful hand-woven capes, jackets, throws, and knitwear to pottery and jewelry. It also has a great gourmet cafe.

THE DINGLE PENINSULA

Like the Iveragh Peninsula, Dingle has a spectacularly scenic peripheral road, and a substantial tourist trade has blossomed along it. But as soon as you veer off the main roads you'll discover extraordinary desolate beauty, seemingly worlds away from the tour buses. Dingle Town itself is smaller and less congested than Killarney, and the Dingle Peninsula is an ideal drive, it also makes a fine bicycling tour.

Don't miss **Slea Head,** at the southwestern extremity of the peninsula, with its pristine beaches, great walks, and fascinating archaeological remains. The village of **Dunquin,** which sits between Slea Head and Clogher Head, is home to the useful Blasket Centre (admission €3.70/$4.80).

Dunbeg Fort sits on a rocky promontory just south of Slea Head, its walls rising from the cliff edge. Although much of the fort has fallen into the sea, the place is well worth a visit at the bargain-basement rate of €2 ($2.40) per person. From Slea Head, the Dingle Way continues east to Dingle Town (24km/15 miles) or north along the coast toward Ballyferriter.

Just offshore from Dunquin are the seven **Blasket Islands;** a ferry (✆ **066/915-6455**) connects Great Blasket with the mainland when the weather permits. Alternatively, you can take a 3-hour cruise around the islands with **Blasket Island Tours** (✆ **066/915-6422**), leaving from Dunquin Pier. The islands were abandoned by the last permanent residents in 1953 and now are inhabited only by a few summer visitors who share the place with the seals and seabirds. A magnificent 13km (8-mile) walk goes to the west end of Great Blasket and back, passing sea cliffs and ivory beaches; you can stop along the way at the only cafe on the island, which serves lunch and dinner.

DINGLE TOWN (*AN DAINGEAN*)

Dingle *(An Daingean)* is a charming, brightly colored little town at the foot of steep hills and on the edge of a gorgeous stretch of coast. There's not much to do here, but it has plenty of hotels and restaurants and makes a good base for exploring the region.

EXPLORING THE TOWN

Despite the big-sounding name, **Dingle's Oceanworld Aquarium,** Dingle Harbour (✆ **066/915-2111;** www.dingle-oceanworld.ie), is a relatively small aquarium with little to see to justify the ticket price: Admission costs €11 ($14) adults, €6.50 ($7.70) children. Various sea critters swim behind glass in the aquarium's 29 tanks, and young staffers carry around live marine creatures and introduce them up close to visitors. It's open September and June from 9:30am to 7pm; July through August from 9:30am to 8:30pm; and October through May from 9:30am to 6pm.

Forget Flipper. In Dingle, the name to know is Fungie the Dolphin. Every day, **Fungie the Dolphin Tours** ★★, the Pier, Dingle (✆ **066/915-2626**), ferry visitors out into the nearby waters to see the famous village mascot. Trips cost €14 ($18) for adults and €8 ($10) for children 11 and under. They last about 1 hour and depart regularly, roughly every 2 hours in the off season and as frequently as every half-hour in high season. Fungie swims up to the boat, and the boatmen stay out long enough for ample sightings—and long, wonderful eyefuls of the gorgeous bay.

ENJOYING THE GREAT OUTDOORS

BEACHES The Dingle Peninsula is known for its dramatic beaches. The best known is **Inch Strand,** a 5km-long (3-mile) sandy stretch.

Kilmurray Bay at Minard is a Lilliputian dream come to life, as in the shadow of Minard Castle, giant sausage-shaped sandstone boulders form a beach unlike anything you've ever seen. Nearby, **Trabeg Beach** features exquisite wave-sculptured maroon sandstone statues, sheer rock cliffs, and sea caves lined with veins of crystalline quartz.

Castlegregory *(Caislean an Ghriare)* is a seaside village with two wide, sandy beaches. It's known for its good diving waters, and scuba divers and watersports fans flock to the place in summer. It's a bit bustling for isolationists, who are better off heading to tiny **Cloghane** *(An Clochán)* on the southern edge of Brandon Bay. With a population of 270 and a lovely beach, it's got much to offer.

BICYCLING Mountain bikes can be rented at the **Mountain Man,** Strand Street, Dingle (✆ **066/915-2400**), for €12 ($14) per day or €50 ($60) per week. Mike Shea knows the area well, and can suggest a number of 1-day or overnight touring options on the Dingle Peninsula. Touring and mountain bikes are also available year-round from **Foxy John Moriarty,** Main Street, Dingle (✆ **066/915-1316**).

DIVING On the North Dingle Peninsula, **Harbour House,** The Maharees, Castlegregory, County Kerry (✆ **066/713-9292;** www.waterworld.ie), is a diving center that offers packages including diving, room, and board at good rates. Classes for beginners are available.

SAILING The **Dingle Sailing Club,** c/o The Wood, Dingle (✆ **066/915-1629**), offers an array of courses taught by experienced, certified instructors. Summer courses run from €130 to €180 ($156–$230).

SEA ANGLING For sea-angling packages and day trips, contact Nicholas O'Connor at **Angler's Rest,** Ventry (✆ **066/915-9947**); or Seán O'Conchúir (✆ **066/915-5429**), representing the **Kerry Angling Association.**

WALKING The **Dingle Way** circles the peninsula, covering 153km (95 miles) of gorgeous mountain and coastal landscape. The most rugged section is along Brandon Head, where the trail passes between Mount Brandon and the ocean; the views are tremendous, but the walk is long (about 24km/15 miles or 9 hr.) and strenuous, and should be attempted only when the sky is clear. For more information, see *The Dingle Way Map Guide,* available in local tourist offices and shops.

WHERE TO STAY

Expensive/Moderate

Dingle Skellig Hotel This three-story hotel has an idyllic location next to Dingle Bay on the eastern edge of town. The look of the place is all polished pine and contemporary touches, most tastefully done. Most guest rooms are done in neutral colors with floral touches, although some have slightly lurid color combinations. Many have gorgeous views.

Annascaul Rd., Dingle, County Kerry. ✆ **066/915-1144.** Fax 066/915-1501. www.dingleskellig.com. 116 units. €160–€230 ($208–$300) double. Rates include full breakfast. AE, MC, V. Free parking. Closed Jan–Feb Mon–Thurs (open weekends). **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; lounge; indoor pool; gym; Jacuzzi; steam room; children's playroom; room service; health treatments. *In room:* TV, hair dryer, radio.

Moderate

Pax House ★ On a green hill overlooking Dingle Bay, Pax House's sunny balcony takes in sweeping views as far as Slea Head. Owners Ron and Joan Brosnan-Wright have transformed a former retirement home into a comfortable B&B with homey touches. The furniture is heavy pine (some four-poster beds), and the decor is bright and cheerful. For breakfast, Joan makes artisan breads (the white almond bread is delicious) to go with the usual egg and meat options. This peaceful place is a real getaway.

Pax House is signposted on the N86, Dingle, County Kerry. ✆ **066/915-1518.** Fax 066/915-2461. www.kerrygems.com/pax. 13 units. €90–€160 ($117–$200) double. Rates include full breakfast. MC, V. Free parking. **Amenities:** Conservatory; sitting room. *In room:* TV, tea/coffeemaker, hair dryer, radio.

Inexpensive

The Captain's House ★ *Value* Jim and Mary Milhench own and run this dapper little B&B in the middle of Dingle. The name is inspired less by the location (the house is landlocked, except for a river running through the manicured yard) than by Jim's former career as a sea captain. It's a friendly place—when you arrive, you're offered tea with scones or a slice of rich cake and made to feel genuinely welcome. As in many town houses, the rooms here are a bit small, but it feels cozy rather than cramped. Mary's breakfasts are excellent, with homemade muesli, baked ham, local cheeses, fresh honey, and fresh local eggs.

The Mall, Dingle, County Kerry. ✆ **066/915-1531.** Fax 066/915-1079. 8 units. €90–€100 ($117–$156) double. Rates include full breakfast. AE, MC, V. Closed Dec–Jan. **Amenities:** Sitting room. *In room:* TV.

Greenmount House ★★ This modern bungalow on a hill above Dingle isn't much to look at from the outside, but don't be fooled. Inside it's a stylish place, with lush colors and clever design. Each of the spacious guest rooms has its own sitting area and large bathroom—some are split-level, a few have balconies, and some have sea views. Breakfasts, ranging from smoked salmon omelets to ham-and-pineapple toasted sandwiches, have won awards for owners Mary and John Curran.

John St., Dingle, County Kerry. ✆ **066/915-1414.** Fax 066/915-1974. www.greenmount-house.com. 12 units. €90–€160 ($117–$210) double. Rates include full breakfast. MC, V. Closed Dec 20–26. **Amenities:** Nonsmoking rooms; conservatory; sitting room. *In room:* TV, tea/coffeemaker.

WHERE TO DINE

Expensive

Beginish ★ SEAFOOD Owner/chef Mrs. Pat Moore runs this delightful small, unassuming Dingle restaurant with aplomb. A sunny conservatory overlooks the gardens and there are outdoor tables in summer. Although there are lamb and beef dishes and a vegetarian special each night, the emphasis is on fresh fish. Among the starters, the smoked salmon with capers and horseradish cream is perfect—nothing fancy, just excellent ingredients. You can't go wrong with any of the fish courses—monkfish with Provençal sauce or cod on thyme-scented potatoes. For dessert, Pat's rhubarb soufflé tart is legendary.

Green St., Dingle, County Kerry. ✆ **066/915-1588.** Reservations recommended. Dinner main courses €16–€28 ($21–$36). MC, V. Tues–Sun 12:30–2:15pm and 6–10pm. Closed Dec–Feb.

Doyle's Seafood Bar SEAFOOD This is a casual fish bar, so the atmosphere is homey, with stone walls and floors and traditional Irish *sugan* chairs. All the ingredients are local—from the sea, the gardens, or nearby farms. Even the smoked salmon is smoked here, in small batches. Lobster is the house specialty, but there's plenty to choose from—lemon sole with prawn sauce, salmon filet in puff pastry, rack of lamb, and a signature seafood platter.

4 John St., Dingle, County Kerry. ✆ **066/915-1174.** www.doylesofdingle.com. Reservations required. Main courses €20–€29 ($26–$38). MC, V. Mon–Sat 6–9:30pm. Closed mid-Dec to mid-Feb.

Moderate

The Chart House ★★ MODERN COUNTRY This popular restaurant (be sure to book ahead) has an inviting bistro atmosphere with lots of polished pine and warm, rose-colored walls. The cooking here is an ambitious blend of Irish dishes and outside influences. Main courses might include steak filet with black pudding mash, or pork with brandied apples.

The Mall, Dingle, County Kerry. ✆ **066/915-2255.** www.charthousedingle.com. Reservations required. Dinner main courses €15–€25 ($20–$33). MC, V. Wed–Mon 6:30–10pm. Closed Jan 8–Feb 12.

Lord Bakers SEAFOOD/PUB GRUB The ages-old decor in this pub restaurant combines a stone fireplace and cozy alcoves with a more modern, sunlit conservatory and a few Art Deco touches. The menu offers standard bar food, but juices it up with things like crab claws in garlic butter, Kerry oysters, seafood Mornay, and steaks.

Main St., Dingle, County Kerry. ✆ **066/915-1277.** Reservations recommended for dinner. Bar food €10–€13 ($13–$17); dinner main courses €16–€28 ($21–$36). AE, MC, V. Fri–Wed 12:30–2pm and 6–9:30pm.

Inexpensive

An Cafe Liteartha CAFE/TEAROOM "The Literary Cafe" is a self-service cafe in an excellent bookstore. This is heaven for those interested in Irish history, literature, maps, and scones. The cafe sells fresh soups, sandwiches, salads, seafood, and scones and cakes. It's ideal for a quiet lunch or snack in the middle of town.

Dykegate St., Dingle, County Kerry. ✆ **066/915-2204.** All items €3–€5 ($3.90–$6.50). No credit cards. Mon–Sat 9am–6pm; later in summer.

3 Galway City

For many travelers to Ireland, Galway is the farthest edge of their journey. Part of the reason they draw the line here is that the county looks so otherworldly—with its bleak bogs; wind-swept, heather-clad moors; and its extraordinary light—they think that it must be the end of all that's worth seeing in Ireland (if not the end of the world). It isn't, of course, as County Mayo has picturesque rocky coasts and Donegal a kind of exquisite isolation, but Galway is just far enough from the madding crowds (3-hr. drive from Dublin) without pushing the limits of some people's comfort. If you've come this far, you've seen the land that drew the ancient settlers to Connemara and seduced the early Christian monks with its isolation. In fact, some went even farther—monastic remains have been found on 17 islands off the Galway coast.

These days, this region is bustling and affluent, its villages brightly painted, and property prices soaring. Galway City, the heart of the county, has an affluent, artsy population of 70,000, and is one of Ireland's most prosperous and appealing cities. It is a busy workaday town, but it also has a lively art and music scene that has made it the unofficial arts capital of the country. The excellent Galway Arts Festival, held every summer, is an accessible, buzzing culture fest.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **By Plane** **Aer Aran** flies from Dublin into Galway Airport (Carnmore, about 16km/10 miles east of the city; ✆ **091/755569;** www.galwayairport.com) four times daily, two times a day to London. There's also regular service to Cardiff, Liverpool, Manchester, and Edinburgh. The European budget airline **Flybe** (www.flybe.com) is expected to start regular flights to Belfast City airport from Galway by 2008.

By Train **Irish Rail** trains from Dublin and other points arrive daily at **Ceannt Station** (✆ **091/561444;** www.irishrail.ie), off Eyre Square, Galway.

By Bus Buses from all parts of Ireland arrive daily at **Bus Éireann Travel Centre,** Ceannt Station, Galway (✆ **091/562000;** www.buseireann.ie).

By Car As the gateway to west Ireland, Galway is the terminus for many national roads. They lead in from all parts of Ireland, including N84 and N17 from the north points, N63 and N6 from the east, and N67 and N18 from the south.

VISITOR INFORMATION For information about Galway and the surrounding areas, contact or visit **Ireland West Tourism (Aras Fáilte),** Foster Street (✆ **091/537700;** www.westireland.travel.ie). Hours are May, June, and September daily 9am to 5:45pm; July and August daily 9am to 7:45pm; October to April Monday to Friday 9am to 5:45pm, Saturday 9am to 12:45pm. For further detailed information on events and news in Galway, consult **www.galway.net**.

GETTING AROUND Galway has excellent local bus service. Buses run from the **Bus Éireann Travel Centre** (✆ **091/562000**) or Eyre Square to various suburbs, including Salthill and the Galway Bay coastline. The fare starts at €1.50 ($1.90).

There are taxi ranks at Eyre Square and all the major hotels in the city. If you need to call a cab, try **Abbey Cabs** (✆ **091/569369**), **Cara Cabs** (✆ **091/563939**), or **Galway Taxis** (✆ **091/561112**).

To rent a car, contact one of the following firms: **Avis Rent-A-Car,** Higgins Garage, Headford Road (✆ **091/568886;** www.avis.ie); **Budget Rent-A-Car,** Galway Airport (✆ **091/556376;** www.budget.ie); or **Murrays Rent-A-Car,** Headford Road (✆ **091/562222;** www.europcar.ie).

WHERE TO STAY

VERY EXPENSIVE

The G ★ *Finds* All Galway is talking about this over-the-top place. Designed by the hat designer Philip Treacy, it looks like a cross between *Barbarella* and *My Fair Lady,* which is to say it's an extraordinary-looking place. There are psychedelic touches (the Pink Salon is the color of Pepto-Bismol) and a love of disco chic (the otherwise subtle taupe-and-white grand salon has masses of huge glass baubles hanging overhead). Rooms are calmer, in soothing white with touches of coffee and cream, and luxuriant beds. Bathrooms are sensational, many have showers built for two. The **ESPA spa** is oh-so-sophisticated, and it's all very Manhattan. It's all about a 15-minute walk from central Galway. It was included in Condé Nast's Hot 100 list for 2007, and there is no place trendier on the west coast.

Wellpark, Galway, County Galway. ✆ **091/865200.** Fax 091/765293. www.ghotel.ie. 101 units. €250–€310 ($325–$400) double. Rates include full breakfast. AE, MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; spa; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* Satellite TV, Wi-Fi, tea/coffeemaker, hair dryer, DVD/CD player, trouser press, voice mail.

Glenlo Abbey Hotel ★★ About 3km (2 miles) outside of Galway on the main Clifden road, this secluded, sprawling stone hotel overlooks Lough Corrib in a sylvan setting, surrounded by a 9-hole golf course. Dating from 1740, the building has retained its grandeur in the public areas, with hand-carved wood furnishings, ornate plasterwork, and an extensive collection of Irish art and antiques. The guest rooms, which have lovely views of Lough Corrib and the countryside, are luxuriously decorated with traditional furnishings, as well as marble bathrooms.

Bushy Park, Galway, County Galway. ✆ **091/526666.** Fax 091/527800. www.glenlo.com. 46 units. €195–€310 ($253–$400) double. Suites also available. Rates include full breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; 2 bars; 9-hole golf course; concierge; room service; laundry service; drawing room; fishing in Lough Corrib. *In room:* TV, Wi-Fi, hair dryer, garment press, safe.

EXPENSIVE

The House Hotel ★★ This four-story stone building in Galway's historic area, next to the Spanish Arch, was formerly a warehouse, and is now a boutique loft hotel. From its low-key lobby with polished oak floors, columns, and big windows, to its subtle, contemporary rooms, it's a comfortable, modern alternative. Rooms are divided into categories like "comfy," "classy," and "swanky," and they pretty much do what it says on the label. The swanky rooms are definitely the swankiest. All have comfortable beds, soft linens, lots of sunlight, high ceilings, and a refreshing urban feel. Its design has won accolades, and it prides itself on its service. It's a good new option in Galway.

Lower Merchant's Rd., Galway, County Galway. ✆ **091/538900.** Fax 091/568262. www.thehousehotel.ie. 45 units. €150–€250 ($195–$325) double. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar. *In room:* TV, broadband, minibar, tea/coffeemaker, hair dryer, safe.

Park House Hotel ★ With a steady, old-fashioned approach to luxury, the Park House is a reliable option in central Galway. For 30 years, its warmly lit frontage has been welcoming travelers into the tastefully decorated lobby. Rooms are spacious and classically decorated with plaid bedspreads and colorful throw pillows. Privacy is one of the things this hotel does especially well—no two rooms directly face each other, ensuring peace and quiet for all guests. The **Park Room Restaurant** is an award-winning, luxurious operation (see below), and its traditional style fits perfectly with this rock-steady hotel's ethos.

Foster St., Eyre Sq., Galway, County Galway. ✆ **091/564924.** Fax 091/569219. www.parkhousehotel.ie. 84 units. €180–€250 ($234–$325) double. Rates include full breakfast. AE, MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV/DVD, broadband, tea/coffeemaker, hair dryer, trouser press, CD player, voice mail.

MODERATE

Killeen House ★ *Value* This hotel just outside of town is a small wonder. The decor and setting both harmonize very well—there are no false notes—just a lot of design fun and a sense of quiet luxury. The rooms are beautifully decorated, with wood floors, comfortable beds wrapped in creamy fabrics, and lovely, bucolic views through the windows. The decor in the rest of the house is equally aesthetic, with lots of antiques and quality pieces.

On N59, 6km (3¾ miles) from Galway, Bushy Park, Galway, County Galway. ✆ **091/524179.** Fax 091/528065. www.killeenhousegalway.com. 6 units. €150–€180 ($195–$234) double. Rates include full breakfast. AE, MC, V. Free parking. Closed Christmas. **Amenities:** Sitting room. *In room:* TV.

INEXPENSIVE

Barnacle's Quay Street House ★ *Value* This cheap and cheerful guesthouse is bright, attractive, and friendly—what more do you need? It's a 16th-century house, with marvelous fireplaces and lots of character. Bedrooms are done in sunny yellows, and there's a communal kitchen if you tire of restaurants. The clientele tends to be young, mostly college students filling the shared dorm rooms, but the four-bed rooms are also good for families traveling on a budget. All are welcome, and the location is handily central. Book early in the high season, as the place tends to fill up quickly.

10 Quay St., Galway, County Galway. ✆ **091/568644.** www.barnacles.ie. 10 units. €56 ($73) double. Rates include continental breakfast. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Lounge; kitchen; Internet; TV room.

Clare Villa ★ *Value* This spacious, modern house is steps from the beach. Its pleasant rooms all have firm, comfortable beds, and the owners are helpful and friendly. The biggest attraction, though, is its proximity to the seafront and taking in that fresh salt air every morning.

38 Threadneedle Rd. ✆ **091/522520.** clarevilla@yahoo.com. 6 units. €60 ($78) double. Rates include full breakfast. No credit cards. **Amenities:** Sitting room. *In room:* TV, hair dryer.

Knockrea Guest House ★ On a commercial street in Salthill, just outside Galway City and 5 minutes from the waters of Galway Bay, this attractive guesthouse is friendly and beautifully maintained. The large guest rooms have simple pine furniture, polished pine floors, and light-colored walls. Two family rooms offer more space and lots of beds. Eileen Storan is an able and sympathetic host—she knows the area well and helps her guests make the most of their time in Galway.

55 Lower Salthill, Galway, County Galway. ✆ **091/520145.** Fax 091/529985. www.knockrea.com. 6 units, 4 with private bathroom. €60–€70 ($78–$91) double with shared bathroom; €90 ($117) double with private bathroom. Rates include full breakfast. MC, V. Free parking. **Amenities:** Nonsmoking rooms; 3 sitting rooms; use of kitchen. *In room:* TV.

WHERE TO DINE

VERY EXPENSIVE

Kirwan's Lane ★★ CONTINENTAL Chef-owner Michael O'Grady's stylish, inviting restaurant is widely acclaimed, and for good reason. The dining room is rustic chic, with pine furnishings and walls painted warm ocher. It's a particularly good value at lunchtime, when the constantly changing menu might include a starter of Irish brie crostini and marinated salmon roulade. The dinner menu features dishes with fresh local produce and seafood, all beautifully presented.

Kirwan's Lane. ✆ **091/568266.** Reservations recommended. Main courses €18–€29 ($23–$38). AE, MC, V. Daily 12:30–2:30pm and 6–10:30pm. Closed Sun Sept–June.

The Malt House ★★ MODERN IRISH Barry and Therese Cunningham's cozy place, tucked into a courtyard off one of Galway's main streets, has long been a big hit with the locals. The draw is the creative cooking that turns traditional Irish dishes into modern international cuisine. The menu is divided into "Land" and "Sea," and both tempt equally. The honey-glazed roast duckling has an Asian flair, while on the seafood side, there's fried scampi and prawns Newberg. Come for the early-bird menu and save a bundle.

High St. ✆ **091/567866.** www.malthouse.com. Reservations recommended. 2-course early-bird dinner 6–7:30pm €26 ($34); main courses €16–€25 ($21–$33). AE, MC, V. Mon–Sat 12:30–3pm and 6:30–10:30pm.

MODERATE

G.B.C. (Galway Bakery Company) ★ BISTRO With a distinctive Old Galway shop-front facade, this building is two eateries in one: a ground-level self-service coffee shop and a full-service bistro upstairs. The restaurant menu lists a variety of dishes, priced to suit every budget, from steaks and seafood dishes to chicken Kiev or *cordon bleu,* as well as quiches, omelets, salads, and stir-fried vegetable platters. Baked goods, particularly the homemade brown bread, are an added attraction. The coffee shop serves memorably good breakfasts and light lunches.

7 Williamsgate St. ✆ **091/563087.** www.gbcgalway.com. Coffee-shop items under €7 ($9.10); dinner main courses €10–€20 ($13–$26). AE, DC, MC, V. Coffee shop daily 8am–10pm; restaurant daily noon–10pm.

Nimmo's ★★ WINE BAR/SEAFOOD This is one of Galway's trendy spots—a place to see and be seen that manages to serve fantastic food while constantly admiring itself. It's ideal for a festive, buzzy meal out. Pass the stone facade, climb a winding stairway, and you'll find yourself in a wonderfully romantic dining room, particularly on a starry night when you can see the moon through the skylights. The menu changes according to season and tends to feature seafood in the summer and game during the winter. Start with the zesty fish soup or the smoked-salmon salad, then move on to the delicious Parmesan chicken or beef bourguignon with a pile of fluffy mashed spuds. Save room for dessert, which is brought in by Goya's, the best bakery in Galway. The wines are terrific, too. Make a reservation in advance to be sure of getting a table.

Long Walk, Spanish Arch. ✆ **091/561114.** Reservations recommended. Main courses €12–€24 ($16–$31). MC, V. Tues–Sun 12:30–3pm and 7–10pm.

MODERATE/INEXPENSIVE

Conlon SEAFOOD If you love seafood, head for this place, as it is the local specialist, with 20 varieties of fresh fish and shellfish on the menu at any time. You're bound to find something to choose—the house specialties are wild salmon and oysters, so that's not a bad place to start.

Eglinton Court. ✆ **091/562268.** Seafood bar items €4–€8 ($5.20–$10); main courses €7–€25 ($9.10–$33); lobster thermidor €35 ($46). DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat 11am–midnight; Sun 5pm–midnight.

McDonagh's FISH AND CHIPS/SEAFOOD For seafood straight off the boats, served up in an authentic maritime atmosphere, this is Galway's best choice. The place is divided into three parts: a traditional "chipper" for fish and chips, a smart restaurant in the back, and a fish market where you can buy raw seafood. The menu includes salmon, trout, lemon or black sole (or both), turbot, and silver hake, all cooked to order. In the back restaurant, you can crack your own shrimp tails and crab claws in the shell.

22 Quay St. ✆ **091/565001.** Reservations not accepted June–Aug. Main courses €8–€34 ($10–$44). AE, MC, V. Daily noon–10pm.

The River God Cafe *Value* IRISH/CONTINENTAL This is a rewarding destination for those with hearty appetites and modest budgets. The byword here is rib-sticking comfort food in a rustic setting. The casserole of cod and potatoes Connemara-style, served in a deep tureen, will put the color back into any face. An equally lavish portion of wild-mushroom tart with paprika potatoes will restore the vegetarian visitor.

Quay St. (at Cross St.). ✆ **091/565811.** Reservations not accepted. Fixed-price 3-course dinner €16 ($21); dinner main courses €10–€18 ($13–$23). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 5–10:30pm.

INEXPENSIVE

Busker Brown's ★ CAFE/BAR A modern cafe in a medieval building, Busker Brown's is a favorite of locals and travelers for its funky decor that mixes ancient stonework with modern tables and art, as well as for its big breakfasts and homemade, inexpensive lunches and dinners. It offers everything from hamburgers and sandwiches to fresh stews and pasta. It also stays open late—one of a few Galway eateries to do so.

Upper Cross St. ✆ **091/563377.** Main courses €5–€12 ($6.50–$16). MC, V. Mon–Sat 10:30am–11:30pm; Sun 12:30–11:30pm.

EXPLORING GALWAY CITY

Tucked between the Atlantic and the navy blue waters of Lough Corrib, Galway was founded by fishermen. After an invasion by the Anglo-Norman forces of Richard de Burgo in the early 13th century, it walled itself in, as so many cities did then, although little remains of those old stone walls. Local legend has it that Christopher Columbus attended Mass at Galway's **St. Nicholas Collegiate Church** in 1477, before one of several attempts to circumnavigate the globe. Originally built in 1320, the church has been enlarged, rebuilt, and embellished over the years.

In the center of town, on Shop Street, is **Lynch's Castle,** dating from 1490 and renovated in the 19th century. It's the oldest Irish medieval town house used daily for commercial purposes (it's now a branch of the Allied Irish Bank). The stern exterior is watched over by a handful of amusing gargoyles

In the 16th and 17th centuries, Galway was wealthy and cosmopolitan, with particularly strong trade links to Spain. Close to the city docks, you can still see the area where Spanish merchants unloaded cargo from their galleons. The **Spanish Arch** was one of four arches built in 1594, and the **Spanish Parade** is a small open square.

The hub of the city is a pedestrian park at **Eyre Square** (pronounced *Air Square*), officially called the John F. Kennedy Park in commemoration of his visit here in June 1963, a few months before his assassination. From here, it's a minute's walk to the **medieval quarter** with its festive, Left Bank atmosphere.

MORE ATTRACTIONS

Galway Irish Crystal Heritage Centre ★★ Visitors to this distinctive crystal manufacturer can watch the craftsmen at work—blowing, shaping, and hand-cutting glassware—and then go shop for the perfect pieces to take back home. Glassmaking demonstrations are continuous on weekdays. The shop and restaurant are open daily.

East of the city on the main Dublin road. (N6), Merlin Park, Galway, County Galway. ✆ **091/757311.** Free admission. Guided tour €4 ($5.20) adults, €3 ($3.90) seniors and students, €2 ($2.60) children, €10 ($13) families. Year-round Mon–Fri 9am–5:30pm; Sat 10am–5:30pm; Sun 11am–5pm.

Nora Barnacle House ★ Just across from the St. Nicholas church clock tower, this restored 19th-century terrace house was once the home of Nora Barnacle, who later would become the wife of James Joyce. It contains letters, photographs, and other exhibits on the lives of the Joyces and their connections with Galway.

Bowling Green. ✆ **091/564743.** Admission €1.60 ($2.10). Mid-May to mid-Sept Mon–Sat 10am–5pm (closed for lunch), and by appointment.

CRUISES & TOURS

BUS TOURS Galway is small enough to be walkable, but **Galway Panoramic's** open-top buses are a handy way to explore the highlights (✆ **01/670-8822;** €11/$14 adults, €5/$6.50 children). The buses run on a loop—when you see something you want to explore, you just hop off and hop back on when the next bus comes around. In the summertime only, **Bus Éireann** (✆ **091/562000;** www.buseireann.ie; €22/$29 adults, €16/$21 children) offers tours that depart from the bus station in Galway City for 8-hour tours across the Connemara section of Galway.

BOAT TOURS The ***Corrib Princess*** (✆ **091/592447;** www.corribprincess.ie; €12/$16 adults, €7/$9 children) is a 157-passenger, two-deck boat that cruises along the River Corrib, with commentary on points of interest. The trip lasts 90 minutes, passing castles, historical sites, and wildlife. There is a full bar and snack service. You can buy tickets at the dock or in the tourist office.

ENJOYING THE GREAT OUTDOORS

BICYCLING To rent a bike, contact **Celtic Cycles,** Queen Street (✆ **091/566606**), or **Richard Walsh Cycles,** Headford Road, Woodquay (✆ **091/565710**).

FISHING Set beside the River Corrib, Galway City and nearby Connemara are popular fishing centers for salmon and sea trout. For the latest information on requirements for licenses and local permits, check with the **Western Regional Fisheries Board (WRFB),** Weir Lodge, Earl's Island, Galway (✆ **091/563118;** www.wrfb.ie). For gear and equipment, try **Duffys Fishing,** 5 Main Guard St. (✆ **091/562367**), **Freeney Sport Shop,** 19 High St. (✆ **091/568794**), or **Great Outdoors Sports Centre,** Eglinton Street (✆ **091/562869**).

GOLF Less than 8km (5 miles) east of Galway is the 18-hole, par-72 championship **Galway Bay Golf & Country Club,** Renville, Oranmore, County Galway (✆ **091/790503**). It charges greens fees of €55 ($72) weekdays, €70 ($91) weekends. Less than 3km (2 miles) west of the city is the 18-hole, par-69 seaside course at **Galway Golf Club,** Blackrock, Galway (✆ **091/522033**). Greens fees are €50 ($65) weekdays, €60 ($78) weekends.

HORSEBACK RIDING Riding enthusiasts head to **Aille Cross Equestrian Centre,** Aille Cross, Loughrea, County Galway (✆ **091/841216;** www.aille-cross.com), about 32km (20 miles) east of Galway City. Run by personable Willy Leahy (who has appeared often on American television), this facility is very well known, with 50 horses and 20 Connemara ponies. For about €25 to €35 ($33–$46) an hour, you can ride through nearby farmlands, woodlands, forest trails, and along beaches.

THE SHOPPING SCENE: KERRY GLASS & MORE

Given its status as both a tourist hub and a vibrant arts community, it's unsurprising that Galway has fairly good shopping. Some of the best is in tiny malls of small shops clustered in historic buildings, such as the **Cornstore** on Middle Street, the **Grainstore** on Lower Abbeygate Street, and the **Bridge Mills,** a 430-year-old mill building beside the River Corrib. **Eyre Square Centre,** the downtown area's largest shopping mall, with 50 shops, incorporates a section of Galway's medieval town wall into its complex.

Mac Eocagain/Galway Woollen Market (21 High St.) is an excellent resource if you're shopping for traditional Aran hand-knits and colorful hand-loomed sweaters and capes, as well as linens, lace, and sheepskins. Each item has two prices, one including value-added tax (VAT) and one tax-free for non–European Union (E.U.) residents. A few doors away, **O'Máille (O'Malley)** (16 High St.; www.omaille.com) does a fabulous business in quality Irish tweeds, knitwear, and traditional Aran knits.

Mulligan (5 Middle St. Court,) has a huge stock of Irish and Scottish traditional CDs, as well as folk music from around the world.

For jewelry, **Fallers of Galway** is a prime source of Claddagh rings, many made on the premises (Williamsgate St.; www.fallers.com) Another option is **Hartmann & Son Ltd.,** a traditional Galway jeweler with a far-reaching reputation as watchmakers, goldsmiths, and makers of Claddagh rings.

For handicrafts, visit **Keven McGuire and Son** (3 Lyndon Court) in a whitewashed cottage and a gray stone building 1 block from Eyre Square, where it sells leather Celtic and modern handbags, briefcases, music cases, and wallets.

12

Italy

Italy is a feast for the senses and the intellect. Any mention of Italy calls up visions of Pompeii, the Renaissance, and Italy's rich treasury of art and architecture. But some of the country's best experiences can involve the simple act of living in the Italian style, eating the regional cuisines, and enjoying the countryside.

1 Rome ★★★

The city of Rome is simultaneously strident, romantic, and sensual. And although the romantic poets would probably be horrified at today's traffic, pollution, overcrowding, crime, political discontent, and barely controlled chaos of modern Rome, the city endures and thrives in a way that is called "eternal."

It would take a lifetime to know a city filled with 27 centuries of artistic achievement. A cradle of Western civilization, Rome is timeless with its ancient history, art, and architecture, containing more treasures per square foot than any other city in the world. Caesar was assassinated here, Charlemagne crowned, and the list of the major events goes on and on.

In between all that absorption of culture and history, take time to relax and meet the Romans. Savor their succulent pastas while enjoying a fine glass of wine on one of the city's splendid squares where one of the reigning Caesars might have gone before you, or perhaps Michelangelo or Raphael.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **By Plane** Chances are you'll arrive at Rome's **Leonardo da Vinci International Airport** (✆ **06-65951**), popularly known as **Fiumicino,** 30km (19 miles) from the city center. There is a tourist information office at the airport's Terminal B, International arrival, open daily 8:15am to 7pm.

There's a **train station** in the airport. To get into the city, follow the signs marked TRENI for the 30-minute shuttle to Rome's main station, **Stazione Termini.** The shuttle (the Leonardo Express) runs from 6:37am to 11:37pm for 11€ ($15) one-way. On the way, you'll pass a machine dispensing tickets, or you can buy them in person near the tracks if you don't have small bills on you. When you arrive at Termini, get out of the train quickly and grab a baggage cart. (It's a long schlep from the track to the exit or to the other train connections, and baggage carts can be scarce.)

A **taxi** from da Vinci airport to the city costs 40€ ($56) and up for the 1-hour trip, depending on traffic. The expense might be worth it if you have a lot of luggage. Call ✆ **06-6645,** 06-3570, or 06-4994 for information.

If you arrive on a charter flight at **Ciampino Airport** (✆ **06-65951**), you can take a COTRAL bus (✆ **06-57031**), which departs every 30 minutes for the Anagnina stop of Metropolitana (subway) Line A. Take Line A to Stazione Termini, where you can make your final connections. Trip time is about 45 minutes and costs 1€ ($1.45). A **taxi** from here to Rome costs the same as the one from the da Vinci airport (above), but the trip is shorter (about 40 min.).

By Train or Bus Trains and buses (including trains from the airport) arrive in the center of old Rome at the silver **Stazione Termini,** Piazza dei Cinquecento (✆ **892021**). This is the train, bus, and subway transportation hub for all Rome, and it is surrounded by many hotels (especially cheaper ones).

If you're taking the **Metropolitana** (subway), follow the illuminated red-and-white M signs. To catch a bus, go straight through the outer hall and enter the sprawling bus lot of **Piazza dei Cinquecento.** You'll also find **taxis** there.

The station is filled with services. At a branch of the Banca San Paolo IMI (at tracks 1 and 24), you can exchange money. **Informazioni Ferroviarie** (in the outer hall) dispenses information on rail travel to other parts of Italy. There's also a **tourist information booth,** baggage services, newsstands, and snack bars.

By Car From the north, the main access route is the **Autostrada del Sole (A1),** which cuts through Milan and Florence, or you can take the coastal route, **SSI Aurelia,** from Genoa. If you're driving north from Naples, you take the southern lap of the **Autostrada del Sole (A2).** All the autostrade join with the **Grande Raccordo Anulare,** a ring road encircling Rome, channeling traffic into the congested city.

VISITOR INFORMATION Information is available at Azienda Provinciale di Turismo (APT; www.aptprovroma.it), Via XX Settembre 26 (✆ **06-421381**). The headquarters are open Monday to Saturday 9am to 7pm.

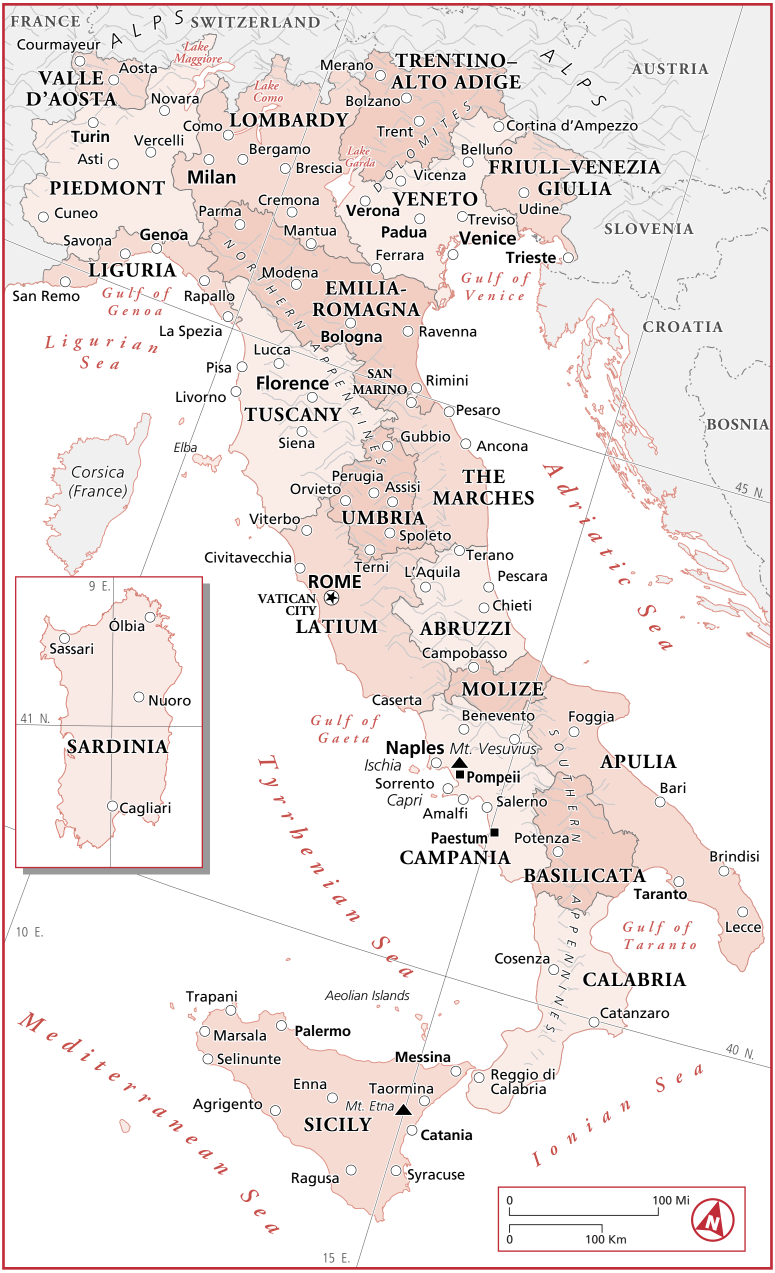
More helpful, and stocking maps and brochures, are the offices maintained by the **Comune di Roma** at various sites around the city. They're staffed daily from 9am to 6pm, except the one at Termini (daily 9am–7pm). The main office is at Via Parigi 5 (✆ **06-488991**). Here are the addresses and phone numbers of others in Stazione Termini (✆ 06-48913322); in Piazza dei Cinquecento, outside Termini (✆ 06-4740031); on Lungotevere Vaticano near the Castel Sant'Angelo (✆ 06-68809707); in Piazza San Giovanni, in Laterano (✆ 06-77203535); on Via Nazionale, near the Palazzo delle Esposizioni (✆ 06-47824525); on Via dei Fori Imperiali, near the Colosseum (✆ 06-69924307); on Piazza Sonnino, in Trastevere (✆ 06-58333457); on Piazza Cinque Lune, near Piazza Navona (✆ 06-68809240); and on Via dell'Olmata, near Piazza Santa Maria Maggiore (✆ 06-4740955). All phone calls for Comune di Roma are directed through a centralized number: ✆ 06-82059127. Call daily 9am to 7pm.

Enjoy Rome, Via Marghera 8A (✆ **06-4451843;** www.enjoyrome.com), was begun by an English-speaking couple, Fulvia and Pierluigi. They dispense information about almost everything in Rome and are far more pleasant and organized than the Board of Tourism. They'll also help you find a hotel room, with no service charge (in anything from a hostel to a three-star hotel). Open Monday to Friday 9am to 7pm, Saturday 9am to 2pm.

CITY LAYOUT Arm yourself with a detailed street map, not the general overview handed out free at tourist offices. Most hotels hand out a pretty good version at their front desks.

The bulk of ancient, Renaissance, and baroque Rome (as well as the train station) lies on the east side of the **Tiber River (Fiume Tevere),** which meanders through town. However, several important landmarks are on the other side: **St. Peter's Basilica** and the **Vatican,** the **Castel Sant'Angelo,** and the colorful **Trastevere** neighborhood. The

Italy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Turin
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Cortina d'Ampezzo
Vercelli
Asti
Bergamo
Lake Garda
Belluno
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PIEDMONT
Cremona
VENETO
Udine
Cuneo
Parma
Verona
Treviso
SLOVENIA
Mantua
Padua
Venice
Savona
Genoa
Ferrara
Trieste
LIGURIA
NORTHERN APPENNINES
Modena
Gulf of Venice
San Remo
Gulf of Genoa
Rapallo
EMILIA-ROMAGNA
La Spezia
Bologna
Ravenna
CROATIA
Ligurian Sea
Lucca
Pisa
SAN MARINO
Rimini
Livorno
Florence
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TUSCANY
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Perugia
THE MARCHES
Orvieto
Assisi
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Cagliari
MOLIZE
Caserta
Benevento
Foggia
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Mt. Vesuvius
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Pompeii
APULIA
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city's various quarters are linked by large boulevards (large, at least, in some places) that have mostly been laid out since the late 19th century.

Major streets fan out from the **Vittorio Emanuele Monument,** a controversial pile of snow-white Brescian marble that's often compared to a wedding cake. Running north to **Piazza del Popolo** and the city wall is **Via del Corso,** one of Rome's main streets. Called simply "Il Corso," it's noisy, congested, and crowded with buses and shoppers. Going west across the Tiber to St. Peter's is **Corso Vittorio Emanuele.** Running toward the Colosseum is **Via del Fori Imperiali,** named for the excavated imperial forums on either side. **Via Quattro Novembre** runs east and becomes **Via Nazionale** before terminating at Piazza della Reppublica.

GETTING AROUND Much of the inner core is traffic-free, so you'll need to walk whether you like it or not. However, in many parts of the city it's hazardous and uncomfortable because of the crowds, heavy traffic, and narrow sidewalks.

By Subway The **Metropolitana,** or **Metro,** for short, is the fastest means of transportation, operating daily from 5:30am to 11:30pm. A big red M indicates the entrance to the subway. The Metro operates until 12:30am on Saturday.

Tickets are 1€ ($1.45) and are available from *tabacchi* (tobacco shops), many newsstands, and vending machines at all stations. Booklets of tickets are available at tabacchi and in some terminals. You can also buy a **tourist pass** on either a daily or a weekly basis (see "By Bus/Tram," below).

By Bus/Tram Roman buses and trams are operated by an organization known as **ATAC (Azienda Tramvie e Autobus del Comune di Roma),** Via Ostiense 131L (✆ **800-431784** for information). For 1€ ($1.45) you can ride to most parts of Rome, although it can be slow going in all that traffic and the buses are often very crowded. Your ticket is valid for 75 minutes, and you can get on many buses and trams during that time by using the same ticket. Ask where to buy bus tickets, or buy them in *tabacchi* or bus terminals; there are no ticket-issuing machines on the vehicles. At Stazione Termini, you can buy a special **tourist pass,** which costs 4€ ($5.60) for a day or 16€ ($22) for a week. This pass allows you to ride on the ATAC network without bothering to buy individual tickets. The tourist pass is also valid on the subway. One-day and weekly tickets are also available at tabacchi, many newsstands, and at vending machines at all stations.

At the **bus information booth** at Piazza dei Cinquecento, in front of the Stazione Termini, you can purchase a directory with maps of the routes.

By Taxi Don't count on hailing a taxi on the street or even getting one at a stand. If you're going out, have your hotel call one. At a restaurant, ask the waiter or cashier to dial for you. If you want to phone for yourself, try one of these numbers: ✆ **06-6645,** 06-3570, or 06-4994. The meter begins at 2.35€ ($3) for the first 3km (1¾ miles) and then rises .65€ (90¢) per kilometer. Every suitcase costs 1€ ($1.45), and on Sunday a 3.35€ ($4.70) supplement is assessed. There's another 5€ ($7) supplement from 10pm to 7am. The driver will expect a 10% tip.

By Car All roads might lead to Rome, but you don't want to drive once you get here. You might want to rent a car to explore the countryside around Rome or drive to another city. You can rent a car from **Hertz,** at Via Giovanni Giolitti 34 (✆ **06-4740389;** Metro: Termini); and **Avis** is at Stazione Termini (✆ **06-4814373;** Metro: Termini). **Maggiore,** an Italian company, has an office at Stazione Termini (✆ **06-4883715;** Metro: Termini). There are also branches of the major rental agencies at the airport.

By Bike The most convenient place to rent bikes is **Bici & Baci**, Via del Viminale 5 (✆ **06-4828443;** www.bicibaci.com), lying 2 blocks west of Stazione Termini, the main rail station. Prices start at 3€ ($4.20) per hour or 11€ ($15) per day.

FAST FACTS: Rome

American Express The Rome offices are at Piazza di Spagna 38 (✆ **06-67641;** Metro: Spagna). The travel service is open Monday to Friday 9am to 5:30pm. Hours for the financial and mail services are Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm. The tour desk is open during the same hours as those for travel services and also Saturday from 9am to 12:30pm (May–Oct).

Banks In general, banks are open Monday to Friday 8:30am to 1:30pm and 3 to 4pm. Some banks keep afternoon hours from 2:45 to 3:45pm. Theres a branch of **Citibank** at Via Abruzzi 2 (✆ **06-421561;** Metro: Barberini). The bank office is open Monday through Friday from 8:30am to 1:30pm.

Currency Exchange There are exchange offices throughout the city. They're also at all major rail and air terminals, including Stazione Termini, where the *cambio* (exchange office) beside the rail information booth is open daily from 8am to 8pm. At some cambio, you'll have to pay commissions, often 1½ percent. Likewise, banks often charge commissions.

Dentists For dental work, go to **American Dental Arts Rome,** Via del Governo Vecchio (✆ **06-6832613;** bus: 41, 44, or 46B), which uses all the latest technology, including laser dentist techniques. There is also a 24-hour **G. Eastman Dental Hospital** at Viale Regina Elena 287B (✆ **06-844831;** Metro: Policlinico).

Doctors Call the U.S. Embassy at ✆ **06-46741** for a list of doctors who speak English. All big hospitals have a 24-hour first-aid service (go to the emergency room, *Pronto Soccorso*). You'll find English-speaking doctors at the privately run **Salvator Mundi International Hospital,** Viale delle Mura Gianicolensi 67 (✆ **06-588961;** bus: 115A). For medical assistance, the **International Medical Center** is on 24-hour duty at Via Firenze 47 (✆ **06-4882371;** Metro: Piazza Repubblica). You could also contact the **Rome American Hospital,** Via Emilio Longoni 69 (✆ **06-22551**), with English-speaking doctors on duty 24 hours.

Drugstores A reliable pharmacy is **Farmacia Internazionale,** Piazza Barberini 49 (✆ **06-4825456;** Metro: Barberini), open day and night. Most pharmacies are open from 8:30am to 1pm and 4 to 7:30pm. In general, pharmacies follow a rotation system, so several are always open on Sunday.

Embassies & Consulates The **embassy of the United States,** Via Vettorio Veneto 119A (✆ **06-46-741;** Metro Barberini), is open Monday through Friday from 8:30am to 5:30pm.

Emergencies Dial ✆ **113** for an ambulance or to call the police; to report a fire, call ✆ **115.**

Internet Access You can log onto the Web in central Rome at **Internet Train,** Via dei Marrucini 12 (✆ **06-4454953;** bus: 71, 204, or 492). It is open Monday to Friday 9:30am to 1am, Saturday 3pm to 1am. A 30-minute visit costs 1.50€ ($2.10).

Mail It's easiest to buy stamps and mail letters and postcards at your hotel's front desk. Stamps *(francobolli)* can also be bought at tabacchi. You can buy special stamps at the **Vatican City Post Office,** adjacent to the information office in St. Peter's Square; it's open Monday to Friday 8:30am to 7pm and Saturday 8:30am to 6pm. Letters mailed from Vatican City reach North America far more quickly than mail sent from Rome for the same cost.

Newspapers & Magazines You can get the *International Herald Tribune, USA Today,* the *New York Times,* and *Time* and *Newsweek* magazines at most newsstands. The expat magazine (in English) *Wanted in Rome* comes out monthly and lists current events and shows. If you want to try your hand at reading Italian, *Time Out* now has a Rome edition.

Safety Pickpocketing is the most common problem. Men should keep their wallets in their front pocket or inside jacket pocket. Purse snatching is also commonplace, with young men on Vespas who ride past you and grab your purse. To avoid trouble, stay away from the curb and keep your purse on the wall side of your body and place the strap across your chest. Don't lay anything valuable on tables or chairs, where it can be grabbed up. Gypsy children have long been a particular menace, although the problem isn't as severe as in years past. If they completely surround you, you'll often literally have to fight them off. They might approach you with pieces of cardboard hiding their stealing hands. Just keep repeating a firm no!

Telephone The **country code** for Italy is **39.** The **city code** for Rome is **06;** use this code when calling from *anywhere* outside or inside Italy—you must add it within Rome itself (and you must include the 0 every time, even when calling from abroad).

Toilets Facilities are found near many of the major sights and often have attendants, as do those at bars, clubs, restaurants, cafes, and hotels, plus the airports and the rail station. (There are public restrooms near the Spanish Steps, or you can stop at the McDonald's there—it's one of the nicest branches of the Golden Arches you'll ever see!) You're expected to leave .10€ to .20€ (15¢–30¢) for the attendant. It's not a bad idea to carry some tissues in your pocket when you're out and about as well.

WHERE TO STAY

NEAR STAZIONE TERMINI

Very Expensive

St. Regis Grand ★★★ This restored landmark is more plush and upscale than any hotel in the area. It is a magnificent Roman palazzo, combining Italian and French styles in decoration and furnishings. Guest rooms, most of which are exceedingly spacious, are luxuriously furnished. Hand-painted frescoes are installed above each headboard. For the best rooms and the finest service, ask to be booked on the St. Regis floor.

Via Vittorio Emanuele Orlando 3, 00185 Roma. ✆ **06-47091.** Fax 06-4747307. www.stregis.com/grandrome. 161 units. 435€–1,030€ ($609–$1,442) double; from 1,080€ ($1,512) junior suite; from 2,270€ ($3,178) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 20€–30€ ($28–$42). Metro: Repubblica. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; fitness center; sauna; room service; massage; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, coffeemaker, hair dryer, iron, safe.

Moderate

Residenza Cellini ★ *Finds* This undiscovered small hotel from the '30s is run by the English-speaking De Paolis family, which welcomes you with warm hospitality. Bedrooms are spacious and traditionally furnished, with polished wood pieces and Oriental carpets on the hardwood floors. The king-size beds have hypoallergenic orthopedic mattresses, and the bathrooms come with hydrojet shower or Jacuzzi.

Via Modena 5, 00184 Roma. ✆ **06-47825204.** Fax 06-47881806. www.residenzacellini.it. 6 units. 145€–240€ ($203–$336) double; 165€–260€ ($231–$364) junior suite. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 25€ ($35). Metro: Repubblica. **Amenities:** Bar; room service; laundry service; dry cleaning; all nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

Inexpensive

Yes Hotel *Value* We'd definitely say yes to this hotel, which lies only 100m (328 ft.) from Stazione Termini. It's a two-story hotel housed in a restored 19th-century building with simple, well-chosen furnishings resting on tiled floors. There is a sleek, modern look to both the bedrooms and public areas, and the staff is helpful but not effusive.

Via Magenta 15, 00185 Roma. ✆ **06-44363836.** Fax 06-44363829. www.yeshotelrome.com. 29 units. 60€–160€ ($84–$224) double. DC, MC, V. Parking 17€ ($24). Metro: Termini. **Amenities:** Bar; room service; laundry service; babysitting; all nonsmoking units. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer, safe.

NEAR VIA VENETO & PIAZZA BARBERINI

Very Expensive

Hotel Eden ★★★ The Eden is Rome's top choice for discerning travelers who like grand comfort but without all the ostentation. The Eden's hilltop position guarantees a panoramic city view from most guest rooms; all are spacious and elegantly appointed with a decor harking back to the late 19th century, plus marble-sheathed bathrooms. Try to get one of the front rooms with a balcony boasting views over Rome.

Via Ludovisi 49, 00187 Roma. ✆ **06-478121.** Fax 06-4821584. www.starwoodhotels.com. 121 units. 680€–840€ ($952–$1,176) double; from 1,940€ ($2,716) suite. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. Parking 60€ ($84). Metro: Piazza Barberini. **Amenities:** Restaurant (La Terrazza; see "Where to Dine," later in this chapter); bar; fitness room; car-rental desk; room service; business center; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning; rooms for those w/limited mobility; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

Expensive

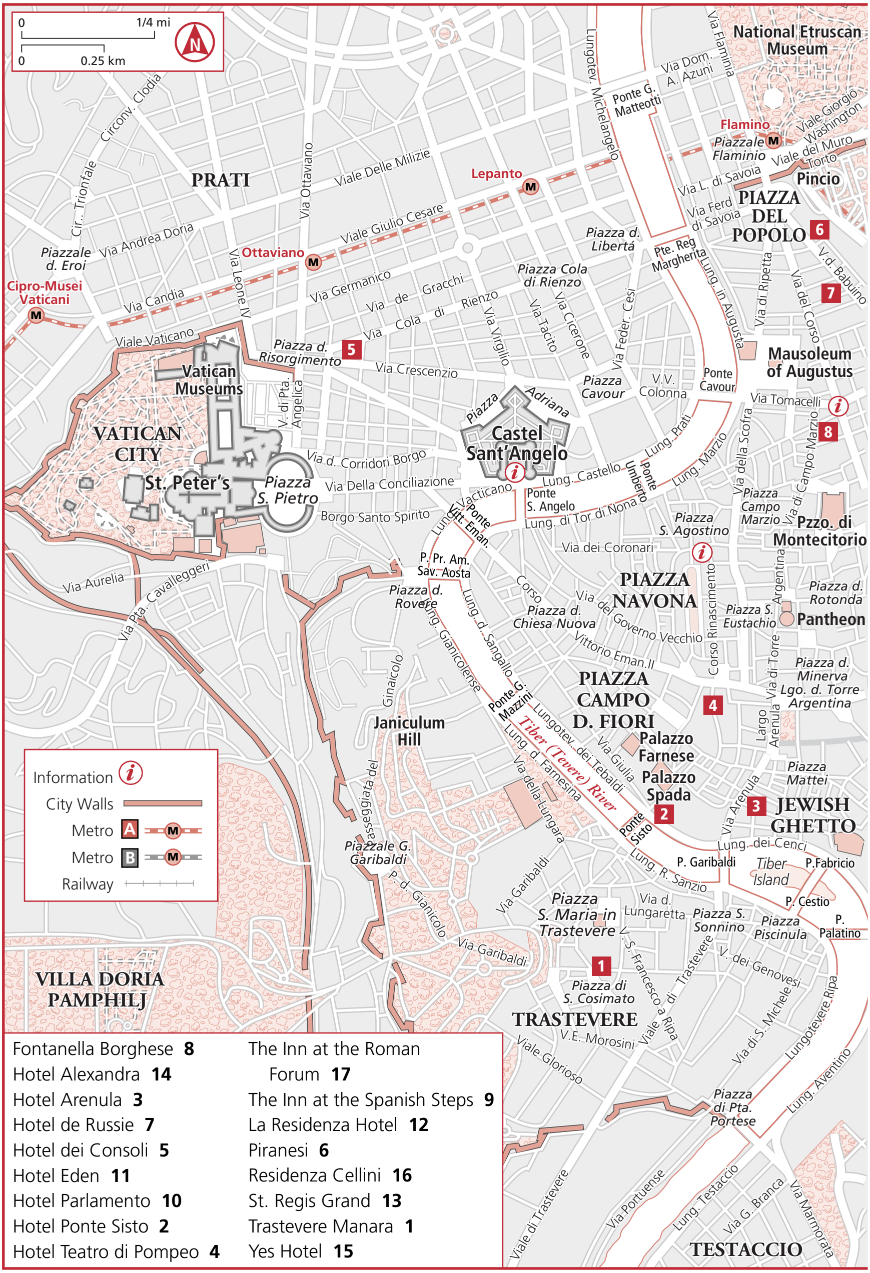
Hotel Alexandra ★ *Finds* This is one of your few chances to stay on Via Veneto without going broke (although it's not exactly cheap). Set behind the stone facade of what was a 19th-century mansion, the Alexandra offers immaculate and soundproof guest rooms. The rooms range from cramped to midsize, but each has been redecorated, filled with antiques or tasteful contemporary pieces. The breakfast room is appealing: Inspired by an Italian garden, it was designed by noted architect Paolo Portoghesi.

Via Vittorio Veneto 18, 00187 Roma. ✆ **06-4881943.** Fax 06-4871804. www.hotelalexandraroma.com. 60 units (some with shower only). 225€–270€ ($315–$378) double; 350€–850€ ($490–$1,190) suite. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 26€–36€ ($36–$50). Metro: Piazza Barberini. **Amenities:** Room service; laundry service; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Moderate

La Residenza Hotel ★★ In a superb but congested location, this little hotel successfully combines intimacy and elegance. A bit old-fashioned and homey, the converted villa has an ivy-covered courtyard and a series of public rooms with Empire divans, oil portraits, and rattan chairs. Terraces are scattered throughout. The guest rooms are generally spacious, containing bentwood chairs and built-in furniture,

Rome Accommodations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Mausoleum of Augustus
Pzzo. di Montecitorio
Pantheon
PIAZZA NAVONA
PIAZZA CAMPO D. FIORI
Palazzo Farnese
Palazzo Spada
JEWISH GHETTO
Tiber Island
Janiculum Hill
VILLA DORIA PAMPHILJ
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TESTACCIO
Tiber (Tevere) River
Lepanto
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Ponte G. Matteotti
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Cir.. Trionfale
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Viale Giulio Cesare
Piazzale d. Eroi
Via Andrea Doria
Via Candia
Viale Vaticano
Via Leone IV
Via Germanico
Via de Gracchi
Via Cola di Rienzo
Piazza d. Libertà
Piazza Cola di Rienzo
Pte. Reg Margherita
Lung. in Augusta
Via di Ripetta
Via del Corso
V. d. Babuino
Piazza d. Risorgimento
Via Crescenzio
Via Virgilio
Via Tacito
Via Cicerone
Via Feder. Cesi
Piazza Cavour
V.V. Colonna
Ponte Cavour
Via Tomacelli
Via d. Pta. Angelica
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Borgo Santo Spirito
Lung. Vaticano
Ponte S. Angelo
Lung. Castello
Lung. Prati
Ponte Umberto
Lung. Marzio
Lung. di Tor di Nona
Via della Scrofa
Piazza Campo Marzio
Via di Campo Marzio
Piazza S. Agostino
Via dei Coronari
Ponte Vitt. Eman.
P. Pr. Am. Sav. Aosta
Piazza d. Rovere
Via Aurelia
Via Pta. Cavalleggeri
Corso Vittorio Eman.II
Piazza d. Chiesa Nuova
Via del Governo Vecchio
Corso Rinascimento
Piazza S. Eustachio
Piazza d. Rotonda
Via di Torre Argentina
Piazza d. Minerva
Lgo. d. Torre Argentina
Largo Arenula
Via Arenula
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Lung. d. Farnesina
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P. d. Gianicolo
Via Garibaldi
Piazza S. Maria in Trastevere
Via d. Lungaretta
Piazza S. Sonnino
Piazza Piscinula
V. dei Genovesi
Via S. Francesco a Ripa
Viale di Trastevere
Piazza di S. Cosimato
V.E. Morosini
Via di S. Michele
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Piazza di Pta. Portese
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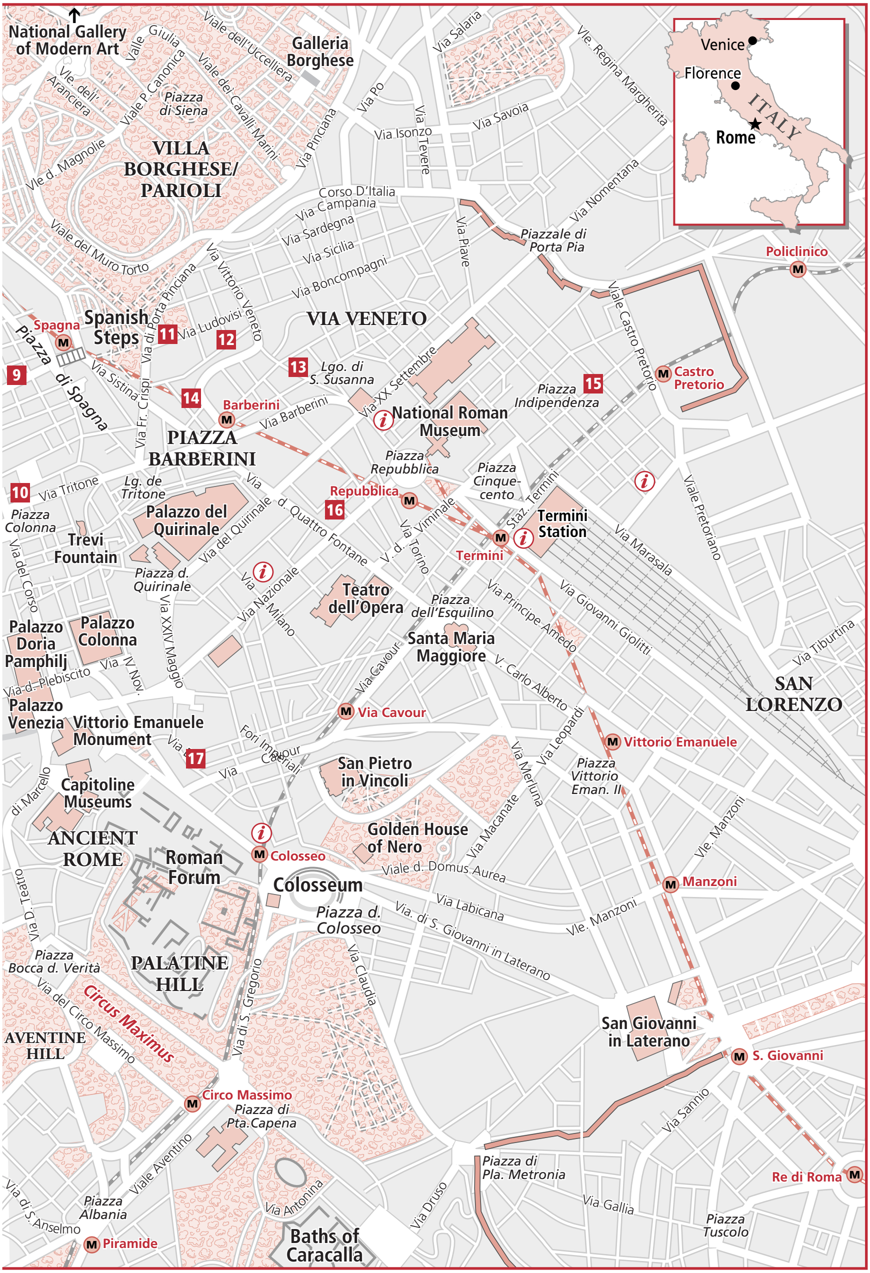
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Via Pinciana
Via Po
Via Salaria
Vle. Regina Margherita
Via Tevere
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Via Viminale
Termini Station
Via Marsala
Piazza Colonna
Palazzo del Quirinale
Via del Quirinale
Trevi Fountain
Via del Corso
Piazza d. Quirinale
Via Nazionale
Via Milano
V. d. Torino
Termini
Teatro dell'Opera
Piazza dell'Esquilino
Via Principe Amedeo
Via Giovanni Giolitti
Via Tiburtina
Palazzo Doria Pamphilj
Palazzo Colonna
Via XXIV Maggio
Via IV Nov.
Via d. Plebiscito
Santa Maria Maggiore
V. Carlo Alberto
Via Cavour
SAN LORENZO
Palazzo Venezia
Vittorio Emanuele Monument
Via Cavour
Fori Imperiali
Via
17
Via Leopardi
Vittorio Emanuele
San Pietro in Vincoli
Via Merulana
Piazza Vittorio Eman. II
Via di Marcello
Capitoline Museums
Vle. Manzoni
ANCIENT ROME
Golden House of Nero
Via Macanate
Roman Forum
Colosseo
Viale d. Domus Aurea
Manzoni
Via D. Teatro
Colosseum
Piazza d. Colosseo
Via Labicana
Via. di S. Giovanni in Laterano
Vle. Manzoni
Piazza Bocca d. Verità
PALATINE HILL
Via Claudia
Via del Circo Massimo
Circus Maximus
Via di S. Gregorio
San Giovanni in Laterano
AVENTINE HILL
S. Giovanni
Circo Massimo
Piazza di Pta.Capena
Via Sannio
Viale Aventino
Piazza di Pla. Metronia
Re di Roma
Via Antonina
Via Druso
Via Gallia
Via di S.Anselmo
Piazza Albania
Piazza Tuscolo
Piramide
Baths of Caracalla

including beds. The dozen or so junior suites boast balconies. The bathrooms have robes, and rooms even come equipped with ice machines.

Via Emilia 22–24, 00187 Roma. ✆ **06-4880789.** Fax 06-485721. www.hotel-la-residenza.com. 29 units. 200€–220€ ($280–$308) double; 240€–250€ ($336–$350) suite. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, MC, V. Parking (limited) 8€ ($11). Metro: Piazza Barberini. **Amenities:** Bar; room service; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

NEAR ANCIENT ROME

Expensive

The Inn at the Roman Forum ★ *Finds* This is one of the secret discoveries of Rome with the Roman Forum itself as a neighbor. A restored 15th-century building dripping with antiquity, the inn even has a small section of Trajan's Marketplace on site. Sleek, classically styled bedrooms are spread across three upper floors, opening onto views of the heart of Rome. Three back bedrooms open onto a walled-in garden complete with fig and palm trees. The most elegant and expensive double has a private patio with a designer bathroom.

Via degli Ibernesi 30, 00184 Roma. ✆ **06-69190970.** Fax 06-45438802. www.theinnattheromanforum.com. 12 units. 210€–800€ ($294–$1,120) double; from 450€ ($630) suite. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 30€ ($42). Bus: 64 or 117. **Amenities:** Bar; room service; laundry service; all nonsmoking units. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

Inexpensive

Hotel Arenula ★ *Value* At last a hotel has opened in Rome's old Jewish ghetto, and it's a winner and quite affordable. The restored building is from the 19th century, and the Patta family turned it into this undiscovered and comfortable inn. Close at hand are such attractions as the Pantheon, the Colosseum, and the Piazza Navona. Rooms are furnished in a tasteful, traditional way. They are most inviting and comfortable, with pale-wood pieces and immaculate bathrooms, each with shower. There's no elevator, so be prepared to climb some stairs.

Via Santa Maria de Calderari 47, 00186 Roma. ✆ **06-6879454.** Fax 06-6896188. www.hotelarenula.com. 50 units. 125€ ($175) double. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Colosseo. Bus: 40. **Amenities:** Breakfast lounge; room service. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer.

NEAR CAMPO DE' FIORI

Moderate

Hotel Teatro di Pompeo ★★ *Finds* Built atop the ruins of the Theater of Pompey, this small charmer lies near the spot where Julius Caesar met his end on the Ides of March. Intimate and refined, it's on a quiet piazza near the Palazzo Farnese and Campo de' Fiori. The rooms are decorated in an old-fashioned Italian style with hand-painted tiles, and the beamed ceilings date from the days of Michelangelo. The guest rooms range from small to medium in size, each with a tidy but cramped bathroom.

Largo del Pallaro 8, 00186 Roma. ✆ **06-68300170.** Fax 06-68805531. www.hotelteatrodipompeo.it. 13 units (shower only). 180€–210€ ($252–$294) double; 240€–270€ ($336–$378) triple. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: 46, 62, or 64. **Amenities:** Bar; room service; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

NEAR THE SPANISH STEPS

Very Expensive

Hotel de Russie ★★★ *Kids* This government-rated five-star hotel has raised the bar for every other hotel in the city. Just off the Piazza del Popolo, it reopened in spring 2000 to media acclaim for its opulent furnishings and choice location. Public areas are glossy and contemporary. About 30% of the bedrooms are conservative, with traditional furniture, while the remaining 70% are more minimalist, with a stark and striking style.

Via del Babuino 9, 00187 Roma. ✆ **800/323-7500** in the U.S. and Canada, or 06-328881. Fax 06-3288888. www.roccofortehotels.com. 125 units. 650€–940€ ($910–$1,316) double; from 1,320€ ($1,848) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Flaminia. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; fitness center; spa; Jacuzzi; sauna; children's programs; salon; room service; babysitting; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

The Inn at the Spanish Steps ★★★ *Finds* This intimate, upscale inn was the first new hotel to open in this location in years. Every room is furnished in an authentic period decor, featuring antiques, elegant draperies, and parquet floors. The superior units come with fireplace, a frescoed or beamed ceiling, and a balcony. The hotel is completely modern, from its hypoallergenic mattresses to its generous wardrobe space.

Via dei Condotti 85, 00187 Roma. ✆ **06-69925657.** Fax 06-6786470. www.atspanishsteps.com. 24 units. 330€–650€ ($462–$910) double; 1,100€ ($1,540) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Rates include buffet breakfast. Metro: Piazza di Spagna. **Amenities:** Bar; room service; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Expensive

Piranesi ★★ *Finds* Right off the Piazza del Popolo sits one of Rome's most select boutique hotels. If you lodge here, you'll be staying in one of the most historic areas of Rome. Bedrooms are tranquil and decorated in a style evocative of the 18th-century Directoire. Bare pinewood floors and cherrywood furniture are grace notes, as are the immaculate bathrooms with new showers. The most dramatic aspect of the Piranesi is its panoramic rooftop terrace.

Via del Babuino 196, 00187 Roma. ✆ **06-328041.** Fax 06-3610597. www.hotelpiranesi.com. 32 units. 255€–390€ ($357–$546) double; 320€–520€ ($448–$728) suite. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, MC, V. Parking: 35€ ($49). Metro: Flaminio. Bus: 117. **Amenities:** Bar; fitness center; sauna; room service; laundry service; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms; 1 room for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer.

Moderate

Casa Howard ★ *Finds* It's rare to make a discovery in the tourist-trodden Piazza di Spagna area. That's why Casa Howard comes as a pleasant surprise. The B&B occupies about two-thirds of the second floor of a historic structure. The welcoming family owners maintain beautifully furnished guest rooms, each with its own private bathroom (although some bathrooms lie outside the bedrooms in the hallway). The Green Room is the most spacious, with its own en-suite bathroom.

Via Capo le Case 18, 00187 Roma. ✆ **06-69924555.** Fax 06-6794644. www.casahoward.com. 5 units. 170€–240€ ($238–$336) double. MC, V. Metro: Piazza di Spagna. **Amenities:** Room service; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning; all nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, beverage maker, hair dryer, Wi-Fi.

Fontanella Borghese ★ *Finds* Close to the Spanish Steps in the exact heart of Rome, this hotel is on the third and fourth floors of a palace dating from the end of the 18th century. In the midsize bedrooms, plain wooden furniture rests on parquet floors, and everything is in a classical tradition comfortably modernized for today's travelers. Half of the bathrooms come with tubs, the rest with showers. The staff of the front desk is one of the most helpful in central Rome, and the hotel lies within walking distance of the Trevi Fountain, the Pantheon, and the Piazza Navona.

Largo Fontanella Borghese 84, 00186 Roma. ✆ **06-68809-504.** Fax 06-6861295. www.fontanellaborghese.com. 29 units. 175€–255€ ($245–$357) double; 235€–350€ ($329–$490) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking (nearby) 25€ ($35). Metro: Spagna. **Amenities:** Breakfast room; room service. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer.

Inexpensive

Hotel Parlamento The hard-to-find Parlamento has a two-star government rating and moderate prices. Expect a friendly *pensione*-style reception. The furnishings are antiques or reproduction, and carved wood or wrought-iron headboards back the firm beds. The bathrooms were recently redone with heated towel racks, phones, and (in a few) even marble sinks. Rooms are different in style; the best are no. 82, with its original 1800s furniture, and nos. 104, 106, and 107, which open onto the roof garden. You can enjoy the chandeliered and *trompe l'oeil* breakfast room, or carry your cappuccino up to the small roof terrace with its view of San Silvestro's bell tower.

Via delle Convertite 5 (at the intersection with Via del Corso), 00187 Roma. ✆/fax **06-69921000.** www.hotelparlamento.it. 23 units. 90€–170€ ($126–$238) double; 120€–195€ ($168–$273) triple. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 30€ ($42). Metro: Spagna. **Amenities:** Bar; room service; rooftop terrace. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer, safe.

NEAR VATICAN CITY

Moderate

Hotel dei Consoli ★ *Finds* This rather elegant hotel in the Prati district is newly constructed, just a short stroll from the Vatican Museums. The hotel occupies three floors in a building restored in the imperial style, with cornices and columns. All of the bedrooms are handsomely furnished and decorated; draperies and bedding are in elegant silks. Deluxe units have whirlpool baths, as do the junior suites. A roof terrace with a panoramic view crowns the building.

Via Varrone 2 D., 00193 Roma. ✆ **06-68892972.** Fax 06-68212274. www.hoteldeiconsoli.com. 28 units. 300€–320€ ($420–$448) double; 380€–480€ ($532–$672) suite. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 28€–33€ ($39–$46). Metro: Ottaviano–San Pietro. **Amenities:** Bar; room service; laundry service; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, safe.

IN TRASTEVERE

Expensive

Hotel Ponte Sisto ★ *Finds* Steps from the River Tiber, this hotel lies on the most exclusive residential street in historic Rome at the gateway to Trastevere. The hotel is imbued with a bright, fresh look that contrasts with some of the timeworn buildings surrounding it. Windows look out on the core of Renaissance and baroque Rome. This 18th-century structure has been totally renovated with class and elegance. If you can live in the small bedrooms (the singles are really cramped), you'll enjoy this choice address with its cherrywood furnishings.

Via dei Pettinari 64, 00186 Roma. ✆ **06-6863100.** Fax 06-68301712. www.hotelpontesisto.it. 103 units. 385€ ($539) double; 535€ ($749) suite. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 26€ ($36). Tram 8. **Amenities:** Restaurant for guests only; room service; laundry service; dry cleaning; garden; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Inexpensive

Trastevere Manara ★ *Value* Manara opened its restored doors in 1998 to meet the demand for accommodations in Trastevere. This little gem has fresh, bright bedrooms with immaculate tiles. All of the small bathrooms have also been renovated and contain showers. The price is hard to beat for those who want to stay in one of the most atmospheric sections of Rome. Most of the rooms open onto the lively Piazza San Cisimato, and all of them have comfortable, albeit functional, furnishings.

Via L. Manara 24–25, 00153 Roma. ✆ **06-5814713.** Fax 06-5881016. 18 units. 103€–105€ ($144–$147) double. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: H. Tram: 8. **Amenities:** Breakfast room. *In room:* TV.

WHERE TO DINE

NEAR STAZIONE TERMINI

Expensive

Agata e Romeo ★★ NEW ROMAN One of the most charming places near the Vittorio Emanuele Monument is this striking duplex restaurant done up in turn-of-the-20th-century Liberty style. You'll enjoy the creative cuisine of Romeo Caraccio (who manages the dining room) and his wife, Agata Parisella (who prepares her own version of sophisticated Roman food). The chef is equally adept at fish or meat dishes, including filet of bison with peppercorn and a mushroom sauce or else turbot with an arugula sauce and a flavoring of Pernod. The most luscious dessert is Agata's *millefoglie,* puff pastry stuffed with almonds.

Via Carlo Alberto 45. ✆ **06-4466115.** Reservations recommended. All pastas 30€ ($42); meat and fish 40€ ($56). AE, DC, MC, V. Tues–Fri 1–2:30pm and 8–10:30pm and Mon 8–10:30pm. Closed Aug 4–27. Metro: Vittorio Emanuele.

Inexpensive

Monte Arci ROMAN/SARDINIAN On a cobblestone street near Piazza Indipendenza, this restaurant is set behind a sienna-colored facade. It features Roman and Sardinian specialties such as *nialoreddus* (a regional form of gnocchetti); pasta with clams, lobster, or the musky-earthy notes of porcini mushrooms; and delicious lamb sausage flavored with herbs and pecorino cheese. The best pasta dish we sampled was *paglia e fieno al Monte Arci* (homemade pasta with pancetta, spinach, cream, and Parmesan). It's all home cooking, hearty but not that creative.

Via Castelfirdardo 33. ✆ **06-4941220.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 8€–15€ ($11–$21); fixed-price menu 25€ ($35). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri 12:30–3pm; Mon–Sat 7–11:30pm. Closed Aug. Metro: Stazione Termini or Repubblica.

Trimani Wine Bar ★ CONTINENTAL Opened as a tasting center for French and Italian wines, spumantis, and liqueurs, this is an elegant wine bar with a stylish but informal decor and comfortable seating. More than 30 wines are available by the glass. To accompany them, you can choose from a bistro-style menu, with dishes such as salad niçoise, vegetarian pastas, herb-laden bean soups *(fagiole),* and quiche. Also available is a wider menu, including meat and fish courses. The specialty is the large range of little *bruschette* with cheese and radicchio—the chef orders every kind of prosciutto and cheese from all over Italy. The dishes are matched with the appropriate wines. The dessert specialty is cinnamon cake with apples and a flavor of fresh rosemary.

Trimani maintains a shop about 37m (120 ft.) from its wine bar, at V. Goito 20 (✆ **06-4469661**), where you can purchase an astonishing array of Italian wines.

Via Cernaia 37B. ✆ **06-4469630.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 10€–18€ ($14–$25); glass of wine (depending on vintage) 2€–15€ ($2.80–$21). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat 11:30am–3pm and 5:30pm–12:30am (in Dec open also on Sun). Closed 2 weeks in Aug. Metro: Repubblica or Castro Pretorio.

NEAR VIA VENETO & PIAZZA BARBERINI

Very Expensive

La Terrazza ★★★ ITALIAN/INTERNATIONAL La Terrazza serves some of the city's finest cuisine; you get the added bonus of a sweeping view over St. Peter's. Chef Adriano Cavagnini, the wizard behind about a dozen top-notch Italian restaurants around Europe, prepares a seasonally changing menu that's among the most polished in Rome. The pasta specialty is penne filled with ricotta cheese, plus mortadella, walnuts, and Pecorino cheese. Another good dish—rather divine, in fact—is oven-baked rack of lamb with wilted spinach, feta cheese, olives, and a fresh mint sauce.

In the Hotel Eden, Via Ludovisi 49. ✆ **06-478121.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 30€–65€ ($42–$91). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 12:30–2:30pm and 7:30–10:30pm. Metro: Barberini.

Moderate

Colline Emiliane ★★ *Finds* EMILIANA-ROMAGNOLA Serving the *classica cucina bolognese,* Colline Emiliane is a small, family-run place—the owner is the cook and his wife makes the pasta (about the best you'll find in Rome). The house specialty is an inspired *tortellini alla panna* (with cream sauce and truffles). Main courses include *braciola di maiale* (boneless rolled pork cutlets stuffed with ham and cheese, breaded, and sautéed) and an impressive *giambonnetto* (roast veal Emilian style with roast potatoes).

Via Avignonesi 22 (off Piazza Barberini). ✆ **06-4817538.** Reservations highly recommended. Main courses 10€–18€ ($14–$25). MC, V. Tues–Sun 12:45–2:45pm; Tues–Sat 7:45–10:45pm. Closed Aug. Metro: Barberini.

NEAR ANCIENT ROME

Moderate

F.I.S.H. ★ *Finds* SEAFOOD If you've got a dinner date with Madonna and Guy Ritchie, take them here. It remains one of Rome's hottest new restaurants, managing to be both chic and good. Its initials stand for "Fine International Seafood House," and the restaurant lives up to its acronym. It's tiny but choice, and count yourself lucky if you can get a table. The decor is sleek and minimalist. In the bar you can study the creatures in the tropical aquarium, perhaps contemplating one for your dinner. There's an open kitchen, so no culinary secrets here. The sushi and sashimi are the finest and freshest in Rome. A sound culinary technique produces such winning platters as a black squid ravioli stuffed with ricotta and tuna roe, or else *maltagliate* (homemade egg pasta) with octopus and a sultana ragout. Another worthy specialty is basmati and wild rice with scallops and salmon eggs cooked in banana leaves. Sea perch is cooked into a roll and served with couscous and date pie.

Via dei Serpenti 16. ✆ **06-47824962.** Reservations required. Main courses 9€–20€ ($13–$28). AE, DC, MC, V. Tues–Sun 7:30pm–midnight. Closed Aug 7–26, Dec 24–25, and Dec 31–Jan 4. Metro: Colosseo.

Inexpensive

Hostaria Nerone ★ ROMAN/ITALIAN Built atop the ruins of the Golden House of Nero, this trattoria is run by the energetic de Santis family, which cooks, serves, and handles the crowds of hungry locals and visitors. The copious antipasti buffet offers the bounty of Italy's fields and seas. The pastas include savory spaghetti with clams and our favorite, *pasta fagioli* (with beans). There are also grilled crayfish and swordfish, and Italian sausages with polenta. Roman-style tripe is a favorite, but maybe you'll skip it for the *osso buco* (veal shank) with mashed potatoes and seasonal mushrooms. The list of some of the best Italian wines is reasonably priced.

Via Terme di Tito 96. ✆ **06-4817952.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 9€–16€ ($13–$22). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat noon–3pm and 7–11pm. Metro: Colosseo. Bus: 75, 85, 87, 117, or 175.

NEAR CAMPO DE' FIORI & THE JEWISH GHETTO

Moderate

Ristorante del Pallaro ★★ *Finds* ROMAN The cheerful woman in white who emerges with clouds of steam from the bustling kitchen is owner Paola Fazi. The fixed-price menu is the only choice and has made the place famous. Ms. Fazi prepares everything with love, as if she were feeding her extended family. As you sit down, your antipasto, the first of eight courses, appears. Then comes the pasta of the day, followed by roast veal, white meatballs, or (Fri only) dried cod, along with potatoes and eggplant. For your final courses, you're served mozzarella, cake with custard, and fruit in season.

Largo del Pallaro 15. ☎ **06-68801488.** Reservations recommended. Fixed-price menu 25€ ($35). No credit cards. Tues–Sun noon–3:30pm and 7pm–12:30am. Closed Aug 12–25. Bus: 40, 46, 60, 62, or 64.

NEAR PIAZZA NAVONA & THE PANTHEON

Expensive

Il Convivio ★ ROMAN/INTERNATIONAL This is one of the most acclaimed restaurants in Rome, and one of the few to be granted a coveted Michelin star. Its 16th-century building is a classic setting in pristine white with accents of wood. The Troiano brothers turn out an inspired cuisine based on the best and freshest ingredients at the market. For a special pasta, try the homemade ravioli filled with whitefish, marinated tomatoes, and aromatic herbs with an almond and olive pesto. The gourmet rice dish is, of all things, served with a snail sauce, zucchini flowers, scamorza cheese, and porcini mushrooms. The finest poultry selection is breast of guinea fowl under a mustard crust.

Vicolo dei Soldati 31. ☎ **06-6869432.** Reservations required. All main courses 25€–35€ ($35–$49); fixed-price menu 95€ ($133). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat 8–11pm. Bus: 40 or 64. Metro: Piazza di Spagna.

Moderate

Osteria dell'Antiquario ★ *Finds* INTERNATIONAL/ROMAN This virtually undiscovered osteria enjoys a location a few blocks down the Via dei Coronari. In a stone-built stable from the 1500s, this restaurant has three dining rooms used in winter. In nice weather, try to get an outdoor table on the terrace; shaded by umbrellas, they face a view of the Palazzo Lancillotti. Among the most savory offerings is a risotto with pumpkin flowers, scampi, and saffron, or you might also go for the grilled lamb chops with a sauce made with fresh mint.

Piazzetta di S. Simeone 26–27, Via dei Coronari. ☎ **06-6879694.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 12€–25€ ($17–$35). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat 7:30–11pm. Closed 15 days in mid-Aug, Christmas, and Jan 6–30. Bus: 70, 87, or 90.

Inexpensive

Osteria del Gallo ★ *Finds* ROMAN You can escape the tourist traps of the Piazza Navona by finding this place in a tiny little alley off the west/northwest side of the fabled square. The chef/owner comes out to take your order personally. He is justly proud of his homemade pastas such as gnocchi with mussels and arugula; linguine with seafood, and a typical Roman recipe for *tagliolini cacao e pepe* (with cheese and pepper). Menu items include a variety of fresh fish dishes roasted in a salt crust to retain their juice and flavor and filet of beef cooked with green pepper. All desserts are homemade, including one of the best tiramisu turned out in the area.

Vicolo di Montevecchio 27. ☎ **06-6873781.** Reservations highly recommended. Main courses 8€–16€ ($11–$22). AE, DC, MC, V. Wed–Mon 11:30am–3pm and 6:30–11:30pm. Metro: Piazza Navona.

NEAR PIAZZA DEL POPOLO & THE SPANISH STEPS

Expensive

El Toulà ★★ MEDITERRANEAN/VENETIAN Offering sophisticated haute cuisine, El Toulà is the glamorous flagship of an upscale chain that has gone international. The setting is elegant, with vaulted ceilings, large archways, and a charming bar. The impressive, always-changing menu has one section devoted to Venetian specialties in honor of the restaurant's origins. Save room for the seasonal selection of sorbets and sherbets (the cantaloupe and fresh strawberry are celestial); you can request a mixed plate if you'd like to sample several. El Toulà usually isn't crowded at lunchtime.

Via della Lupa 29B. ✆ **06-6873498.** Reservations required for dinner. Main courses 16€–30€ ($22–$42); 5-course tasting menu 70€ ($98); 4-course "flavor of Rome" 65€ ($91). AE, DC, MC, V. Tues–Fri 12:30–3pm; Mon–Sat 7:30–11pm. Closed Aug. Bus: 70, 81, 87, 116, or 196.

Moderate

Dal Bolognese ★ BOLOGNESE This is one of those rare dining spots that's chic but actually lives up to the hype with noteworthy food. To begin, we suggest *misto di pasta:* four pastas, each with a different sauce, arranged on the same plate. Another good choice thin slices of savory Parma ham or the delectable prosciutto and vine-ripened melon. For your main course, specialties that win hearts year after year are *lasagne verde* and tagliatelle *alla bolognese,* and a most recommendable veal cutlets bolognese topped with cheese. They're not inventive, but they're simply superb.

Piazza del Popolo 1–2. ✆ **06-3611426.** Reservations required. Main courses 12€–20€ ($17–$28). AE, DC, MC, V. Tues–Sun 1–3pm and 8:15pm–midnight (last dinner order at 11:15pm). Closed 20 days in Aug. Metro: Flaminio.

Inexpensive

Maccheroni ROMAN In a rustic tavern in the heart of Rome, you can savor food that you usually have to go to the countryside to enjoy. The chef shops wisely for his bevy of regional dishes and backs up his menu with a well-chosen wine list that includes the house Chianti. Pasta is the house specialty, and it's never better than in the spaghetti flavored with bacon and onion. You can also order gnocchi, ravioli, and fettuccine with various sauces. The menu features a traditional Roman cuisine, and everything is well prepared.

Piazza della Copelle 44. ✆ **06-68307895.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 8€–18€ ($11–$25). AE, MC, V. Daily 1–3pm and 8pm–midnight. Metro: Spagna. Bus: 64, 70, 75, or 116.

NEAR VATICAN CITY

Inexpensive

Hostaria dei Bastioni *Value* ROMAN/SEAFOOD This simple but well-managed restaurant is about a minute's walk from the entrance to the Vatican Museums. Although a warm-weather terrace doubles the size during summer, many diners prefer the inside room as an escape from the roaring traffic. The menu features the staples of Rome's culinary repertoire, including fisherman's *risotto* (a broth-simmered rice dish with fresh fish, usually shellfish), a vegetarian *fettuccine alla bastione* with orange-flavored creamy tomato sauce, and an array of grilled fresh fish. The food is first rate and a bargain at these prices.

Via Leone IV 29. ✆ **06-39723034.** Reservations recommended Fri–Sat. Main courses 8€–15€ ($11–$21). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat noon–3pm and 7–11:30pm. Closed July 15–Aug 1. Metro: Ottaviano.

Sicilianbocca ★ *Finds* SICILIAN The best Sicilian restaurant in Rome lies close to the Vatican. Natives of Sicily own and operate this place, and their specialties taste virtually the same as those encountered in Sicily itself. The menu features a large variety of delectable smoked fish, including salmon, swordfish, and tuna. The homemade pastas here are the best Sicilian versions in town, especially the classic *maccheroni alla Norma,* with ricotta, a savory tomato sauce, and sautéed eggplant. The ricotta and pear cake, topped with steaming hot fudge, is a celestial delight.

Via E. Faà di Bruno 26. ✆ **06-3738400.** Reservations not required. Main courses 10€–20€ ($14–$28). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat 1:30–3pm and 8–11:30pm. Closed 3 weeks in Aug. Metro: Ottaviano San Pietro.

IN TRASTEVERE

Expensive

Alberto Ciarla ★★ SEAFOOD The Ciarla, in an 1890 building in an obscure corner of an enormous square, is Trastevere's best restaurant and one of its most expensive. You'll be greeted with a cordial reception and a lavish display of seafood on ice. The specialties include a handful of ancient recipes subtly improved by Signor Ciarla (such as the soup of pasta and beans with seafood). Original dishes include a delectable fish in orange sauce, savory spaghetti with clams, and a full array of shellfish, including mixed fried seafood. The sea bass filet is prepared in at least three ways, including an award-winning version with almonds.

Piazza San Cosimato 40. ✆ **06-5818668.** Reservations required. Main courses 15€–31€ ($21–$43); fixed-price menus 50€–85€ ($70–$119). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat 8:30pm–12:30am. Closed 1 week in Jan and 1 week in Aug. Bus: 44, 75, 170, 280, or 718.

Moderate

Antico Arco ★ *Finds* ITALIAN Named after one of the gates of early medieval Rome (Arco di San Pancrazio), which rises nearby, Antico Arco is on Janiculum Hill not far from Trastevere and the American Academy. It's a hip restaurant with a young, stylish clientele. Carefully crafted dishes with fresh ingredients include a ravioli-like pasta filled with scorpion fish and served with a Ligurian pesto or else lamb with fennel and a fresh pesto sauce. A palate-awakening Danish filet of beef comes flavored with basil under a Parmesan cheese sauce. A white chocolate tiramisu is a heavenly concoction.

Piazzale Aurelio 7. ✆ **06-5815274.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 15€–26€ ($21–$36); fixed-price menu 63€ ($88). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat 6pm–midnight. Bus: 44 or 870.

EXPLORING THE ETERNAL CITY

Rome is studded with ancient monuments that silently evoke its history as one of the greatest centers of Western civilization—once all roads led to Rome, with good reason. It was the first cosmopolitan city in Europe, importing everything from slaves to gladiators to great art from the far corners of the empire. With all its carnage and mismanagement, it left a legacy of law and order and an uncanny lesson in how to conquer enemies by absorbing their cultures. But ancient Rome is only a part of the spectacle. The Vatican also made the city a center of the world in art as well as religion. And although Vatican architects rifled much of the glory of the past for their projects, they also created the great Renaissance treasures we come to see today.

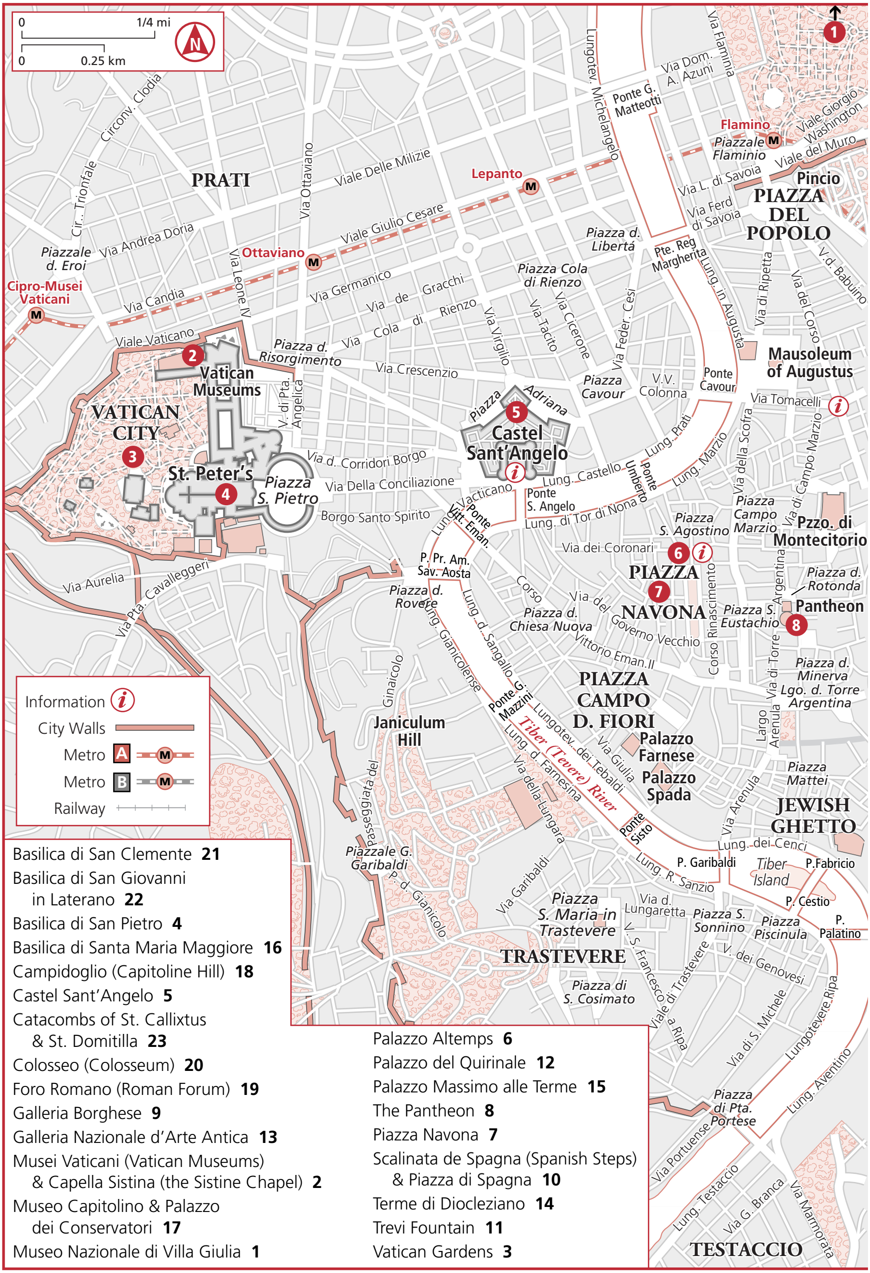
SIGHTSEEING SUGGESTIONS FOR FIRST-TIME VISITORS

If You Have 1 Day One day is far too brief—after all, Rome wasn't built in a day, and you can't see it in one. You can make the most of your limited time, though.

To see ancient Rome and the glory of the Caesars, start your stroll at Michelangelo's **Campidoglio,** or **Capitoline Hill.** From here you can look out over the Roman Forum area. After this overview, walk east along the Via dei Fori Imperiali, taking in a view of the remains of the **Imperial Forums.** This route leads you to the ruins of the **Colosseum.** After a visit to this amphitheater, cross over to spend the rest of the day exploring the ruins of the Roman Forum and Palatine Hill to the west of the Colosseum.

After a day of sightseeing, have dinner near the Pantheon, an area that's packed with restaurants, bars, and

Rome Attractions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Via Dom. A. Azuni
Via Flaminia
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Flamino
Piazzale Flaminio
Viale Giorgio Washington
Viale del Muro
Pincio
Via L. di Savoia
Via Ferd di Savoia
PIAZZA DEL POPOLO
Piazzale d. Eroi
Via Andrea Doria
Viale Giulio Cesare
Ottaviano
Via Leone IV
Piazza d. Libertà
Pte. Reg Margherita
Lung. in Augusta
Via di Ripetta
Via del Corso
V.d. Babuino
Cipro-Musei Vaticani
Via Candia
Via Germanico
Via de Gracchi
Via Cola di Rienzo
Piazza Cola di Rienzo
Via Tacito
Via Cicerone
Via Feder. Cesi
Viale Vaticano
2
Vatican Museums
Piazza d. Risorgimento
Via Crescenzio
Via Virgilio
V. di Pta. Angelica
Piazza Cavour
V.V. Colonna
Ponte Cavour
Mausoleum of Augustus
Via Tomacelli
VATICAN CITY
3
Piazza Adriana
5
Castel Sant'Angelo
Via d. Corridori Borgo
Via Della Conciliazione
Lung. Prati
Lung. Marzio
Via della Scrofa
Via di Campo Marzio
St. Peter's
4
Piazza S. Pietro
Borgo Santo Spirito
Lung. Vacticano
Ponte Vitt. Eman.
Lung. Castello
Ponte S. Angelo
Ponte Umberto
Lung. di Tor di Nona
Piazza S. Agostino
Piazza Campo Marzio
Pzzo. di Montecitorio
Via dei Coronari
6
PIAZZA NAVONA
7
Via Aurelia
Via Pta. Cavalleggeri
P. Pr. Am. Sav. Aosta
Piazza d. Rovere
Corso Vittorio Eman.II
Via del Governo Vecchio
Piazza d. Chiesa Nuova
Lung. d. Sangallo
Corso Rinascimento
Piazza d. Rotonda
Pantheon
Piazza S. Eustachio
8
Via di Torre Argentina
Piazza d. Minerva
Lgo. d. Torre Argentina
Lung. Gianicolense
Gianicolo
Janiculum Hill
Ponte G. Mazzini
Tiber (Tevere) River
Lungotev. dei Tebaldi
Lung. d. Farnesina
Via Giulia
PIAZZA CAMPO D. FIORI
Palazzo Farnese
Palazzo Spada
Largo Arenula
Via Arenula
Piazza Mattei
JEWISH GHETTO
Information
City Walls
Metro A
M
Metro B
M
Railway
Passeggiata del
Via della Lungara
Ponte Sisto
Lung. dei Cenci
Tiber Island
P. Fabricio
P. Garibaldi
Lung. R. Sanzio
P. Cestio
Piazzale G. Garibaldi
P. d. Gianicolo
Via Garibaldi
Piazza S. Maria in Trastevere
Via d. Lungaretta
Piazza S. Sonnino
Piazza Piscinula
P. Palatino
V. dei Genovesi
TRASTEVERE
V. S. Francesco a Ripa
Viale di Trastevere
Piazza di S. Cosimato
Via di S. Michele
Lungotevere Ripa
Lung. Aventino
Piazza di Pta. Portese
Via Portuense
Lung. Testaccio
Via G. Branca
Via Marmorata
TESTACCIO

Basilica di San Clemente **21**

Basilica di San Giovanni in Laterano **22**

Basilica di San Pietro **4**

Basilica di Santa Maria Maggiore **16**

Campidoglio (Capitoline Hill) **18**

Castel Sant'Angelo **5**

Catacombs of St. Callixtus & St. Domitilla **23**

Colosseo (Colosseum) **20**

Foro Romano (Roman Forum) **19**

Galleria Borghese **9**

Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica **13**

Musei Vaticani (Vatican Museums) & Capella Sistina (the Sistine Chapel) **2**

Museo Capitolino & Palazzo dei Conservatori **17**

Museo Nazionale di Villa Giulia **1**

Palazzo Altemps **6**

Palazzo del Quirinale **12**

Palazzo Massimo alle Terme **15**

The Pantheon **8**

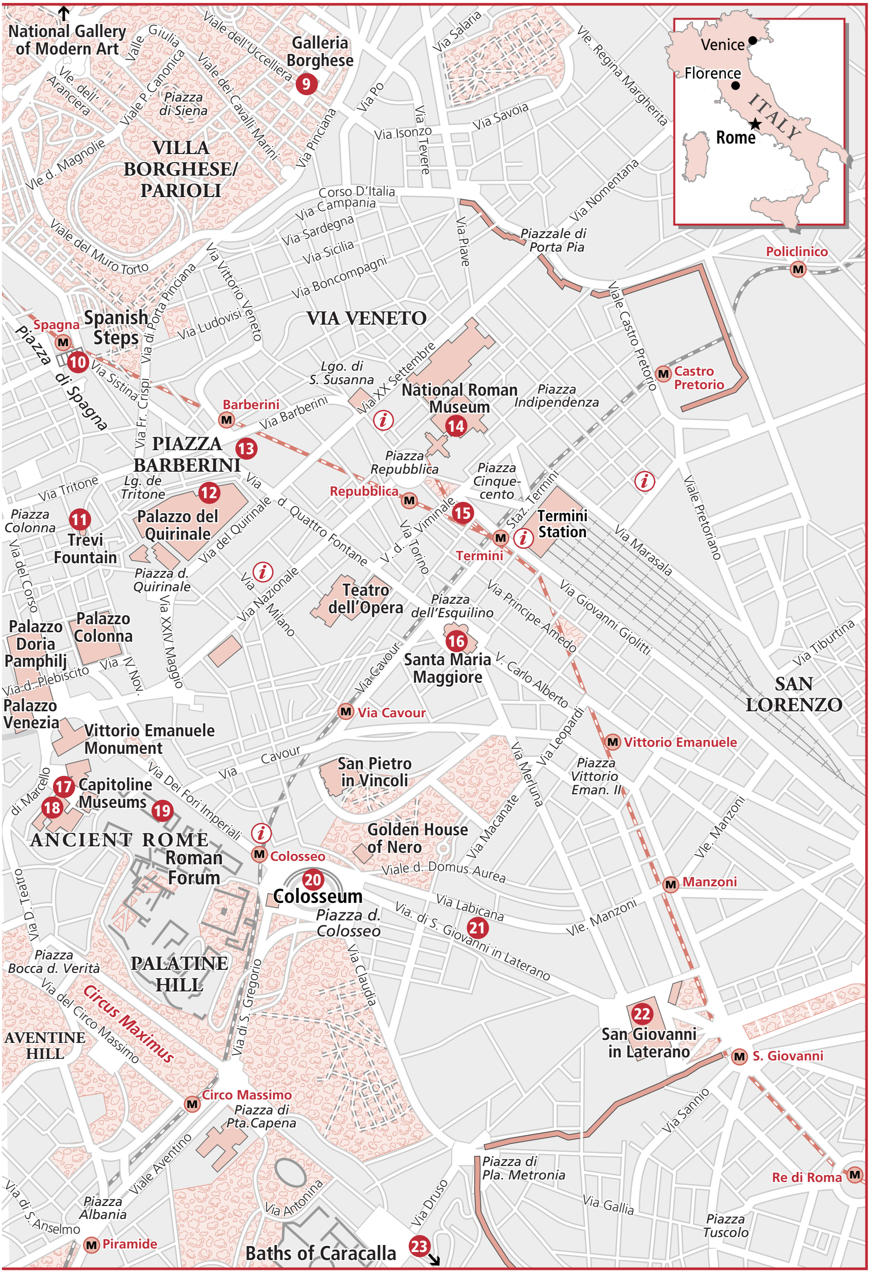
Piazza Navona **7**

Scalinata de Spagna (Spanish Steps) & Piazza di Spagna **10**

Terme di Diocleziano **14**

Trevi Fountain **11**

Vatican Gardens **3**



National Gallery of Modern Art
Galleria Borghese
9
Viale Giulia
Viale dell'Uccelliera
Viale dei Cavalli Marini
Viale P. Canonica
Vle. d. Aranciera
Piazza di Siena
Vle d. Magnolie
VILLA BORGHESE/ PARIOLI
Via Pinciana
Via Po
Via Salaria
Via Tevere
Via Isonzo
Via Savoia
Vle. Regina Margherita
Venice
Florence
ITALY
Rome
Corso D'Italia
Via Campania
Via Sardegna
Via Sicilia
Via Boncompagni
Via Nomentana
Via Piave
Piazzale di Porta Pia
Viale del Muro Torto
Via Vittorio Veneto
Via di Porta Pinciana
Via Ludovisi
VIA VENETO
Policlinico
Spagna
Spanish Steps
Piazza di Spagna
10
Via Sistina
Via Fr. Crispi
Lgo. di S. Susanna
Via XX Settembre
National Roman Museum
14
Piazza Indipendenza
Viale Castro Pretorio
Castro Pretorio
Barberini
Via Barberini
PIAZZA BARBERINI
13
Piazza Repubblica
Piazza Cinque-cento
Via Tritone
Lg. de Tritone
12
Palazzo del Quirinale
Repubblica
Staz. Termini
Termini Station
Via Viminale
15
Termini
Via d. Quattro Fontane
Via del Quirinale
Piazza Colonna
11
Trevi Fountain
Via del Corso
Piazza d. Quirinale
Via Milano
Via Nazionale
V. d. Torino
Via Marasala
Viale Pretoriano
Teatro dell'Opera
Piazza dell'Esquilino
Via Principe Amedeo
Via Giovanni Giolitti
Palazzo Doria Pamphilj
Palazzo Colonna
Via XXIV Maggio
Via IV Nov.
Via d. Plebiscito
16
Santa Maria Maggiore
V. Carlo Alberto
Via Tiburtina
Via Cavour
SAN LORENZO
Palazzo Venezia
Vittorio Emanuele Monument
Via Cavour
Vittorio Emanuele
Via Leopardi
Piazza Vittorio Eman. II
Via Dei Fori Imperiali
San Pietro in Vincoli
Via Merulana
Via di Marcello
17
Capitoline Museums
18
19
ANCIENT ROME
Golden House of Nero
Via Macanate
Vle. Manzoni
Roman Forum
Colosseo
Viale d. Domus Aurea
Manzoni
20
Colosseum
Piazza d. Colosseo
Via Labicana
Via di S. Giovanni in Laterano
21
Vle. Manzoni
Via D. Teatro
Piazza Bocca d. Verità
PALATINE HILL
Via Claudia
Via di S. Gregorio
Via del Circo Massimo
Circus Maximus
22
San Giovanni in Laterano
S. Giovanni
AVENTINE HILL
Circo Massimo
Piazza di Pta.Capena
Via Sannio
Viale Aventino
Piazza di Pla. Metronia
Re di Roma
Via di S. Anselmo
Piazza Albania
Piramide
Via Antonina
Via Druso
Via Gallia
Piazza Tuscolo
Baths of Caracalla
23

cafes. Toss a coin in the **Trevi Fountain** and promise a return visit.

If You Have 2 Days Spend day 2 exploring **St. Peter's** and the **Vatican Museums.** The tiny walled "city-state of the Vatican," the capital of the Catholic world, contains such a wealth of splendor that you could spend a week seeing it all, but most people hit the highlights in one busy day. After exploring the treasures of St. Peter's Basilica (including climbing Michelangelo's dome), take a lunch break. Then stroll over to the Vatican Museums, which boast one of the most jaw-dropping collections of art and antiques in the world, all of it culminating in the gloriously restored **Sistine Chapel.** If you can keep going, take in the **Castel Sant'Angelo.**

Have dinner that night in a restaurant in Trastevere.

If You Have 3 Days On the morning of day 3, go to the **Pantheon** in the heart of Old Rome; then, if you were able to make a reservation, take in the **Galleria Borghese** and spend an hour relaxing in this beautiful park afterward. If you don't have a ticket, head to another of Rome's top museums (perhaps the Capitoline Museum and Palazzo dei Conservatori, if you weren't able to squeeze in a visit before.) Have dinner at a restaurant on Piazza Navona.

If You Have 4 Days On day 4, take in one of the museums you didn't get to earlier (consider the National Etruscan Museum or the Galleria Doria Pamphilj). Another great option is to head out the **Appian Way** to take in the catacombs, an outing that will take up most of the day. Squeeze in a couple of hours of shopping and strolling around the Spanish Steps.

ST. PETER'S & THE VATICAN

Basilica di San Pietro (St. Peter's Basilica) ★★★ As you stand in Bernini's **St. Peter's Square (Piazza San Pietro)**, you'll be in the arms of an ellipse partly enclosed by a majestic **Doric-pillared colonnade.** Atop it stands a gesticulating crowd of some 140 saints. Straight ahead is the facade of **St. Peter's Basilica** ★★★. St. Peter's is said to have been built over the tomb of the crucified saint. The original church was built on the order of Constantine, but the present basilica is predominantly High Renaissance and baroque. Inside, the massive scale is almost too much to absorb, showcasing some of Italy's greatest artists: Bramante, Raphael, Michelangelo, and Maderno.

In a church of such grandeur, you can't expect much subtlety. It's a trove of magnificent art. Under Michelangelo's dome is the celebrated twisty-columned **baldacchino** ★★ (1524), by Bernini. In the nave on the right (the first chapel) stands one of the Vatican's greatest treasures: Michelangelo's exquisite ***Pietà*** ★★★.

To go even farther down, to the **Necropolis Vaticana** ★★, the area around St. Peter's tomb, you must apply in writing 3 weeks beforehand to the **excavations office.** Apply in advance at the Ufficio Scavi (✆ **06-69885318**), through the arch to the left of the stairs up the basilica. You specify your name, the number in your party, your language, and dates you'd like to visit. They'll notify you by phone of your admission date and time. For 10€ ($14), you'll take a guided tour of the tombs that were excavated in the 1940s, 7m (23 ft.) beneath the church floor. For details, check **www.vatican.va**. Children under 15 are not admitted to the Necropolis Vaticana.

The grandest sight still lies before you: the climb to **Michelangelo's dome** ★★★, about 114m (375 ft.) high. Although you can walk up the steps, we recommend you take the elevator as far as it goes. After you've made it to the top, you'll have an

Tips A St. Peter's Warning

St. Peter's has a strict dress code: no shorts, no skirts above the knee, and no bare shoulders and arms. ***Note:*** *You will not be let in if you come dressed inappropriately.* In a pinch, men and women alike can buy a big, cheap scarf from a nearby souvenir stand and wrap it around their legs as a long skirt or throw it over their shoulders as a shawl.

astounding view over the rooftops of Rome and even the Vatican Gardens and papal apartments.

Piazza San Pietro. ☎ **06-69881662.** Basilica (including grottoes) free admission. Guided tour of excavations around St. Peter's tomb 10€ ($14); children younger than 15 are not admitted. Stairs to the dome 5€ ($7); elevator to the dome 6€ ($8.40); Sacristy (with Historical Museum) free. Basilica (including the sacristy and treasury) daily 9am–6pm. Grottoes daily 8am–5pm. Dome Oct–Mar daily 8am–5pm; Apr–Sept daily 8am–6pm. Bus: 46. Metro: Ottaviano/San Pietro, then a long stroll.

Musei Vaticani (Vatican Museums) & Cappella Sistina (the Sistine Chapel) ★★★ The Vatican Museums boast one of the world's greatest art collections. It's a gigantic repository of treasures from antiquity and the Renaissance, housed in a labyrinthine series of lavishly adorned palaces, apartments, and galleries leading you to the real gem: the Sistine Chapel. After you're admitted, you can choose your route through the museum from **four color-coded itineraries** (A, B, C, D) according to the time you have (1½–5 hr.) and your interests. Choose from the picture gallery, which houses paintings and tapestries from the 11th to the 19th centuries, the Egyptian collection, the Etruscan museum, Greek and Roman sculpture, several other museums, and, of course, the **Sistine Chapel.** Don't miss the Stanze di Raphael, rooms decorated by Raphael while still a young man. Consult the large panels at the entrance, then follow the letter and color of the itinerary you've chosen. Facilities for persons with mobility issues are available.

Michelangelo labored for 4 years (1508–12) over the epic Sistine Chapel, work that was so physically taxing that it permanently damaged his eyesight. Glorifying the human body as only a sculptor could, Michelangelo painted nine panels, taken from the pages of Genesis, and surrounded them with prophets and sibyls. The restoration of the Sistine Chapel in the 1990s took years and touched off controversy among art historians. Take a pair of binoculars so you can get the best view of the restored frescoes.

Vatican City, Viale Vaticano (a long walk around the Vatican walls from St. Peter's Sq.). ☎ **06-69883332.** Admission 13€ ($18) adults, 8€ ($11) children under 14, free for children under 6. Nov–Feb Mon–Sat 10am–1:45pm; Mar–Oct Mon–Fri 10am–4:45pm; Sat 10am–2:45pm. Closed Jan 1 and 6, Easter, May 1 and 17, June 7 and 29, Aug 15–16, Nov 1, and Dec 8, 25, and 26. Reservations for guided tours costing 24€ ($33) per person made through Vatican website at www.vatican.va. (You don't have to stand in line.) Metro: Cipro–Musei Vaticani.

THE FORUM, THE COLOSSEUM & THE HIGHLIGHTS OF ANCIENT ROME

Foro Romano (Roman Forum), Palatino (Palatine Hill), and Museo Palatino (Palatine Museum) ★★★ The Forum was built in the marshy land between the Palatine and Capitoline hills, and flourished as the center of Roman life in the days of the Republic, before it gradually lost prestige to the Imperial Forums. By day, the columns of now-vanished temples and the stones from which long-forgotten orators spoke are mere shells. But at night, when the Forum is silent in the moonlight, it isn't difficult to imagine Vestal Virgins still guarding the sacred temple fire.

If you want the stones to have some meaning, you'll have to buy a detailed plan at the gate, as the temples can be hard to locate. The best of the ruins include the three Corinthian columns of the **Temple of the Dioscuri** ★★★, dedicated to the Gemini twins, Castor and Pollux. Forming one of the most celebrated sights of the Roman Forum, a trio of columns supports an architrave fragment. The founding of this temple dates from the 5th century B.C The partially reconstructed **House of the Vestal Virgins** ★★ (3rd–4th c. A.D.) is a popular attraction; the overgrown rectangle of the gardens has lilied goldfish ponds and is lined with broken, heavily worn statues of senior Vestals on pedestals.

A long walk up from the Roman Forum leads to the **Palatine Hill** ★ (with the same hours as the Forum). The Palatine, tradition tells us, was the spot on which the first settlers built their huts under the direction of Romulus. In later years, the hill became a patrician residential district that attracted such citizens as Cicero. It's worth the climb for the panoramic view of both the Roman and the Imperial Forums, as well as the Capitoline Hill and the Colosseum.

The **Museo Palatino (Palatine Museum)** ★ displays a good collection of Roman sculpture from the digs in the Palatine villas. In summer you can take guided tours in English daily at 11am, 11:45am, and 4:15pm for 3.50€ ($4.90); call in winter to see if they're still available. If you ask the custodian, he might take you to one of the nearby locked villas and let you in for a peek at surviving frescoes and stuccoes. The entire Palatine is slated for renewed excavations, so many areas might be roped off at first; but soon even more will be open to the public.

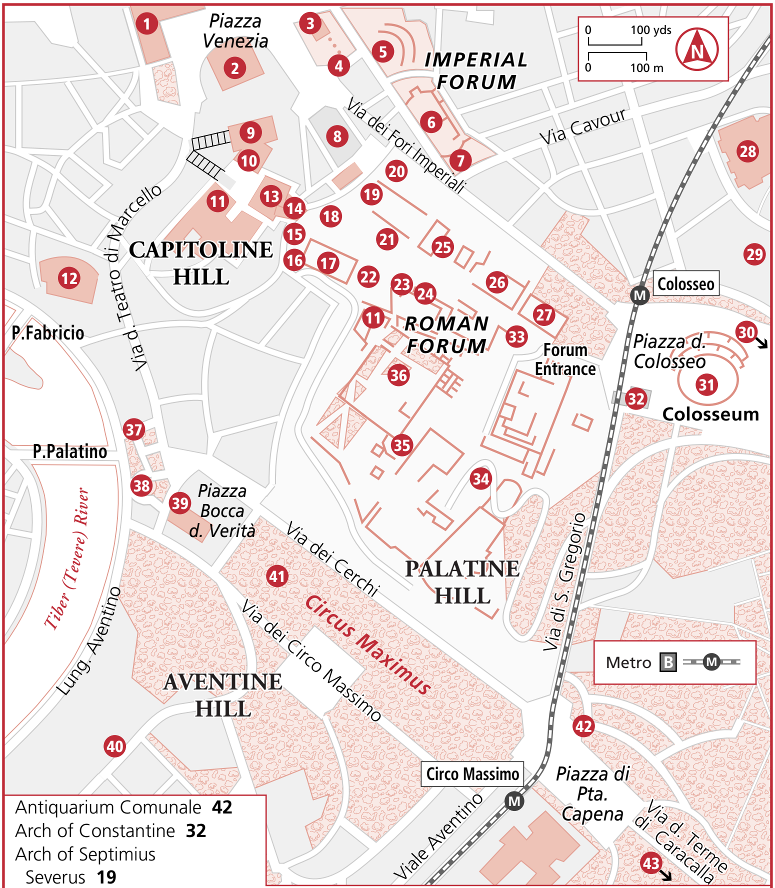
Largo Romolo e Remo. ✆ **06-39967700.** Forum free admission; Palatine Hill 11€ ($15). Oct 30–Dec 31 and Jan 2–Feb 15 daily 8:30am–4:30pm; Feb 16–Mar 15 daily 8:30am–5pm; Mar 16–24 daily 8:30am–5:30pm; Mar 25–Aug 31 daily 8:30am–7:15pm; Sept daily 8:30am–7pm; Oct 1–29 daily 8:30am–6:30pm. Last admission 1 hr. before closing. Guided tours are given daily at 11am, lasting 1 hr., costing 3.50€ ($4.90). Closed holidays. Metro: Colosseo. Bus: 75 or 84.

Colosseo (The Colosseum) ★★★ Now a mere shell, the Colosseum still remains the greatest architectural legacy from ancient Rome. It was inaugurated by Titus in A.D. 80 with a bloody combat between gladiators and wild beasts. At its peak the Colosseum could seat 50,000 spectators; exotic animals—and humans—were shipped in from the far corners of the Empire to satisfy their jaded tastes. Many historians now believe that one of the most enduring legends about the Colosseum—that Christians were fed to the lions here—is unfounded.

Piazzale del Colosseo, Via dei Fori Imperiali. ✆ **06-39967700.** Admission 11€ ($15) all levels. Nov–Feb 15 daily 8:30am–4:30pm; Feb 16–Mar 15 daily 8:30am–5pm; Mar 16–27 daily 8:30am–5:30pm; Mar 28–Aug daily 8:30am–7:15pm; Sept daily 9am–7pm; Oct daily 8:30am–7pm. Guided tours in English Nov 1–Mar 15 daily at 9:45am, 10:15am, 11:15am, 11:45am, 12:30pm, 1:45pm, and 3pm; Mar 15–Oct 31 daily at 9:45am, 10:15am, 11:15am, 11:45am, 12:30pm, 1:45pm, 3pm, 4:15pm, 4:45pm, 5:15pm and 5:45pm. Tours 3.50€ ($4.90). Admission to Colosseo includes visits to Palatine Hill.

Museo Capitolino (Capitoline Museum) and Palazzo dei Conservatori (Palace of the Curators) ★★ Of Rome's seven hills, the **Campidoglio (Capitoline)** is the most sacred. Its origins stretch from antiquity; an Etruscan temple to Jupiter once stood on this spot. The approach is dramatic as you climb the long, sloping steps by Michelangelo. At the top is a perfectly proportioned square, **Piazza del Campidoglio** ★★, also laid out by the Florentine artist.

The Colosseum, The Forum & Ancient Rome Attractions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IMPERIAL FORUM
Via dei Fori Imperiali
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CAPITOLINE HILL
Via d. Teatro di Marcello
P.Fabricio
P.Palatino
Tiber (Tevere) River
ROMAN FORUM
Forum Entrance
Colosseo
Piazza d. Colosseo
Colosseum
Piazza Bocca d. Verità
Via dei Cerchi
PALATINE HILL
Via di S. Gregorio
Circus Maximus
Via dei Circo Massimo
Lung. Aventino
AVENTINE HILL
Metro B M
Circo Massimo
Viale Aventino
Piazza di Pta. Capena
Via d. Terme di Caracalla
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Antiquarium Comunale	**42**
Arch of Constantine	**32**
Arch of Septimius Severus	**19**
Arch of Titus	**33**
Basilica of Constantine & Maxentius	**26**
Basilica di San Clemente	**30**
Basilica di San Giovanni in Laterno	**30**
Basilica Julia	**17**
Baths of Caracalla	**43**
Capitoline Museum	**10**
Circus Maximus	**41**
Colosseum	**31**
Curia	**20**
Farnese Gardens	**36**
Forum of Augustus	**6**
Forum of Julius Caesar	**8**
Forum of Nerva	**7**
Forum of Trajan	**4**
Golden House of Nero	**29**
Hippodrome	**34**
House of Livia	**35**
House of the Vestal Virgins	**24**
National Museum of Palazzo Venezia	**1**
Palazzo dei Conservatori	**11**
Palazzo Senatorio	**14**
San Pietro in Vincoli	**28**
Santa Maria in Aracoeli	**9**
Santa Maria in Cosmedin	**39**
Tabularium	**13**
Temple of Antoninus & Faustina	**25**
Temple of the Dioscuri	**22**
Temple of Fortuna Virile (Temple of Portunus)	**37**
Temple of Hercules	**38**
Temple of Romulus	**27**
Temple of Saturn	**16**
Temple of Vespasian & Titus	**15**
Temple of Vesta	**23**
Theater of Pompey	**12**
Trajan's Column	**3**
Trajan's Market	**5**
Umbilicus Urbus/ Imperial Rostra	**18**
Via Sacra	**21**
Vittorio Emanuele Monument	**2**

One side of the piazza is open; the others are bounded by the **Senatorium (Town Council),** the statuary-filled **Palace of the Conservatori (Curators),** and the **Capitoline Museum.** The Campidoglio is dramatic at night (walk around to the back for a regal view of the floodlit Roman Forum).

The **Capitoline Museum,** built in the 17th century, was based on an architectural sketch by Michelangelo. In the first room is ***The Dying Gaul*** ★★, a work of majestic skill that's a copy of a Greek original dating from the 3rd century B.C. In a special gallery all her own is the ***Capitoline Venus*** ★★, who demurely covers herself. This statue was the symbol of feminine beauty and charm down through the centuries (it's a Roman copy of a 3rd-century-B.C. Greek original). The **equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius** ★★, whose years in the piazza made it a victim of pollution, has been restored and is now kept in the museum for protection. This is the only such equestrian statue to have survived from ancient Rome, mainly because it was thought for centuries that the statue was that of Constantine the Great, and papal Rome respected the memory of the first Christian emperor.

Palazzo dei Conservatori ★★, across the way, was also based on a Michelangelo architectural plan and is rich in classical sculpture and paintings. One of the most notable bronzes, a Greek work of incomparable beauty dating from the 1st century B.C., is ***Lo Spinario*** ★★★ (a little boy picking a thorn from his foot). In addition, you'll find ***Lupa Capitolina (Capitoline Wolf)*** ★★★, a rare Etruscan bronze that may date from the 5th century B.C. (Romulus and Remus, the legendary twins who were suckled by the wolf, were added at a later date.)

Piazza del Campidoglio 1. ☎ **06-82059127.** Admission 8€ ($11). Tues–Sun 9am–8pm. Bus: 44, 81, 95, 160, 170, 715, or 780.

Castel Sant'Angelo ★ This overpowering castle on the Tiber was built in the 2nd century as a tomb for Emperor Hadrian; it continued as an imperial mausoleum until the time of Caracalla. If it looks like a fortress, it should—that was its function in the Middle Ages. In the 14th century, it became a papal residence. But its legend rests largely on its link with Pope Alexander VI, whose mistress bore him two children (those darlings of debauchery, Cesare and Lucrezia Borgia). Today the highlight here is a trip through the Renaissance apartments with their coffered ceilings and lush decoration. Their walls witnessed some of the most diabolical plots and intrigues of the High Renaissance. You can climb to the top terrace for another one of those dazzling views of the Eternal City.

Lungotevere Castello 50. ☎ **06-39967600.** Admission 6€ ($8.40). Tues–Sun 9am–7pm. Bus: 23, 40, 46, 49, 62, 80, 87, 280, 492, or 910. Metro: Ottaviano, then a long stroll.

The Pantheon ★★★ Of all ancient Rome's great buildings, only the Pantheon ("All the Gods") remains intact. It was built in 27 B.C. by Marcus Agrippa and was reconstructed by Hadrian in the early 2nd century A.D. This remarkable building is among the architectural wonders of the world because of its dome and its concept of space. The Pantheon was once ringed with white marble statues of Roman gods in its niches. Animals were sacrificed and burned in the center, and the smoke escaped through the only means of light, an opening at the top 5.5m (18 ft.) in diameter. Michelangelo came here to study the dome before designing the cupola of St. Peter's, whose dome is .5m (1⅔ ft.) smaller than the Pantheon's.

Piazza della Rotonda. ☎ **06-68300230.** Free admission. Mon–Sat 8:30am–7:30pm; Sun 9am–6pm. Bus: 40, 46, 62, 64, 170, or 492 to Largo di Torre.

THE APPIAN WAY & THE CATACOMBS

Of all the roads that led to Rome, **Via Appia Antica**—built in 312 B.C.—was the most famous. It eventually stretched all the way from Rome to the seaport of Brindisi, through which trade with the colonies in Greece and the East was funneled. Along the Appian Way, the patrician Romans built great monuments above the ground, while the Christians met in the catacombs beneath. Of the catacombs open to the public, those of St. Callixtus and St. Domitilla are the best.

Catacombe di San Callisto (Catacombs of St. Callixtus) ★★ ”The most venerable and most renowned of Rome,” said Pope John XXIII of these funerary tunnels. These Catacombs are often packed with tour-bus groups, and they have perhaps the cheesiest tour, but the tunnels are simply phenomenal. They're the first cemetery of the Christian community of Rome, burial place of 16 popes in the 3rd century. The complex is a network of galleries stretching for nearly 19km (12 miles), structured in five levels and reaching a depth of about 20m (65 ft.). Paintings, sculptures, and epigraphs (with such symbols as the fish, anchor, and dove) provide invaluable material for the study of the life and customs of the ancient Christians and the story of their persecutions.

Via Appia Antica 110–126. ✆ **06-51301580.** Admission 5€ ($7) adults, 3€ ($4.20) children 6–15, free for children 5 and under. Apr–Oct Thurs–Tues 9am–noon and 2–5pm. Bus: 118.

Catacombe di San Domitilla (Catacombs of St. Domitilla) ★★★ This oldest of the Catacombs is the hands-down winner for most enjoyable Catacomb experience. Groups are small, most guides are genuinely entertaining and personable, and, depending on the mood of the group and your guide, the visit may last up to an hour. There are fewer "sights" than in the other Catacombs—although the 2nd-century fresco of the Last Supper is impressive—but some of the guides actually hand you a few bones out of a tomb niche. (Incidentally, this is the only catacomb where you'll still see bones; the rest have emptied their tombs to rebury the remains in ossuaries on the inaccessible lower levels.)

Via d. Sette Chiese 280. ✆ **06-5110342.** Admission 5€ ($7) adults, 3€ ($4.20) children 6–14. Wed–Mon 9am–noon and 2–5pm. Closed Jan.

MORE ATTRACTIONS

Basilica di San Clemente ★ From the Colosseum, head up Via San Giovanni in Laterano to this basilica. In the 4th century A.D., a church was built over a secular house from the 1st century, beside which stood a pagan temple dedicated to Mithras. The Normans destroyed the lower church, and a new one was built in the 12th century. Down in the eerie grottoes (which you can explore on your own), you'll discover well-preserved frescoes from the 9th to the 11th centuries.

Via San Giovanni in Laterano at Piazza San Clemente. ✆ **06-7740021.** Basilica free admission; excavations 5€ ($7). Mon–Sat 9am–noon and 3–6:30pm; Sun 10am–noon and 3–6:30pm. Metro: Colosseo. Bus: 85, 87, or 850.

Basilica di San Giovanni in Laterano ★ This church (not St. Peter's) is the cathedral of the diocese of Rome, where the pope comes to celebrate Mass on certain holidays. Built in A.D. 314 by Constantine, it has suffered the vicissitudes of Rome, forcing it to be rebuilt many times. The present building is characterized by its 18th-century facade by Alessandro Galilei (statues of Christ and the Apostles ring the top). Borromini gets the credit (some say blame) for the interior, built for Innocent X.

Across the street is the **Santuario della Scala Santa (Palace of the Holy Steps),** Piazza San Giovanni in Laterano (✆ **06-7726641**). It's alleged that the 28 marble steps here (now covered with wood for preservation) were originally at Pontius Pilate's villa in Jerusalem and that Christ climbed them the day he was brought before Pilate. Today pilgrims from all over come here to climb the steps on their knees.

Piazza San Giovanni in Laterano 4. ✆ **06-69886452.** Basilica free admission; cloisters 2€ ($2.80). Summer daily 9am–6:45pm (off season to 6pm). Metro: San Giovanni. Bus: 4, 16, 30, 85, 87, or 174.

Basilica di Santa Maria Maggiore ★ This great church, one of Rome's four major basilicas, was built by Pope Liberius in A.D. 358 and rebuilt by Pope Sixtus III from 432 to 440. Its 14th-century **campanile** is the city's loftiest. The basilica is noted for the 5th-century Roman mosaics in its nave, and for its coffered ceiling, said to have been gilded with gold brought from the New World. In the 16th century, Domenico Fontana built a now-restored "Sistine Chapel." The church also contains the **tomb of Bernini,** Italy's most important baroque sculptor and architect.

Piazza di Santa Maria Maggiore. ✆ **06-4465836.** Free admission. Daily 7am–7pm. Metro: Termini.

Galleria Borghese ★★★ This treasure trove includes such masterpieces as Bernini's *Apollo and Daphne,* Titian's *Sacred and Profane Love,* Raphael's *Deposition,* and Caravaggio's *Jerome.* One of the most popular pieces of sculpture in the gallery is Canova's sculpture of Napoleon's sister, Pauline, as *Venus Victorious.* When Pauline was asked whether she felt uncomfortable posing in the nude, she replied, "Why should I? The studio was heated."

Important information: No more than 360 visitors at a time are allowed on the ground floor, and no more than 90 are allowed on the upper floor. Reservations are essential, so call ✆ **06-32810** (Mon–Fri 9am–6pm; Sat 9am–1pm). If you'll be in Rome for a few days, try stopping by in person on your first day to reserve tickets for a later day. Better yet, before you leave home, contact **Select Italy** (✆ **800/877-1755;** www.selectitaly.com).

Piazza Scipione Borghese 5 (off Via Pinciano). ✆ **06-32810** for information. Admission 8.50€ ($12). Tues–Sun 9am–7pm. Bus: 5, 19, 52, 116, 204, 490, or 910.

Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica (National Gallery of Ancient Art) ★★ **Palazzo Barberini,** right off Piazza Barberini, is one of Rome's most magnificent baroque palaces. It was begun by Carlo Maderno in 1627 and completed in 1633 by Bernini, whose lavishly decorated rococo apartments are on view. This gallery is part of the **National Gallery of Ancient Art.** The splendid array of 13th- to the 16th-century paintings includes works by Simone Martini, Filippo Lippi, Andrea Solario, Francesco Francia, Il Sodoma, and Raphael. Many visitors come just to see the magnificent Caravaggios, including *Narcissus.*

Via delle Quattro Fontane 13. ✆ **06-4824184.** Admission 6€ ($8.40). Tues–Sun 9am–7pm. Metro: Barberini.

Museo Nazionale di Villa Giulia (National Etruscan Museum) ★★★ This 16th-century papal palace shelters a priceless collection of art and artifacts from the mysterious Etruscans. If you have time for only the masterpieces, head for room 7, with a remarkable 6th-century-B.C. *Apollo from Veio* (clothed, for a change). The other two widely acclaimed statues here are *Dea con Bambino (Goddess with a Baby)* and a greatly mutilated but still powerful *Hercules* with a stag. In room 8, you'll see the lions' sarcophagus from the mid–6th century B.C., which was excavated at Cerveteri, north of Rome. Finally, in room 9, is one of the world's most important Etruscan art treasures, the bride and bridegroom coffin from the 6th century B.C.

Piazzale di Villa Giulia 9. ✆ **06-3226571.** Admission 4€ ($5.60). Tues–Sun 8:30am–7:30pm. Metro: Flaminio.

Palazzo del Quirinale ★★ Despite its Renaissance origins (nearly every important architect in Italy worked on some aspect of its sprawling premises), this palazzo is rich in associations with ancient emperors and deities. The colossal statues of the Dioscuri Castor and Pollux, which now form part of the fountain in the piazza, were found in the nearby great Baths of Constantine. The sweeping view of Rome from the piazza, which crowns the highest of the seven ancient hills of Rome, is itself worth the trip. This palace houses the President of the Republic.

Piazza del Quirinale. No phone for visitor information; call Rome's tourist office. 5€ ($7) admission. Sun 8:30am–noon. Closed late June to early Sept. Metro: Barberini.

Piazza Navona ★★★ is one of the most beautifully baroque sites in all Rome. Its shape results from the ruins of the Stadium of Domitian that lie beneath it. Chariot races were once held here, and in medieval times, the popes would flood the piazza to stage mock naval encounters. Today the piazza is packed with vendors and street performers, and lined with pricey cafes where you can enjoy a cappuccino or gelato and indulge in unparalleled people-watching.

Besides the twin-towered facade of 17th-century Santa Agnes, the piazza boasts several baroque masterpieces. The best known, in the center, is Bernini's **Fountain of the Four Rivers (Fontana dei Quattro Fiumi)** ★★★, whose four stone personifications symbolize the world's greatest rivers: the Ganges, Danube, della Plata, and Nile. Try to figure out which is which. (***Hint:*** The figure with the shroud on its head is the Nile, so represented because the river's source was unknown at the time.)

Scalinata di Spagna (The Spanish Steps) ★★ (Metro: Spagna) are filled in spring with azaleas and other flowers, flower vendors, jewelry dealers, and photographers snapping pictures of visitors. The steps and the square (Piazza di Spagna) take their names from the Spanish Embassy, which used to be headquartered here. Designed by Italian architect Francesco de Sanctis and built from 1723 to 1725, they were funded almost entirely by the French as a preface to Trinità dei Monti at the top.

Piazza di Spagna. Metro: Spagna.

Trevi Fountain (Fontana dei Trevi) ★★ (Metro: Barberini) As you elbow your way through the summertime crowds around the Trevi Fountain, you'll find it hard to believe that this little piazza was nearly always deserted before the film *Three Coins in the Fountain* brought the stampede of tour buses. Supplied by water from the Acqua Vergine aqueduct and a triumph of the baroque style, it was based on the design of Nicolo Salvi and was completed in 1762. The design centers on the triumphant figure of Neptunus Rex, standing on a shell chariot drawn by winged steeds and led by a pair of tritons.

MUSEO NAZIONALE ROMANO

Originally, this museum occupied only the Diocletian Baths. Today it is divided into four different sections: Palazzo Massimo alle Terme; the Terme di Diocleziano (Diocletian Baths); the annex Octagonal Hall; and Palazzo Altemps.

Palazzo Altemps ★ This branch of the National Roman Museum is housed in a 15th-century palace that was restored and opened to the public in 1997. It is home to the fabled Ludovisi Collection of Greek and Roman sculpture. Among the masterpieces of the Roman Renaissance, you'll find the *Ares Ludovisi,* a Roman copy of the original dated 330 B.C. and restored by Bernini. In the *Sala delle Storie di Mosè* is *Ludovisi's Throne,* representing the birth of Venus. The *Sala delle Feste* (the Celebrations' Hall) is dominated by *Grande Ludovisi*, a sarcophagus dated to the 2nd century A.D. depicting the Romans fighting against the Ostrogoth barbarians.

Piazza San Apollinare 48, near the Piazza Navona. ☎ **06-39967700.** Admission 10€ ($14). Tues–Sun 9am–7:45pm. Last admission 1 hr. before closing. Bus: 70, 81, 87, or 116.

Palazzo Massimo alle Terme ★ If you ever wanted to know what all those emperors from your history books looked like, this museum will make them live again, togas and all. In the central hall are works representing the political and social life of Rome at the time of Augustus. Other works include an altar from Ostia Antica, the ancient port of Rome, plus a statue of a wounded Niobid from 440 B.C. that is a masterwork of expression and character. Upstairs, stand in awe at all the traditional art from the 1st century B.C. to the Imperial Age. The most celebrated mosaic is of the *Four Charioteers.* In the basement are a rare numismatic collection and an extensive collection of Roman jewelry.

Largo di Villa Peretti 67. ☎ **06-39967700.** Admission 7€ ($9.80). Tues–Sun 9am–7:45pm. Last admission 1 hr. before closing. Price of admission also includes entrance to Terme di Diocleziano (see below). Metro: Termini.

Terme di Diocleziano (Diocletian Bath) & the Aula Ottagona (Octagonal Hall) ★ This museum occupies part of the 3rd-century-A.D. Baths of Diocletian and part of a convent that may have been designed by Michelangelo. The Diocletian Baths were the biggest thermal baths in the world. Nowadays they host a marvelous collection of funereal artworks, such as sarcophagi, and decorations dating from the Aurelian period. The **Octagonal Hall** occupies the southwest corner of the central building of the Diocletian Baths. Here you can see the *Lyceum Apollo.* Also worthy of a note is the *Aphrodite of Cyrene,* discovered in Cyrene, Libya.

Viale E. di Nicola 79. ☎ **06-39967700.** Admission to the Baths 8€ ($11). Octagonal Hall free admission. Baths Tues–Sun 9am–7:45pm. Aula Ottagona Tues–Sat 9am–2pm; Sun 9am–1pm. Last admission 1 hr. before closing. Metro: Termini.

ORGANIZED TOURS

One of the leading tour operators is **American Express,** Piazza di Spagna 38 (☎ **06-67641;** Metro: Spagna). One popular tour is a 4-hour orientation to Rome and the Vatican, which departs most mornings at 9:30am and costs 65€ ($91) per person. Another 4-hour tour, which focuses on the Rome of antiquity (including visits to the Colosseum, the Roman Forum, the ruins of the Imperial Palace, and San Pietro in Vincoli), costs 65€ ($91). From April to October, a popular excursion outside Rome is a 5-hour bus tour to Tivoli, where tours are conducted of the Villa d'Este and its spectacular gardens and the ruins of the Villa Adriana, all for 53€ ($74) per person. The American Express Travel Office is open Monday to Friday 9am to 5:30pm and Saturday 9am to 12:30pm.

Context Rome, Via Baccina (☎ **888/467-1986** in the U.S., or 06-4820911), is a collaborative of scholars. Guides offer small group tours, including visits to monuments, museums, and historic piazzas, as well as to neighborhood trattorie. Custom-designed tours are also available. Prices of the regular tours begin at 25€ ($35). There is also a special kids' program, including treasure hunts and other experiences that feature visits to museums of appeal to the younger set.

THE SHOPPING SCENE

The posh shopping streets **Via Borgognona** and **Via Condotti** begin near Piazza di Spagna, and both the rents and the merchandise are chic and ultraexpensive. **Via Frattina** runs parallel to Via Condotti, its more famous sibling. Not attempting the stratospheric image or prices of Via Condotti or Via Borgognona, **Via del Corso** boasts styles aimed at younger consumers. Some gems are scattered amid the shops selling jeans and sporting equipment. The most interesting are nearest the cafes of Piazza del Popolo.

Beginning at the top of the Spanish Steps, **Via Sistina** runs to Piazza Barberini. The shops are small, stylish, and based on the tastes of their owners. The pedestrian traffic is less dense than on other major streets. Most shoppers reach **Via Francesco Crispi** by following Via Sistina one long block from the top of the Spanish Steps. Near the intersection of these streets are several shops well suited for unusual and less expensive gifts. **Via Veneto** is filled these days with expensive hotels and cafes and an array of relatively expensive stores selling shoes, gloves, and leather goods.

Traffic-clogged **Via Nazionale** begins at Piazza della Repubblica and runs down almost to the 19th-century monuments of Piazza Venezia. You'll find an abundance of leather stores—more reasonable in price than those in many other parts of Rome—and a welcome handful of stylish boutiques.

Via dei Coronari, in a colorful section of the Campus Martius, is lined with stores offering magnificent vases, urns, chandeliers, chaises, refectory tables, and candelabras. To find the street's entrance, turn left out of the north end of Piazza Navona and pass the ruins of Domitian's Stadium; the street will be just ahead of you.

ROME AFTER DARK

Few evening occupations are quite as pleasurable as a stroll past the solemn pillars of old temples or the cascading torrents of Renaissance fountains glowing under the blue-black sky. Of the **fountains**, the Naiads (Piazza della Repubblica), the Tortoises (Piazza Mattei), and the Trevi Fountain are particularly beautiful at night. The **Capitoline Hill** (or Campidoglio) is magnificently lit after dark, with its measured Renaissance facades glowing like jewel boxes. The view of the **Roman Forum** seen from the rear of the trapezoidal piazza del Campidoglio is the grandest in Rome, more so than even the Colosseum. If you're across the Tiber, **Piazza San Pietro** (in front of St. Peter's) is impressive at night without the tour buses and crowds. And a combination of illuminated architecture, Renaissance fountains, and sidewalk shows and art expos enlivens **Piazza Navona**.

Wanted in Rome has listings of jazz, rock, and such and gives an interesting look at expatriate Rome. And ***Un Ospite a Roma,*** available free from the concierge desks of top hotels, is full of details on what's happening. Even if you don't speak Italian, you can generally follow the listings of special events and evening entertainment featured in ***La Repubblica,*** a leading Italian newspaper.

THE PERFORMING ARTS

If you're in the capital for the opera season, usually from late December to June, you might want to attend the historic **Teatro dell'Opera,** Piazza Beniamino Gigli 1, off Via Nazionale (✆ **06-481601;** Metro: Repubblica). Nothing is presented in July and August; in summer, the venue usually switches elsewhere. Call ahead or ask your concierge before you go. Tickets are 10€ to 130€ ($14–$182).

NIGHTCLUBS

Unless you're dead set on making the Roman nightclub circuit, try what might be a far livelier and less expensive scene—sitting late at night on **Via Veneto, Piazza della Rotonda, Piazza del Popolo,** or one of Rome's other piazzas, all for the cost of an espresso, a cappuccino, or a Campari.

In a high-tech, futuristic setting, **Alien,** Via Velletri 13–19 (✆ **06-8412212;** bus: 38, 63, 80, or 92), provides a bizarre space-age dance floor, bathed in strobe lights and rocking to the sounds of house/techno music. The crowd is young. It's open Tuesday through Sunday from 11pm to 5am, with a cover of 16€ to 18€ ($22–$25) that includes the first drink. It is closed from mid-June to early September.

Piper, Via Tagliamento 9 (✆ **06-8555398;** bus: 63), opened in 1965 in a former cinema and became the first modern disco of its kind in Italy. Today it lures with fashion shows, screenings, some of the hottest parties in town, and various gigs, drawing a casual and mixed-age crowd. The pickup scene here is hot and heavy. The kind of music you'll hear depends on the night. Open Monday to Saturday 11pm to 4am, charging a cover of 20€ to 25€ ($28–$35), including one drink.

Gilda, Via Mario de' Fiori 97 (✆ **06-6797396;** Metro: Spagna), is an adventurous nightclub/disco/restaurant that attracts a post-35 set, most often couples. In the past, it has hosted Diana Ross and splashy Paris-type revues. Expect first-class shows, and disco music played between the live acts. The disco (midnight–4am) presents music of the 1960s plus more current tunes. The attractive piano bar, Swing, features Italian and Latin music. The cover is 30€ ($42) and includes the first drink; closed on Monday.

Don't be put off by the facade of **Locanda Atlantide,** via dei Lucani 22B (✆ **06-44704540;** Metro: Piazza Vittorio; bus: 71 or 492). This former warehouse in San Lorenzo is the setting of a nightclub, bar, concert hall, and theater. Every day there's something different—perhaps jazz, a play, a concert, or dance-club action. The cover ranges from 3€ to 10€ ($4.20–$14), depending on the evening; hours are Tuesday to Sunday from 8pm to 2am. It's closed June 15 to September 15.

In a palace from the 1400s is **Bloom,** Via del Teatro Pace 29–30 (✆ **06-68802029**). This combined restaurant and nightclub draws a lot of young Roma to its precincts near the Piazza Navona. On some evenings you're entertained by a live band; at other times a DJ spins dance music, often disco from the '70s. House music and jazz are also featured. Open Monday through Saturday from 8:30pm to 2am, charging no cover. Closed August.

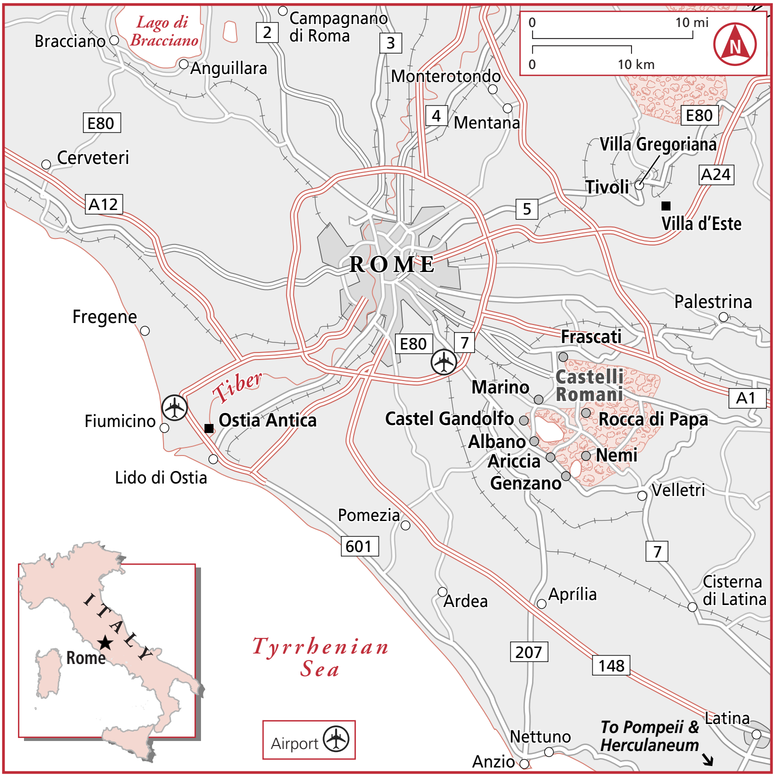
L'Alibi, Via Monte Testaccio 44 (✆ **06-5743448;** bus: 95), in Testaccio, is a year-round stop on many gay men's agenda. The crowd, however, tends to be mixed, both Roman and international, straight and gay, male and female. One room is devoted to dancing. It's open Wednesday through Sunday from 11pm to 4am, and the cover is 7.50€ to 13€ ($11–$18).

SIDE TRIPS FROM ROME

TIVOLI Tivoli, known as Tibur to the ancient Romans, was the playground of the emperors. Today its reputation continues unabated: It's the most popular half-day jaunt from Rome.

While the **Villa d'Este**, a dank Renaissance structure with second-rate paintings, is hardly worth the trek from Rome, its **spectacular gardens** ★★—designed by Pirro Ligorio—dim the luster of Versailles. Visitors descend the cypress-studded slope to the bottom; on the way they're rewarded with everything from lilies to gargoyles spouting water, torrential streams, and waterfalls. The loveliest fountain is the Ovato Fountain (Fontana

Rome & Environs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ROME
Villa Gregoriana
Tivoli
A24
Villa d'Este
Palestrina
Fregene
E80
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Frascati
Castelli Romani
Marino
A1
Tiber
Fiumicino
Ostia Antica
Castel Gandolfo
Rocca di Papa
Albano
Ariccia
Nemi
Genzano
Velletri
Lido di Ostia
Pomezia
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dell Ovato), by Ligorio. But nearby is the most spectacular achievement: the **Fontana dell'Organo Idraulico (Fountain of the Hydraulic Organ),** dazzling with its water jets in front of a baroque chapel, with four maidens who look tipsy. The best walk is along the promenade, with 100 spraying fountains. The garden is worth hours of exploration, but it's a lot of walking, with some steep climbs. Admission is 6.50€ ($9.10). The villa is open Tuesday through Sunday from 8:30am to 1 hour before sunset.

The Villa d'Este dazzles with artificial glamour, but the **Villa Gregoriana** ★ relies more on nature. The gardens were built by Pope Gregory XVI in the 19th century. On the circuitous walk carved along a slope, you can stand and look out onto the most panoramic waterfall (Aniene) at Tivoli. The trek to the bottom on the banks of the Anio is studded with grottoes and balconies that open onto the chasm. From one of the *belvederes,* there's a panoramic view of the Temple of Vesta on the hill. Admission is 4.50€ ($6.30). It's open April 1 to October 15 Tuesday to Sunday from 10am to 6pm; March and October 16 to November 30, it's open Tuesday to Saturday 10am to 2:30pm and Sunday 10am to 4pm.

Of all the Roman emperors dedicated to *la dolce vita,* the globetrotting Hadrian spent the last 3 years of his life in the grandest style. Less than 6km (3¾ miles) from Tivoli, he built one of the greatest estates ever erected—**Villa Adriana (Hadrian's Villa)** ★★★ Via di Villa Adriana (✆ **0774-530203**)—and he filled acre after acre with some of the architectural wonders he'd seen on his many travels. Hadrian directed the staggering feat of building a self-contained world for a vast royal entourage and the hundreds of servants and guards they required to protect them, feed them, bathe them, and satisfy their libidos. Hadrian erected theaters, baths, temples, fountains, gardens, and canals bordered with statuary throughout his estate. For a glimpse of what the villa used to be, see the plastic reconstruction at the entrance. Admission is 6.50€ ($9.10). Hours are daily from 9am to sunset (about 7:30pm in summer, 5:30pm Nov–Mar).

Getting There The town of Tivoli is 32km (20 miles) east of Rome on Via Tiburtina, about an hour's drive with traffic. If you don't have a car, take Metro Line B to the end of the line, the Rebibbia station. After exiting the station, board a COTRAL bus for the trip the rest of the way to Tivoli. Generally, buses depart about every 20 minutes during the day.

OSTIA ANTICA'S RUINS ★★ Ostia Antica is one of the area's major attractions, particularly interesting to those who can't make it to Pompeii. At the mouth of the Tiber, Ostia was the port of ancient Rome, serving as the gateway for all the riches from the far corners of the empire. It was founded in the 4th century B.C. and flourished for about 8 centuries before it began to wither away.

Although a papal-sponsored commission launched a series of digs in the 19th century, the major work of unearthing was carried out under Mussolini's orders from 1938 to 1942. The city is only partially dug out today, but it's believed that all the chief monuments have been uncovered.

These principal monuments are clearly labeled. The most important spot is **Piazzale delle Corporazioni,** an early version of Wall Street. Near the theater, this square contained nearly 75 corporations, the nature of their businesses identified by the patterns of preserved mosaics.

Enter Ostia Antica on Viale dei Romagnoli 717 (✆ **06-56358099**). Admission is 6.50€ ($9.10). It's open Tuesday through Sunday 8:30am to 6pm in the summer; off-season hours are Tuesday through Sunday from 8:30am to 4pm.

Getting There Take the Metro Line B from Stazione Termini to the Magliana stop, then change for the Lido train to Ostia Antica, about 26km (16 miles) from Rome. Departures are about every half-hour, and the trip takes only 20 minutes. The Metro lets you off across the highway that connects Rome with the coast. It's just a short walk to the excavations.

2 Florence ★★★

With the exception of Venice, no other European city lives off its past like Florence (Firenze). As the birthplace of the Renaissance, an amazing outburst of activity from the 14th to the 16th century completely changed this Tuscan town and the world.

Florence might seem a bit foreboding at first glance. Architecturally, it's not a Gothic fantasy of lace like Venice. Many of its *palazzi* (palaces) look like severe fortresses, a characteristic of the Medici style. (They were built to keep foreign enemies at bay.) But these facades, however uninviting, mask treasures within, drawing thousands of visitors who overrun the narrow streets.

The city officials have been wise to keep the inner Renaissance core relatively free of modern architecture and polluting industry.

The locals bemoan the tourist crush but welcome the business it brings. May and September are the ideal times to visit. It's best to avoid the week before and including Easter, and from June until the first week of September—Florence is literally overrun during these times, and the streets weren't designed for mass tourism.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **By Plane** From Rome, you can catch a short domestic flight to **Galileo Galilei Airport** at Pisa (✆ **050-849111**), 93km (58 miles) west of Florence. **Alitalia** (✆ **06-2222;** www.alitalia.it) offers four flights a day from New York to Pisa with one stop in Rome or Milan. You can take an express train for the hour-long trip to Florence. There's also a small domestic airport, **Amerigo Vespucci,** on Via del Termine, near A-11 (✆ **055-30615**), 5.5km (3½ miles) northwest of Florence, a 15-minute drive. From the airport, you can reach Florence by the "Vola in Bus" airport shuttle bus service operated by ATAF, which stops at the main Santa Maria Novella rail terminal. The airport shuttle bus costs 4.50€ ($6.30) one-way. **Alitalia** also provides domestic air service and has offices in Florence at Vicolo Dell' Oro 1 (✆ **055-27881**).

By Train If you're coming from Rome, count on a 2- to 3-hour trip, depending on your connection. **Santa Maria Novella rail station,** in Piazza della Stazione, adjoins Piazza Santa Maria Novella. For railway information, call ✆ **892021.** Some trains stop at the **Stazione Campo di Marte,** on the eastern side of Florence. A 24-hour bus service (no. 12) runs between the two rail terminals.

By Car Florence enjoys good autostrada connections with the rest of Italy, especially Rome and Bologna. A1 connects Florence with both the north and the south. Florence lies 277km (172 miles) north of Rome, 105km (65 miles) west of Bologna, and 298km (185 miles) south of Milan. Use a car only to get *to* Florence, not to get around once you're there.

VISITOR INFORMATION Contact the **Azienda per il Turismo di Firenze (Florence Tourist Board),** which has several branches: Via A. Manzoni 16 (✆ **055-23320;** www.firenzeturismo.it), open Monday through Friday from 9am to 1pm; Via Cavour 1R (✆ **055-290832**), open year-round Monday to Saturday 8:30am to 6:30pm and Sunday 8:30am to 1:30pm. There are also information offices maintained by the **Comune di Firenze.** One is in Borgo Santa Croce 29R just south of Piazza Santa Croce (✆ **055-2340444**), open from April to October Monday to Saturday 9am to 7pm and Sunday 9am to 2pm. From November to March it's open Monday to Saturday 9am to 5pm and Sunday 9am to 2pm. A small **Uffizio Informazioni Turistiche** (also maintained by the Comune di Firenze) is outside the main train terminal, Piazza Stazione 4A (✆ **055-212245**); it's open Monday to Saturday 8:30am to 7pm and Sunday 8:30am to 2pm.

CITY LAYOUT Florence is a city designed for walking, with all the major sights in a compact area. The ***centro storico*** **(historic center)** is split by the **Arno River,** which usually is serene but can at times turn ferocious with floodwaters. The major part of Florence, certainly its historic core with most of the monuments, lies on the north ("right") side of the river. But the "left" side isn't devoid of attractions, including some wonderful trattorie and some great shopping finds, not to mention the Pitti Palace and the Giardini di Boboli, a series of impressive formal gardens. In addition, you'll want to cross over to check out the views of the city from Piazzale Michelangiolo—especially breathtaking at sunset.

Florence

ATTRACTIONS ●

Basilica di San Lorenzo	17
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Baptistery (Battistero San Giovanni)	19
Bargello Museum (Museo Nazionale del Bargello)	26
Boboli Gardens (Giardini di Boboli)	1
Duomo (Cattedrale di Santa Maria del Fiore)	21
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Galleria dell'Accademia	14
Giotto's Bell Tower (Campanile di Giotto)	20
Instituto e Museo di Storia della Scienza	33
Loggia dei Lanzi	32
Medici Laurentian Library	18
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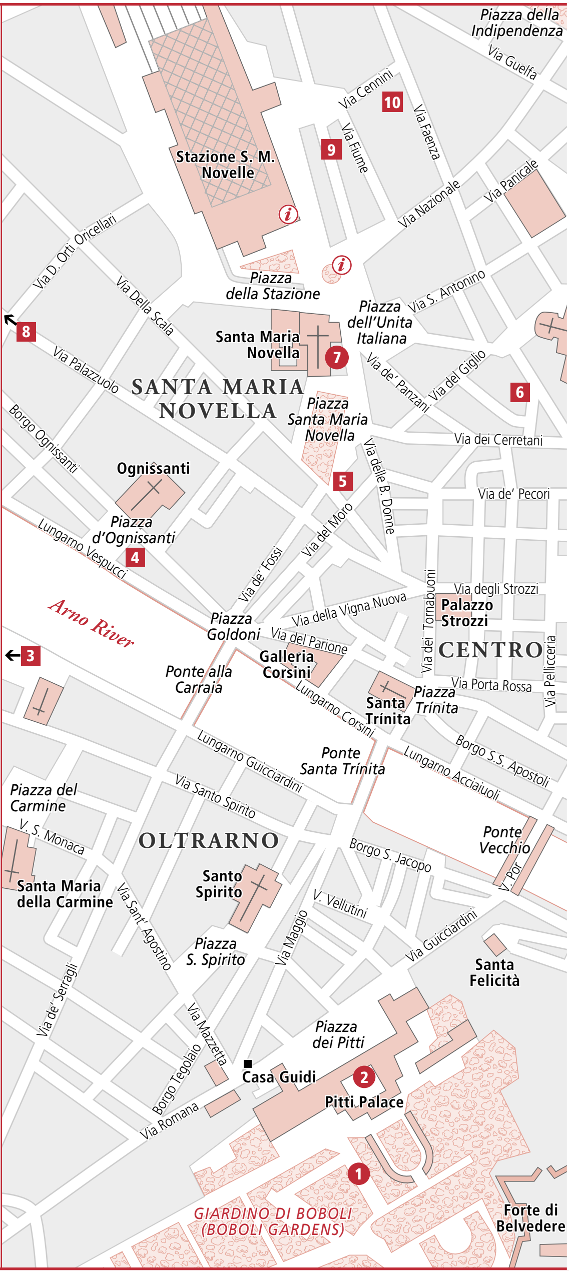
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Via Guelfa
Via Cennini
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Via Faenza
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Via Fiume
Stazione S. M. Novelle
Via Nazionale
Via Panicale
Via D. Orti Oricellari
Piazza della Stazione
Via Della Scala
8
Piazza dell'Unita Italiana
Via S. Antonino
Santa Maria Novella
7
Via Palazzuolo
SANTA MARIA NOVELLA
Via de' Panzani
Via del Giglio
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Piazza Santa Maria Novella
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Ognissanti
5
Via delle B. Donne
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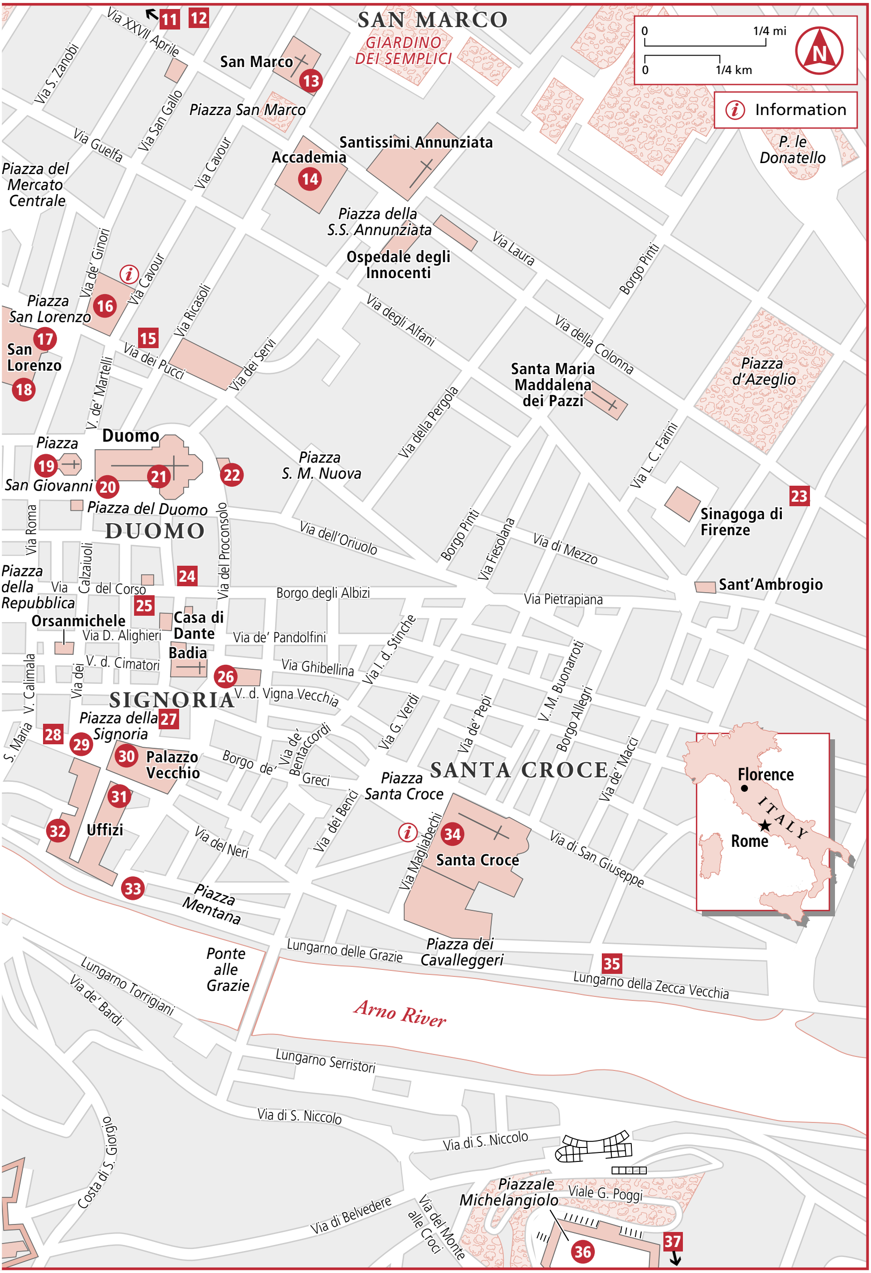
Piazza d'Ognissanti
Lungarno Vespucci
4
Via de' Fossi
Via del Moro
Via dei Tornabuoni
Via degli Strozzi
Palazzo Strozzi
Arno River
3
Piazza Goldoni
Via della Vigna Nuova
Via del Parione
Galleria Corsini
CENTRO
Via Pellicceria
Ponte alla Carraia
Lungarno Corsini
Santa Trinita
Piazza Trinita
Via Porta Rossa
Borgo S.S. Apostoli
Lungarno Guicciardini
Ponte Santa Trinita
Lungarno Acciaiuoli
Via Santo Spirito
Piazza del Carmine
V. S. Monaca
OLTRARNO
Borgo S. Jacopo
Ponte Vecchio
V. Por
Santa Maria della Carmine
Santo Spirito
Via Sant' Agostino
V. Vellutini
Via Maggio
Via Guicciardini
Piazza S. Spirito
Santa Felicità
Via de' Serragli
Piazza dei Pitti
Via Mazzetta
Borgo Tegolaio
Casa Guidi
2
Pitti Palace
Via Romana
1
GIARDINO DI BOBOLI (BOBOLI GARDENS)
Forte di Belvedere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Information
P. le Donatello
Via XXVII Aprile
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12
San Marco
13
Via S. Zanobi
Via San Gallo
Piazza San Marco
Via Guelfa
Via Cavour
Santissimi Annunziata
Accademia
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Piazza del Mercato Centrale
Piazza della S.S. Annunziata
Via Laura
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Ospedale degli Innocenti
Via de' Ginori
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Piazza San Lorenzo
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Via dei Pucci
Via dei Servi
Santa Maria Maddalena dei Pazzi
Piazza d'Azeglio
V. de' Martelli
Via della Pergola
Via L. C. Farini
Piazza
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San Giovanni
20
23
Piazza del Duomo
Sinagoga di Firenze
DUOMO
Via dell'Oriuolo
Borgo Pinti
Via Fiesolana
Via di Mezzo
Via Roma
Via del Proconsolo
Piazza della Repubblica
Via
Calzaiuoli
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Sant'Ambrogio
Via Pietrapiana
25
Orsanmichele
Casa di Dante
Via D. Alighieri
Via de' Pandolfini
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Badia
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Greci
SANTA CROCE
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The Arno is spanned by eight bridges, of which the **Ponte Vecchio (Old Bridge),** lined with overhanging jewelry stores, is the most celebrated and most central. Many of these bridges were ancient structures until the Nazis, in a hopeless last-ditch effort, senselessly destroyed them in their "defense" of Florence in 1944. With tenacity, Florence rebuilt its bridges, using pieces from the destroyed structures whenever possible. The **Ponte Santa Trínita** is the second-most-important bridge. It leads to **Via dei Tornabuoni,** the right bank's most important shopping street (don't look for bargains, however). At the Ponte Vecchio you can walk, again on the right bank of the Arno, along **Via per Santa Maria,** which becomes **Via Calimala.** This leads you into **Piazza della Repubblica,** a commercial district known for its cafes.

From here, you can take **Via Roma,** which leads directly into **Piazza di San Giovanni,** where you'll find the baptistery and its neighboring sibling, the larger **Piazza del Duomo,** with the world-famous cathedral and Giotto bell tower. From the far western edge of Piazza del Duomo you can take **Via del Proconsolo** south to **Piazza della Signoria,** to see the landmark Palazzo Vecchio and its sculpture-filled Loggia della Signoria.

GETTING AROUND **By Foot** Because Florence is so compact, walking is the ideal way to get around—and, at times, the only way because of numerous pedestrian zones. In theory, at least, pedestrians have the right of way at uncontrolled zebra crossings, but don't count on that if you meet up with a speeding Vespa.

By Bus If you plan to use public buses, buy your ticket before boarding. For 1.20€ ($1.70) you can ride on any public bus for a total of 70 minutes. A 24-hour ticket costs 5€ ($7). You can buy bus tickets at *tabacchi* (tobacconists) and newsstands. Once on board, you must validate your ticket in the box near the rear door, or you stand to be fined 40€ ($56)—no excuses accepted. The local **bus station** (which serves as the terminal for ATAF city buses) is at Piazza della Stazione (☎ **055-56501**), behind the train station. Bus routes are posted at bus stops.

By Taxi You can find taxis at stands at nearly all the major squares. The charge is .90€ ($1.30) per kilometer, with a 3.20€ ($4.50) minimum, 6.40€ ($9) between 10pm and 6am. If you need a **radio taxi,** call ☎ **055-4390** or 055-4798.

By Bicycle & Motor Scooter Bicycles and motor scooters, if you avoid the whizzing traffic, are two other practical ways of getting around. **Alinari,** near the rail station at Via S. Zanobi 38R (☎ **055-280500**), rents bikes for 2.50€ ($3.50) per hour, or 12€ to 18€ ($17–$25) per day, depending on the model. Also available are small-engined, rather loud motor scooters. Rentals cost from 10€ to 15€ ($14–$21) per hour or 30€ to 55€ ($42–$77) per day.

By Car Just forget it. Driving in Florence is hopeless—not only because of the snarled traffic and the maze of one-way streets, but also because much of what you've come to see is in a pedestrian zone. You will, however, need a car to explore the surrounding countryside. Car-rental agencies include **Avis,** Borgo Ognissanti 128R (☎ **800/230-4898** in North America, or 055-213629 locally; www.avis.com); **Italy by Car,** Borgo Ognissanti 134R (☎ **055-287161**); and **Hertz,** Via del Termine (☎ **800/654-3131** in North America, or 055-307370 locally; www.hertz.com).

FAST FACTS: Florence

American Express The office is at Via Dante Alighieri 14R (✆ **055-50981**); its open Monday to Friday 9am to 5:30pm and Saturday 9am to 12:30pm.

Consulates The **U.S. Consulate** is at Lungarno Amerigo Vespucci 38 (✆ **055-266951**), open Monday to Friday from 8:30am to 12:30pm (2–4:30pm by appointment only; call ✆ 055-266951). The **U.K. Consulate** is at Lungarno Corsini 2 (✆ **055-284133**), near Piazza Santa Trinità, open Monday to Friday 9:30am to 12:30pm and 2:30 to 4:30pm. Citizens of other English-speaking countries, including **Canada, Australia,** and **New Zealand,** should contact their diplomatic representatives in Rome.

Currency Exchange Local banks have the best rates, and most are open Monday through Friday from 8:30am to 1:30pm and 2:45 to 3:45pm. The tourist office (see "Visitor Information," above) exchanges money at official rates when banks are closed and on holidays, but a commission is often charged. You can also go to the Ufficio Informazione booth at the rail station, open daily 7:30am to 9pm. American Express (above) also exchanges money. One of the best places to exchange currency is the post office (below).

Dentists & Doctors For a list of English-speaking doctors or dentists, consult your consulate (above) or contact **Tourist Medical Service,** Via Lorenzo il Magnifico 59 (✆ **055-475411**). Visits without an appointment are possible only Monday to Friday 11am to noon and 5 to 6pm, and Saturday 11am to noon. After-hours, an answering service gives names and phone numbers of dentists and doctors who are on duty.

Emergencies For fire, call ✆ **115;** for an ambulance, call ✆ **118;** for the police, call ✆ **113;** and for road service, call ✆ **803116.**

Hospitals Call the **General Hospital** of Santa Maria Nuova, Piazza Santa Maria Nuova 1 (✆ **055-27581**).

Internet Access You can check your messages or send e-mail at **Internet Train,** Via de Marrucini 12 (✆ **06-4454953;** www.internettrain.it). Internet Train is open from Monday to Thursday 10am to 10:30pm, Friday 10am to 8pm, Saturday noon to 8pm, Sunday 3 to 7pm.

Pharmacies The **Farmacia Molteni,** Via Calzaiuoli 7R (✆ **055-215472**), is open 24 hours.

Police Dial ✆ **113** in an emergency. English-speaking foreigners who want to see and talk to the police should go to the **Ufficio Stranieri station,** Via Zara 2 (✆ **055-4977602**), where English-speaking personnel are available Monday to Thursday from 8:15 to 10am.

Post Office The **Central Post Office,** at Via Pellicceria 3, off Piazza della Repubblica (✆ **055-2736481**), is open Monday to Saturday 8:15am to 7pm. You can buy stamps and telephone cards at windows 21 and 22. A foreign exchange office is open Monday to Friday 8:15am to 6pm. If you want to send packages of up to 20 kilograms (44 lb.), go to the rear of the building and enter at Piazza Davantati 4.

Safety Violent crimes are rare in Florence; crime consists mainly of pickpockets who frequent crowded tourist centers, such as corridors in the Uffizi Galleries. Members of group tours who cluster together are often singled out as victims. Car thefts are relatively common: Don't leave your luggage in an unguarded car, even if it's locked in the trunk. Women should be especially careful in avoiding purse-snatchers, some of whom grab a purse while whizzing by on a Vespa, often knocking the woman down. Documents such as passports and extra money are better stored in a safe at your hotel, if available.

Telephone The **country code** for Italy is **39.** The **city code** for Florence is **055;** use this code when calling from *anywhere* outside or inside Italy—even within Florence (and you must now include the 0 every time, even when calling from abroad).

WHERE TO STAY

IN CENTRO

Inexpensive

Hotel Cellai ★★★ In the heart of the historic zone, this 18th-century building is decorated in a 19th-century style. Small sofas and armchairs are placed here and there on the terra-cotta floors, creating the aura of a country manse. Most of the midsize-to-spacious bedrooms are in black and cream hues. Headboards are made of intertwined canes of black wood set in thick golden frames or padded and lined with a fabric in a black-and-white Kashmir floral pattern.

Via 27 Aprile 14, 52R 50129 Firenze. ☎ **055-489291.** Fax 055-470387. www.hotelcellai.it. 55 units. 125€–135€ ($175–$189) double; 125€–245€ ($175–$343) junior suite. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: 7, 20, 32, or 33. **Amenities:** Room service; bicycles; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer.

NEAR PIAZZA DELLA SIGNORIA

Expensive

In Piazza della Signoria ★★ This B&B is a rare find lying only a few steps from the landmark square of Florence in a four-story *palazzo* that dates from the 14th century. Restoration was carried out with meticulous care by Alessandro and Sonia, who cater to lovers of Florentine art and elegance. Each room is uniquely furnished with antiques, and they are spacious and well lit, the most desirable of which overlook the piazza itself. Accommodations are named for a famous personality associated with Florence—Machiavelli, Giotto, even Dante or Beatrice. The Michelangelo Room, for example, has the original 18th-century wall frescoes.

Via dei Magazzini 2, 50122 Firenze. ☎ **055-2399546.** Fax 055-2676616. www.inpiazzadellasignoria.com. 13 units. 220€–280€ ($308–$392) double. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking: 28€–30€ ($39–$42). **Amenities:** Breakfast room; laundry service; dry cleaning; all nonsmoking units. *In room:* A/C, TV, beverage maker, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

Relais Uffizi ★ Next door to the Uffizi, this appropriately named inn is a real find and an unbeatable value. The restored 15th-century villa is imbued with homelike comfort and old-fashioned style, with antiques used liberally throughout the hotel. Attractively furnished midsize-to-spacious bedrooms open onto the landmark Piazza della Signoria, and the entrance is through the charming little walking lane, Chiasso del Buco. Bedrooms all contain marble bathrooms, and the most preferred rooms contain canopied beds. Considering its location, it's amazing that the Relais Uffizi isn't better known. Outside your doorstep you can tread in the footsteps of the Brownings, even Dostoevski.

Chiasso del Buco 16, 50122 Firenze. ✆ **055-2676239.** Fax 055-2657909. www.relaisuffizi.it. 10 units. 140€–240€ ($196–$336) double; 220€–260€ ($308–$364) suite. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 30€ ($42). Bus: A, B, 23, or 71. **Amenities:** Bar; room service; laundry service; babysitting; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe (in some).

NEAR PIAZZA DEL DUOMO

Inexpensive

Albergo Firenze *Value* Finding an affordable hotel in overrun Florence seems to grow harder by the year, but this one is a find lying in the historic center only 150m (492 ft.) from the Duomo on one of the oldest city squares. Its exact age is unknown but it received a wholesale renovation in 2006. Rising five floors, the Albergo stands next to a tower house where Dante's wife was born. The entrance is a bit bleak, but the bedrooms are comfortable though simply furnished. All the bathrooms have tubs and some offer a shower as well.

Piazza Donati 4 (Via del Corso), 50122 Firenze. ✆ **055-268301.** Fax 055-212370. www.hotelfirenze-fi.it. 57 units. 80€–130€ ($112–$182) double; 111€–144€ ($155–$202) triple. Rates include breakfast. MC, V. Parking: 26€ ($36) nearby. Bus: 11 or 12. **Amenities:** Breakfast room; laundry service. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi (in some).

Pensione Maria Luisa de' Medici ★ This is an accommodations oddity with a lot of style and artistic flair, run by Angelo Sordi and his Welsh partner, Evelyn Morris. Charging some of the most affordable prices in Florence, they know how to take the bleakness out of a little pensione. The rooms are graced with frescoed portraits of the various Medici and filled with rare lamps, tables, and chairs along with comfortable beds. The corridors are like a baroque museum of the 17th century, making for one of Florence's most unusual B&Bs. Bedrooms are most often spacious and sometimes shared with about four guests if the need arises. Reception is reached by a hike up three flights of stairs.

Via del Corso (between Via del Proconsolo and Via dei Calzaiuoli), 50122 Firenze. ✆ **055-280048.** 9 units, 2 with bathroom. 80€ ($112) double without bathroom; 95€ ($133) double with bathroom. Rates include continental breakfast. No credit cards. Bus: A, 14, or 23. **Amenities:** Tour desk; room service. *In room:* Hair dryer, no phone.

Residenza dei Pucci ★★ You get a room with a view of the cathedral's dome here, though it takes a bit of neck craning to take it in. It's not the view alone that sustains this elegantly restored 19th-century structure, a short walk from such attractions as the Uffizi and the Accademia. Large, high-ceilinged bedrooms are beautifully furnished with refined fabrics and carpets are made of coconut fiber. The top-floor family suite is the most lavish accommodations, offering deluxe living in the heart of Florence. Each room is individually furnished, with lavish use made of French tapestries, four-poster beds, and marble bathrooms (only two have a full tub, the rest with shower).

Via dei Pucci 9, 50122 Firenze. ✆ **055-281886.** Fax 055-264314. www.residenzadeipucci.com. 12 units. 110€–150€ ($154–$210) double; 168€–238€ ($235–$333) suite for 4. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 25€ ($35). Bus:1, 6, 14, or 17. **Amenities:** Room service; laundry service; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer.

NEAR PIAZZA SANTA MARIA NOVELLA & THE TRAIN STATION

Very Expensive

Westin Excelsior ★★★ *Kids* Florence's prime luxury address is the first choice for those who like glamour and glitz. The sumptuousness will bowl you over (if the high prices don't get you first). Near the Ponte Vecchio and the Uffizi, the hotel boasts the best service in town. Part of the hotel was once owned by Carolina Bonaparte, Napoleon's sister; the old palazzi were unified in 1927 and decorated with colored marbles, walnut furniture, Oriental rugs, and neoclassical frescoes. The opulent guest rooms have 19th-century Florentine antiques, sumptuous fabrics, "heavenly beds," and two-line phones. Accommodations come in a variety of configurations. The rooms on the top floor have balconies overlooking the Arno and the Ponte Vecchio.

Piazza Ognissanti 3, 50123 Firenze. ☎ **888/625-5144** in the U.S. and Canada, or 055-27151. Fax 055-210278. www.starwoodhotels.com. 171 units. 285€–870€ ($399–$1,218) double; from 1,470€ ($2,058) junior suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 30€ ($42). Bus: 6 or 17. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; children's program; fitness center; business center; room service; in-room massages; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms; valet; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

Expensive

J.K. Place ★★★ An artistic statement of refinement and taste, this hotel is unique in Florence—in fact, it calls itself "a museum of the soul, an archive of experiences." Close to the Piazza Santa Maria Novella, the Florentine house blends an elegant atmosphere of the past with modern conveniences. Statues, grace notes, and even fireplaces aglow in chilly weather help create a cozy, intimate ambience. Bedrooms are beautifully designed units containing the likes of four-poster beds and Louis XVI fireplaces, evoking the home of an aristocrat in Florence's past life. Breakfast is served in the courtyard covered with glass and on the top floor is a terrace for relaxing.

Piazza Santa Maria Novella 7, 50123 Firenze. ☎ **055-264-5181.** Fax 055-265-8387. www.jkplace.com. 20 units. 290€–470€ ($406–$658) double; 540€–900€ ($756–$1,260) suite. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 32€ ($45). Bus: 14 or 23. **Amenities:** Bar; room service; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning; 1 room for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Moderate

Hotel Mario's ★ *Value* Two blocks from the rail station, this is a winning choice. It's on the first floor of an old building that has been a hotel since 1872, when the *Room with a View* crowd started arriving in search of the glory of the Renaissance. This spotless, homelike place has been completely restored and furnished in Florentine style. Although you'll find cheaper inns in Florence, the service and hospitality make Mario's worth your euros. The guest rooms aren't large but are furnished with taste; wrought-iron headboards frame firm beds. Several rooms open onto a small private garden. The bathrooms are neat, with shelf space. Breakfast is the only meal served; fresh flowers and fresh fruit are put out daily.

Via Faenza 89, 50123 Firenze. ☎ **055-216801.** Fax 055-212039. www.hotelmarios.com. 16 units (shower only). 90€–165€ ($126–$231) double; 110€–220€ ($154–$308) triple. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Valet parking 26€–28€ ($36–$39). Bus: 10, 13, or 17. **Amenities:** Bar; laundry service; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Villa Azalee ★ This handsome villa, on the edge of the city near the train station with a big garden, is a remake of a 1790 home. The owners' personal touch is reflected in the atmosphere and the tasteful decor, featuring tall white-paneled doors with brass fittings, parquet floors, crystal chandeliers, and antiques mixed with reproductions. We prefer the guest rooms in the villa to those in the more modern annex. They range from small to medium and boast an intimate, elegant style; the second-floor rooms are better furnished and command greater views. In the 19th century, the annex was the *scuderia* (stables), and the rooms here have been given a sort of faux Laura Ashley, cozy Cotswold-cottage look.

Viale Fratelli Rosselli 44, 50123 Firenze. ✆ **055-214242.** Fax 055-268264. www.villa-azalee.it. 25 units (shower only). 80€–177€ ($112–$248) double; 95€–235€ ($133–$329) triple. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 21€ ($29) nearby. Bus: 80. **Amenities:** Bar; bike rental; tour desk; room service; laundry service; dry cleaning; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer.

Inexpensive

Hotel Bellettini ★ The palazzo was built in the 1300s, with a history of innkeeping at least 300 years old. This place is so traditional—with terra-cotta floors, beamed ceilings, and touches of stained glass—that you expect Henry James or Elizabeth Barrett Browning to check in at any minute. The rooms are plain (some are almost stark) but comfortable, with queen-size or double beds. Many have sweeping views of Florence. Only two rooms per floor share the corridor bathrooms, so you'll rarely have to wait in line.

In 2001, the hotel acquired a small, charming annex, less than a 2-minute walk from the hotel's main core, and transformed its interior into five of what are today the best rooms in the hotel.

Via De' Conti 7, 50123 Firenze. ✆ **055-213561.** Fax 055-283551. www.hotelbellettini.com. 32 units, 28 with bathroom (shower only). 105€ ($147) double without bathroom; 140€ ($196) double with bathroom. Rooms in annex 170€ ($238) double; 200€ ($280) triple. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 25€ ($35). Bus: 1, 9, 14, 17, 23, 36, or 37. **Amenities:** Bar; tour desk; room service (7am–10pm); laundry service; dry cleaning; all nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar (in annex), beverage maker (in annex), safe.

Stella Mary Hotel *Value* Near the train station in the heart of Florence, this well-kept hotel on the third floor (second floor to Europeans) of a classic Florentine-style building is run by English-speaking Vittoria Tubi (the hotel is serviced by an elevator). The location is a 3-minute walk from either the train station or the San Lorenzo market and its landmark church. The midsize to spacious bedrooms are well furnished, each comfortable and neatly kept, with a private bathroom with shower. The best rooms also contain a bathtub and a private balcony. There is no nightly curfew.

Via Fiume 5, 50123 Firenze. ✆ **055-215694.** Fax 055-264206. www.stellamary.3000.it. 15 units. 65€–130€ ($91–$182) double; 85€–153€ ($119–$214) triple. Rates include buffet breakfast. MC, V. Parking 20€ ($28) in nearby garage. Bus: 14 or 17. **Amenities:** Bar; room service; laundry service. *In room:* A/C, TV, safe.

NEAR PIAZZA SAN MARCO

Inexpensive

Piccolo Hotel *Value* Conveniently located near the railway station and all the top sights, this town-house hotel offers an intimate atmosphere. You'll feel at home, thanks to Ms. Angeloni, the English-speaking manager, who's a fount of advice about the city. Rooms are medium in size; some have balconies, while all have simple, tasteful furniture and floral bed linens. Bathrooms are a little small but well organized and neat.

The only meal served is the generous buffet breakfast, but the hotel is surrounded by good restaurants.

Via S. Gallo 51, 50129 Firenze. ✆ **055-475519.** Fax 055-474515. www.piccolohotelfirenze.com. 10 units (shower only). 75€–130€ ($105–$182) double; 100€–180€ ($140–$252) triple. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 15€ ($21) nearby. Bus: 1, 7, 11, or 17. **Amenities:** Bar; room service; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, safe.

NEAR PIAZZA SANTA CROCE

Moderate

Residenza Casanuova ★ A recently renovated mansion from 1871, this is one of the best B&Bs in Florence, enjoying a prime location near Piazza Santa Croce. It's filled with all the modern conveniences yet retains its original antique architectural style. English-speaking Beatrice and Massimiliano Gorgi are the young and hospitable owners, who will do much to make a stay memorable for one of their guests. The residence occupies the entire second floor of the building with a terrace open to views of the monuments and hills of Florence, on which guests often sit to enjoy the sunset and a glass of Tuscan wine. Rooms have lots of individual character and a warm decor.

Villa della Mattonaia 21, 50121 Firenze. ✆ **055-2343413.** Fax 338-5450758. www.residenzacasanuova.it. 5 units. 135€–180€ ($189–$252). AE, MC, V. Bus: 6, 32, or 33. **Amenities:** Breakfast room. *In room:* A/C, TV, fridge, beverage maker, hair dryer, safe.

Ritz Hotel ★ Along the Arno, the Ritz of Florence has nothing to do with the pricey palaces of London or Paris. This Ritz is a family-run hotel that has been given a new lease on life by its owners, who have upgraded it and turned it into a reasonably priced alternative in a high-priced city. They have restored and redecorated, offering well-furnished, medium-size bedrooms, many with carpets, others with wood and marble. It's a short walk to the Ponte Vecchio or the Uffizi, and the Ritz enjoys a location right on the river, with nice views.

Lugarno Zecca Vecchia 24, 50122 Firenze. ✆ **055-2340650.** Fax 055-240863. www.hotelritz.net. 32 units (some with shower only). 92€–180€ ($129–$252) double; 140€–280€ ($196–$392) suite. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 25€ ($35). Bus: 23. **Amenities:** Bar; room service; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

ACROSS THE ARNO

Expensive

UNA Hotel Vittoria ★★ Is this a boutique hotel or a disco? You're not sure as you enter and are immediately sucked into the world of "wonder boy" designer Fabio Novembre. The modern, innovative modular design comes at you instantly in a series of swirls, rings, and spirals. A floor-to-ceiling floral mosaic encases the reception desk. The bedrooms are adorned with black leather walls and fiber-optic lights. The sleek lines of the decor are so avant-garde that they appear to have been created deep into the 21st century instead of during its launch decade. Depending on your concept of privacy, you'll either love or hate the bathrooms, which are located right by the doorway to each room and encased in crystal, so that all your charms can be displayed to an arriving room-service waiter.

Via Pisana 59, 50143 Firenze. ✆ **055-22771.** Fax 055-22772. www.unahotels.it. 84 units. 80€–465€ ($112–$651) double; 90€–606€ ($126–$848) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 16€ ($22). Bus: 6. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; kids' programs; business center; room service; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

NEAR PIAZZALE MICHELANGIOLO

Very Expensive

Villa La Vedetta ★★ This government-rated five-star deluxe boutique hotel lies beside Piazzale Michelangiolo, with the most exceptional view of the Arno (and the monuments of Florence) of any hotel in town. A glamorous and sophisticated atmosphere prevails here, in a villa surrounded by gardens and reached by a tree-lined road. Behind its neoclassical facade, the hotel successfully blends contemporary and antique styles. Each individually decorated bedroom is luxurious, with parquet floors, fine marble bathrooms, and often a four-poster bed. A total of six units—two suites and four doubles—are housed in the equally distinguished annex. The hotel's Bellavista Suite is acclaimed as the largest in the hotel; it occupies two levels.

Viale Michelangelo Buonarroti 78, 50125 Firenze. ✆ **055-681631.** Fax 055-6582544. www.villalavedettahotel.com. 18 units. 299€–1,100€ ($419–$1,540) double; from 699€ ($979) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. Bus: 12. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; outdoor pool; fitness center; Jacuzzi; sauna; room service; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

WHERE TO DINE

IN CENTRO

Moderate

Cantinetta Antinori ★ FLORENTINE/TUSCAN Behind the severe stone facade of the 15th-century Palazzo Antinori is one of Florence's most popular restaurants and one of the city's few top-notch wine bars. It's no wonder the cellars are so well stocked: Antinori is the oldest (600 years), most distinguished wine company in Tuscany, Umbria, and Piedmont. You can sample these wines by the glass at the stand-up bar or by the bottle as an accompaniment to the meals served at wooden tables in the dining room, decorated with floor-to-ceiling racks of aged and dusty wine bottles. You can eat a meal or just snacks. The food is standard but satisfying, and many of the ingredients come directly from the Antinori farms. Especially good are the sausages with white haricot, fresh Tuscan ewe's cheese, rolled veal with artichokes, fettuccine in duck sauce, oven-roasted Chiana beef (a bit pricey but worth it), and *stracotto al vino Peppole* (beef braised in strong Italian red wine).

Piazza Antinori 3. ✆ **055-292234.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 10€–22€ ($14–$31). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri 12:30–2:30pm and 7–10:30pm. Closed Aug and Dec 24–25. Bus: 6, 11, 14, 36, 37, or 68.

NEAR PIAZZA DEL DUOMO

Inexpensive

Le Mossacce Value TUSCAN/FLORENTINE The 35-seat Le Mossacce is midway between the Bargello and the Duomo. It opened in the early 1900s, and within its 300-year-old walls, hardworking waiters serve a wide range of excellent Florentine and Tuscan specialties, such as *ribollita,* baked lasagna, and heavily seasoned baked pork. *Bistecca alla fiorentina* is a favorite—and you'll be hard-pressed to find it at a better price. Pasta buffs rightly claim that the cannelloni here is among Florence's finest—these baked pasta tubes are stuffed with spinach, a savory tomato sauce, and seasoned ground meat. For dessert, try the excellent *castagnaccio,* a cake baked with chestnut flour. Ask the waiters for advice and trust them; we had a great meal this way.

Via del Proconsolo 55R. ✆ **055-294361.** Main courses 6€–16€ ($8–$22). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri noon–2:30pm and 7–9:30pm. Closed Aug. Bus: 14.

NEAR PIAZZA DELLA SIGNORIA

Moderate

Paoli ★★ TUSCAN/ITALIAN This restaurant is one of the best located in Florence. Paoli, between the Duomo and Piazza della Signoria, was opened in 1824 by the Paoli brothers in a building dating in part from the 13th century. It has a wonderful medieval-tavern atmosphere, with arches and ceramics stuck into the fresco-adorned walls. The pastas are homemade, and the chef does a superb *rognoncino trifolato* (kidney cooked with thinly sliced vegetables over pasta) and sole *meunière* (with a lemon, butter, and wine sauce). A recommended side dish is *piselli alla fiorentina* (garden peas). The ultrafresh vegetables are often served with olive oil, which your waiter will loudly proclaim as the world's finest.

Via dei Tavolini 12R. ✆ **055-216215.** Reservations required. Main courses 8€–20€ ($11–$28). AE, DC, MC, V. Wed–Mon noon–2:30pm and 7–10:30pm. Closed 3 weeks in Aug. Bus: A.

Inexpensive

Da Pennello Value FLORENTINE/ITALIAN This informal trattoria—also called Casa di Dante—offers many Florentine specialties on its a la carte menu and is known for its wide selection of antipasti; you can make a meal out of these delectable hors d'oeuvres. The ravioli is homemade, and one pasta specialty (loved by locals) is *spaghetti carrettiera,* with tomatoes and pepperoni. To follow that, you can have filet mignon in green pepper sauce. Sometimes it's best to order the daily specials, which are made with food bought fresh that day at the market. A Florentine cake, *zuccotto,* rounds out the meal. Da Pennello is on a narrow street near Dante's house, about a 5-minute walk from the Duomo. Called "The Painter" in English, its walls are hung with art, and it used to attract such local guys as Cellini and Andrea del Sarto.

Via Dante Alighieri 4R. ✆ **055-294848.** Main courses 5.50€–13€ ($7.70–$18); fixed-price menus from 20€ ($28). AE, DC, MC, V. Tues–Sat noon–2:45pm and 7–10pm. Closed 1st 3 weeks in Aug and Dec 24–Jan 2. Bus: 14, 22, or 23.

Il Cavallino TUSCAN/ITALIAN A local favorite since the 1930s, Il Cavallino is on a tiny street (which probably won't even be on your map) leading off Piazza della Signoria at its northern end. Two of the three dining rooms have vaulted ceilings and peach-colored marble floors; the main room looks out over the piazza. Menu items are typical hearty Tuscan fare, including an assortment of boiled meats in green herb sauce, grilled filet of steak, chicken breast Medici-style, and the inevitable Florentine spinach. The portions are large. Most diners prefer the house wine, but a limited selection of bottled wines is also available.

Via della Farine 6R. ✆ **055-215818.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 10€–18€ ($14–$25). AE, DC, MC, V. Mar–Oct daily noon–3pm and 7–10pm; off season Thurs–Tues noon–3pm, Thurs–Mon 7–10:30pm. Bus: A.

NEAR PIAZZA SANTA MARIA NOVELLA & THE TRAIN STATION

Moderate/Inexpensive

Sostanza ★ Value FLORENTINE Sostanza, the city's oldest (opened in 1869) and most revered trattoria, is where working people go for excellent moderately priced food. In recent years, however, it has also begun attracting a more sophisticated set, despite its somewhat funky atmosphere. (Florentines call the place *Troia,* a word that means "trough" but also suggests a woman of easy virtue.) The small dining room has crowded family tables, but when you taste what comes out of the kitchen, you'll know that fancy decor would be superfluous. Specialties include breaded chicken breast, a succulent T-bone, and tripe Florentine-style (cut into strips and then baked in a casserole with tomatoes, onions, and parmigiano).

Via del Porcellana 25R. ✆ **055-212691.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 8€–19€ ($11–$27). No credit cards. June–July and Nov–Mar Mon–Fri 12:30–2pm and 7:30–9:45pm; Apr–May and Sept–Oct also Sat 12:30–2pm and 7:30–9:45pm. Closed Aug and 2 weeks at Christmas. Bus: 12.

Trattoria Antellesi ★ TUSCAN Occupying a 15th-century historic monument just steps from the Medici Chapels and a 4-minute walk from the railway station, this place is devoted almost exclusively to well-prepared versions of time-tested Tuscan recipes. The restaurant changes its menu every 3 weeks, based on whatever is seasonal and fresh at the food market (Mercato San Lorenzo), which lies a short walk away. Dishes might include tagliatelle with porcinis or braised arugula, *crespelle alla fiorentina* (cheesy spinach crepe), pappardelle with wild boar, fresh fish (generally on Fri), and superb *bistecca alla fiorentina* (local beefsteak). Expect a wide selection of high-quality Italian wines, mostly Tuscan.

Via Faenza 9R. ☎ **055-216990.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 6€–29€ ($8.40–$41). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily noon–3pm and 7–10:30pm. Bus: 1, 6, 7, 11, 17, 33, 67, or 68.

ACROSS THE ARNO

Expensive

Beccofino ★★★ INTERNATIONAL/MEDITERRANEAN A talented chef on the move, Francesco Berardinelli worked at New York's swank Le Cirque restaurant. But when he returned to his native Italy, he adapted his own imaginative recipes. The result is something special. Such magazines as *Wine Spectator* have predicted that Berardinelli's "going to the top of the cooking world." On our last visit, we were delightfully startled to find innovative and imaginative dishes. The moment the first appetizer is served, carpaccio of dried codfish with French green beans and pomegranate seed, you know you're heading for a night of wonderful surprises. Lentil soup is spiced up with fried calamari and crispy carrots. The salmon filet with stewed cauliflower, capers, and a raisin pesto was a revelation, and a true delight was the roast of lamb with sweet garlic accompanied by fava beans and chicory. Worth your notice is the stuffed cockerel breast flavored with fresh cilantro and served with al dente vegetables.

Piazza degli Scarlatti, Lungarno Guicciardini. ☎ **055-290076.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 9€–22€ ($13–$31). AE, MC, V. Apr–Oct only Tues–Sun 12:30–2:30pm; year-round Tues–Sun 7–11pm. Bus: C, 6, 11, 36, 37, or 68.

Inexpensive

Fuori Porta ★ TUSCAN This is the city's best *enoteche* (wine tavern). As the name translates, it means "outside the gates," yet it's only a 15-minute taxi or bus ride from the landmark Piazza della Signoria, the historic core of Florence. The wine list ranks at the top in Florence, yet the prices are more than reasonable. Many of the finest selections are available by the glass. Discerning palates also appreciate the Tuscan fare, which is soul food to the Florentines. We recently started off an elegant repast with carpaccio of swordfish that was perfectly flavored, as was the sautéed calves' liver to follow. We especially like the loaves of bread that arrive freshly baked from the oven and are most often served with mozzarella and vine-ripened tomatoes.

Via del Monte alle Croce 10R. ☎ **055-2342483.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 6€–14€ ($8.40–$20). AE, MC, V. Daily 12:30–3:30pm and 7pm–12:30am. Bus: 13 or 23.

Osteria Antica Mescita San Niccolò *Value* TUSCAN Across the Arno from the historical center, this much-frequented restaurant consistently turns on some of the most reasonably priced and flavorful dishes in town. Offered is a repertoire of mouthwatering dishes that are cooked fresh with the bounty of the Tuscan countryside. Florentines dig into the fabled *ribollita* (the classic vegetable and bread soup of Tuscany), followed with Florentine-style tripe, an acquired taste for many eaters. You might opt instead for the beef stew with porcini mushrooms. Another savory dish is the rabbit with a Vernaccia wine sauce along with such familiar side dishes as white navy beans with garlic, tomato, and sage. Outdoor dining is possible in summer.

Via Niccolò 60R. ☎ **055-2342836.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 6€–14€ ($8.40–$20). AE, MC, V. Mon–Sat noon–3pm and 7pm–1am. Closed 3 weeks in Aug. Bus: C, D, or 23.

AT ARTIMINO

MODERATE

Da Delfina ★ TUSCAN Even on a short visit to Florence, give yourself a break and dip at least once into the countryside of Tuscany for a meal. Our candidate for an outing is this family-run restaurant in the medieval walled village of Artimino, a 15-minute train ride from the center of Florence. Based on the freshest of local ingredients, the food has a wonderful, earthy taste, and some of it comes from the nearby fields, including nettles, mushrooms, and wild herbs. If you arrive in fair weather, request a table on the terrace with its classic view of a Tuscan landscape. The chefs turn out some of the region's best homemade pasta dishes and delectable sausages. We'd visit just for a plate of the aged salami with its intense, meaty flavor. Raw fava beans appear with pecorino sheep-milk cheese, and homemade pasta with wild mushrooms should win an award. Baby goat *(capretto)* is roasted to perfection in the oven.

Via della Chiesa 1, Artimino. ✆ **055-8718074.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 8€–18€ ($11–$25). No credit cards. Wed–Sun 12:30–2:30pm; Tues–Sat 8–10:30pm. From Santa Maria Novella station in Florence take the Signa train. At Signa take a taxi for the 5-min. ride to Da Delfina.

EXPLORING THE RENAISSANCE CITY

Florence was the fountainhead of the Renaissance, the city of Dante and Boccaccio. For 3 centuries, the city was dominated by the Medici family, patrons of the arts, and masters of assassination. But it's chiefly through Florence's incomparable artists that we know of the apogee of the Renaissance: Ghiberti, Fra Angelico, Donatello, Brunelleschi, Botticelli, Leonardo da Vinci, and Michelangelo.

Group tourism has so overwhelmed this city that in mid-1990s, officials demanded that organized tour groups book their visits in advance and pay an admission fee. No more than 150 tour buses are allowed into the center at one time (considering how small Florence is, even that's a stretch). Today there are more than seven tourists for each native Florentine. And that isn't counting day-trippers, who rush off to Venice in the late afternoon. But despite all its traffic and inconveniences, Florence is still one of the world's greatest art cities.

SIGHTSEEING SUGGESTIONS FOR FIRST-TIME VISITORS

If You Have 1 Day You'll have to accept the inevitable—You can only visit a small fraction of Florence's stellar attractions. Go to the **Uffizi Galleries** as soon as they open and concentrate only on some of the masterpieces or your favorite artists. Have lunch on **Piazza della Signoria,** dominated by the Palazzo Vecchio, and admire the statues in the Loggia dei Lanzi. After lunch, visit the **Duomo** and **Baptistery,** before continuing north to see Michelangelo's *David* at the **Accademia.** Next, head back south toward the Arno and the Ponte Vecchio. On the way do a little shopping at the fabled **Mercato Nuovo (Straw Market).** Sunset should find you at the landmark **Ponte Vecchio.** Finish your very busy day with a hearty Tuscan dinner in on of Florence's many *bucas* (cellar restaurants).

If You Have 2 Days On day 2, you can spend the morning visiting the **Bargello** to see some of the Renaissance, including another version of Michelangelo's *David.* A short walk will take you to the **Palazzo Vecchio,** where you can explore the Hall of the 500 to see the Vasari Renaissance frescoes. Then, in the afternoon, visit the **Pitti Palace,** on the other side of the Arno, and wander through the Galleria Palatina, with its 16th- and 17th-century masterpieces, including 11 works by Raphael alone. After a visit, stroll through the adjoining **Boboli Gardens.** At sunset, go again to the Duomo and the Baptistery for a much better look.

If You Have 3 Days In the morning of day 3, head for the **Medici Chapels** adjacent to the Basilica of San Lorenzo. Later in the morning you can go to the **Museo di San Marco,** a small museum that's a monument to the work of Fra Angelico. After lunch, visit the **Museo dell'Opera del Duomo,** with its sculptural masterpieces, including Donatello's *Mary Magdalene*.

If You Have 4 Days or More On day 4, begin with a morning visit to the **Palazzo Medici-Riccardi,** near the Duomo, to view the mid-15th-cenutry frescoes by Benozzo Gozzoli in the Medici Chapel. Later, pop into **Santa Maria Novella,** one of Florence's most distinguished churches, with its Gondi Chapel containing Brunelleschi's wooden *Christ on the Cross*. Before it closes at 6:30pm, call at the **Basilica di Santa Croce,** with its two restored chapels by Giotto. On day 5, head south to yet another fascinating art city, **Siena.**

TOP MUSEUMS

Bargello Museum (Museo Nazionale del Bargello) ★★ A short walk from Piazza della Signoria, this is a 13th-century fortress palace whose dark underground chambers resounded with the cries of the tortured when it served as the city's jail and town hall during the Renaissance. Today the Bargello is a vast repository of some of the most important Renaissance sculpture. Here you'll see **another Michelangelo *David*** (referred to in the past as *Apollo*), chiseled perhaps 25 to 30 years after the statuesque figure in the Accademia. Among the more significant sculptures is Giambologna's *Winged Mercury* (ca. 1564). The Bargello displays two versions of Donatello's ***John the Baptist*** ★ (one emaciated and the other a younger and much kinder man). Look for two other versions of *David,* one by Donatello and the other by Andrea del Verrocchio. The Bargello also contains a large number of terra cottas by the della Robbia clan.

Via del Proconsolo 4. ✆ **055-2388606.** Admission 4€ ($5.60). Daily 8:15am–1:50pm. Closed 2nd and 4th Mon and 1st, 3rd, and 5th Sun of each month; Jan 1, May 1, and Christmas. Bus: A, 14, or 23.

Galleria dell'Accademia ★★ This museum boasts many paintings and sculptures, but they're completely overshadowed by one work: Michelangelo's colossal ***David*** ★★★, unveiled in 1504. It first stood in Piazza della Signoria but was moved to the Accademia in 1873 (a copy was substituted) and placed beneath the rotunda of a room built exclusively for its display. There are other masterpieces here as well, notably Lo Scheggia's 1440s *Cassone Adimari,* a panel from a wedding chest.

Via Ricasoli 60. ✆ **055-2388612.** Admission 6.50€ ($9.10). Tues–Sun 8:15am–7pm. Bus: B, D, or 12.

Instituto e Museo di Storia della Scienza ★ *Finds* After a decade-long restoration, the Institute and Museum of the History of Science reopened in 2005. Since 1927, it's been a repository of ancient instruments and devices of historical and scientific interest, including Galileo's telescope. The most important exhibit is the **Medici Collection** ★, which displays scientific instruments owned by the Medicis, including the objective lens of the telescope with which Galileo discovered the satellites around Jupiter. Other exhibits include a planetary clock by Lorenzo della Volpaia, plus exhibits relating to 5 centuries of scientific collecting by the once-powerful Tuscan family of Lorraine. Dozens of other displays relate to instruments used in the early studies of mathematics, physics, meteorology, and electricity.

Piazza dei Giudici. ✆ **055-265311.** Admission 6.50€ ($9.10), free for kids 5 and under. June–Sept Mon and Wed–Fri 9:30am–5pm, Tues and Sat 9:30am–1pm; off season Mon and Wed–Sat 9:30am–5pm, Tues 9:30am–1pm. Bus: 13, 23, or 62.

Palazzo Pitti and the Boboli Gardens (Giardini di Boboli) ★★ The massive **Palazzo Pitti** is one of Europe's greatest artistic treasure-troves, second only to the Uffizi. It's a cavalcade of the works of Titian, Rubens, Raphael, and Andrea del Sarto. Built in the 16th century (Brunelleschi was probably the architect), this was once the residence of the powerful Medici family. Today there are several museums in this complex, the most important is the first-floor **Palatine Gallery (Galleria Palatina)** ★★, which houses one of Europe's great art collections and shows masterpieces hung one on top of the other as in the days of the Enlightenment. Other museums include the **Royal Apartments (Appartamenti Reali)** ★, boasting lavish reminders of when the Pitti was a private residence; the **Modern Art Gallery (Galleria d'Arte Moderna; ✆ 055-2388616);** the **Gallery of Costume (Galleria del Costume);** and the **Museum of Silver (Museo degli Argenti)** ★, which displays the household wares of the Medicis.

Behind the Pitti Palace are the **Boboli Gardens (Giardini di Boboli)** ★★, Piazza Pitti 1 (✆ **055-2388786**). After a visit to the Boboli, wander over to the adjoining site, **Giardino Bardini,** a 14th-century garden spread over a 4-hectare (10-acre) site.

Piazza Pitti, across the Arno. ✆ **055-2388614.** Palatina and Modern Art Gallery 8.50€ ($12); 6€ ($8.40) for both Argenti and Boboli Gardens. Galleria Palatina, Appartamenti Reali, and Modern Art Gallery Tues–Sun 8:15am–6:45pm. Boboli Gardens and Museo degli Argenti June–Aug daily 8:30am–7:45pm; Apr–May and Sept–Oct daily 8:30am–6:30pm; Nov–Feb daily 8:15am–4:30pm; closed the 1st and last Mon of each month. Ticket office closes 1 hr. before the gardens. Bus: B, 11, 36, 37, or 68.

St. Mark's Museum (Museo di San Marco) ★★ This state museum is a handsome Renaissance palace whose cell walls are decorated with frescoes by the mystical **Fra Angelico.** In the days of Cosimo de' Medici, San Marco was built by Michelozzo as a Dominican convent. It contained bleak, bare cells, which Angelico and his students brightened considerably. Here you'll see one of his better-known paintings, ***The Last Judgment*** ★★ (1431). On the second floor visitors find the highlight of the museum, Fra Angelico's ***The Annunciation*** ★★★.

Piazza San Marco 1. ✆ **055-2388608.** Admission 4€ ($5.60). Tues–Fri 8:30am–1:50pm; Sat 8:15am–6:50pm; 2nd and 4th Sun of the month 8:15am–7pm; 1st, 3rd, and 5th Mon of the month 8:15am–1:50pm. Ticket office closes 30 min. before the museum. Closed 2nd and 4th Mon of the month; 1st, 3rd, and 5th Sun of the month; Jan 1, May 1, and Christmas. Bus: 7, 10, 11, 17, or 33.

Uffizi Gallery (Galleria degli Uffizi) ★★★ This remains one of the world's outstanding museums and Italy's finest collection of art. The Uffizi is nicely grouped into periods or schools to show the development and progress of Italian and European art. The **Botticelli rooms** showcase the artist's finest works. Many come to contemplate his "Venus on the Half Shell": (This supreme conception of life (the ***Birth of Venus*** ★★★) really packs 'em in.) Leonardo da Vinci's unfinished but brilliant *Adoration of the Magi* commands attention in another salon, where his *Annunciation* also finds its home. Room after room, visitors will find works by Perugino, Dürer, Mantegna, Bellini, Giorgione, and Correggio. Finally, we would be remiss if we didn't mention that a trip to the Uffizi offers awe-inspiring views of Michelangelo's *Holy Family* as well as Raphael's *Madonna of the Goldfinch*.

Piazzale degli Uffizi 6. ✆ **055-2388651.** www.uffizi.firenze.it. Admission 6.50€ ($9.10). Tues–Sun 8:15am–7pm (last entrance 45 min. before closing). Bus: A, B, 14, or 23.

Tips Reserving Tickets for the Uffizi & Other Attractions

Select Italy offers the possibility to reserve your tickets for the Uffizi, Boboli Gardens, Galleria dell'Accademia, and many other attractions in Florence (plus Rome and Venice). The cost varies from 13€ to 28€ ($18–$39), depending on the museum, and several combination passes are available. Contact Select Italy at ☎ **800/877-1755,** or buy online at www.selectitaly.com.

If your hotel has a concierge, don't be shy about asking what he can do to get you tickets.

THE DUOMO, CAMPANILE & BAPTISTERY

Il Duomo (Cattedrale di Santa Maria del Fiore) ★★★ The Duomo, graced by Filippo Brunelleschi's red-tiled dome, is the crowning glory of Florence and the star of the skyline. The exterior, with its geometrically patterned bands of white, pink, and green marble is, along with its dome, considered it's best feature. The Duomo is one of the world's largest churches and represents the flowering of the "Florentine Gothic" style. Begun in 1296, it was finally consecrated in 1436, although finishing touches on the facade were applied as late as the 19th century.

Inside, the overall effect of the cathedral is bleak except inside of the cupola where frescos depict the Last Judgment. Some of the stained-glass windows in the dome were based on designs by Donatello (Brunelleschi's friend) and Ghiberti (Brunelleschi's rival).

Piazza del Duomo. ☎ **055-2302885.** Cathedral free admission; excavations 3€ ($4.20); cupola 6€ ($8.40). Duomo Mon–Wed and Fri 10am–5pm; Thurs 10am–4:30pm; Sat 10am–4:45pm; Sun 1:30–4:45pm. First Sat of each month 10am–3:30pm. Cupola Mon–Fri 8:30am–7pm; Sat 8:30am–5:30pm. Bus: 1 or 3.

Giotto's Bell Tower (Campanile di Giotto) ★★ Giotto left to posterity Europe's most beautiful campanile, rhythmic in line and form. The "Tuscanized" Gothic tower, with bands of the same colored marble as the Duomo, stands 84m (274 ft.) high; you can climb 414 steps to the top. If you can make the tough climb up (and up and up) the cramped stairs, the **view** ★★★ from the top of Giotto's bell tower is unforgettable, sweeping over the city, the surrounding hills, and Medici villas.

Piazza del Duomo. ☎ **055-2302885.** Admission 6€ ($8.40). Daily 8:30am–7:30pm. Last admission 40 min. before closing. Closed Jan 1, Easter, Sept 8, and Christmas. Bus: 1 or 3.

Baptistery (Battistero San Giovanni) ★★★ Named after the city's patron saint, Giovanni (John the Baptist), the octagonal baptistery dates from the 11th and 12th centuries. It's the oldest structure in Florence and is a highly original interpretation of the Romanesque style, with bands of pink, white, and green marble. Visitors from all over the world come to gape at its three sets of **bronze doors** ★★★. The gilt-covered panels (representing scenes from the New Testament, including the Annunciation, the Adoration, and Christ debating the elders in the temple) make up a flowing narration in bronze. To protect them from the elements, the originals are now in the Duomo Museum, but the copies are works of art unto themselves.

Piazza San Giovanni. ☎ **055-2302885.** Admission 3€ ($4.20). Mon–Sat noon–7pm; Sun 8:30am–2pm. Last admission 30 min. before closing. Bus: 1 or 3.

OTHER CHURCHES

Basilica di San Lorenzo ★★ This is Brunelleschi's 1426 Renaissance church, where the Medicis attended services from their nearby palace on Via Larga, now Via Camillo Cavour. Most visitors flock to see Michelangelo's New Sacristy with his *Night* and *Day,* but Brunelleschi's handwork deserves some time, too. Built in the style of a Latin cross, the church is distinguished by harmonious grays and rows of Corinthian columns.

Enter the **Medici Laurentian Library (Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana)** ★★ (✆ **055-210760**) at Piazza San Lorenzo 9. Designed by Michelangelo to shelter the expanding collection of the Medicis, the library showcases an extraordinary curving flight of stone steps. The library boasts some of Italy's greatest manuscripts. ***Note:*** Call ahead before setting out because, at press time, the library was temporarily closed for restoration.

Piazza San Lorenzo. ✆ **055-216634.** Free admission. Mon–Sat 10am–5pm. Bus: 1, 6, 7, 11, 17, 33, 67, or 68.

Basilica di Santa Croce ★★ Think of this as Tuscany's Westminster Abbey. This church shelters the tombs of everyone from Michelangelo to Machiavelli, from Dante (he was actually buried at Ravenna) to Galileo. Santa Croce, said to have been designed by Arnolfo di Cambio, was the church of the Franciscans.

In the right nave (the first tomb) is the Vasari-executed **monument to Michelangelo,** whose 89-year-old body was smuggled back to his native Florence from its original burial place in Rome. The **Trecento frescoes** ★★ are reason enough for visiting Santa Croce—especially those by Giotto to the right of the main chapel.

Piazza Santa Croce 16. ✆ **055-2466105.** Church free admission; cloisters and church museum 5€ ($7). Church Mon–Sat 9:30am–5:30pm; Sun 1–5:30pm. Museum and cloisters Mon–Sat 9:30am–5:30pm; Sun 1–5:30pm. Bus: B, 13, 23, or 71.

Basilica di Santa Maria Novella ★★ Near the rail station is one of Florence's most distinguished churches, begun in 1278 for the Dominicans. Its geometric facade, with bands of white and green marble, was designed in the late 15th century by Leon Battista Alberti. In the left nave as you enter, the third large painting is the great Masaccio's ***Trinità*** ★, a curious work that has the architectural form of a Renaissance stage setting but whose figures (in perfect perspective) are like actors in a Greek tragedy. If you view the church at dusk, you'll see the stained-glass windows in the fading light cast kaleidoscope fantasies on the opposite wall.

Piazza Santa Maria Novella. ✆ **055-282187.** Church free admission; Spanish Chapel and cloisters 2.75€ ($3.90). Church Mon–Thurs 9:30am–5pm. Spanish Chapel and cloisters Sat and Mon–Thurs 9am–5pm. Bus: A, 6, 9, 11, 36, 37, or 68.

PALACES

Palazzo Medici-Riccardi ★ A short walk from the Duomo, this palace was the home of Cosimo de' Medici before he took his household to the Palazzo Vecchio. Art lovers visit today chiefly to see **Benozzo Gozzoli's mid-15th-century frescoes** ★★ in the **Medici Chapel** (not to be confused with the Medici Chapels).

Via Camillo Cavour 1. ✆ **055-2760340.** Admission 5€ ($7). Thurs–Tues 9am–7pm. Bus: 1, 6, 11, 17, 67, or 68.

Palazzo Vecchio ★★ The secular "Old Palace" is Florence's most famous and imposing palazzo. It dates from the end of the 13th century. Its most remarkable architectural feature is the 94m (308-ft.) tower.

The 16th-century **Hall of the 500 (Salone dei Cinquecento),** the most outstanding part of the palace, is filled with Vasari and company frescoes as well as sculpture. As you enter the hall, look for Michelangelo's ***Victory*** ★, depicting an insipid-looking young man treading on a bearded older man (it has been suggested that Michelangelo put his own face on that of the trampled man). You can also visit the private apartments of Eleanor of Toledo, the Spanish wife of Cosimo I, and a chapel begun in 1540 and frescoed by Bronzino.

Piazza della Signoria. ✆ **055-2768224.** Admission 6€ ($8.40). Mon–Wed and Fri–Sun 9am–7pm; Thurs 9am–2pm. Ticket office closes 1 hr. before palace. Bus: A, B, 23, or 71.

THE SHOPPING SCENE

Skilled craftsmanship and traditional design unchanged since the days of the Medicis have made this a serious shopping destination. Florence is noted for its hand-tooled **leather goods** and various **straw merchandise,** as well as superbly crafted **gold jewelry.**

Florence isn't a city for bargain shopping, however. Most visitors interested in gold or silver jewelry head for the **Ponte Vecchio** and its tiny shops. If you're looking for a charm or souvenir, these shops are fine. But the heyday of finding gold jewelry bargains on the Ponte Vecchio is long gone.

The street for antiques is **Via Maggio;** some of the furnishings and objets d'art here are from the 16th century. Another major area for antiques shopping is **Borgo Ognissanti.**

Florence's Fifth Avenue is **Via dei Tornabuoni,** the place to head for the best-quality leather goods, for the best clothing boutiques, and for stylish but costly shoes. Here you'll find everyone from Armani to Ferragamo.

The better shops are largely along Tornabuoni, but there are many on **Via Vigna Nuova, Via Porta Rossa,** and **Via Degli Strozzi** as well. You might also stroll on the *lungarno* along the Arno. For some of the best buys in leather, check out **Via del Parione,** a short, narrow street off Tornabuoni.

FLORENCE'S FAMOUS MARKETS

Intrepid shoppers head for the **Mercato della Paglia** ★★ or **Mercato Nuovo** (**Straw Market** or **New Market**), 2 blocks south of Piazza della Repubblica. The market stands in the monumental heart of Florence, an easy stroll from the Palazzo Vecchio. It sells not only straw items but also leather goods (not the best quality), along with typical Florentine merchandise: frames, trays, hand-embroidery, table linens, and hand-sprayed and -painted boxes in traditional designs. From mid-March to early November, this market is open daily 9am to 8pm; off-season Tuesday to Sunday 9am to 7:30pm.

Even better bargains await those who make their way through the pushcarts to the stalls of the open-air **Mercato Centrale (Mercato San Lorenzo),** in and around Borgo San Lorenzo, near the rail station. If you don't mind bargaining, which is imperative, you'll find an array of merchandise such as straw handbags, Florentine leather purses, sweaters, gloves, and art reproductions. It's open Monday to Saturday from 9am to 6:30pm.

FLORENCE AFTER DARK

Evening entertainment in Florence isn't an exciting prospect, unless you simply like to walk through the narrow streets or head toward Fiesole for a truly spectacular view of the city at night. The typical Florentine begins an evening early at one of the cafes listed below.

THE PERFORMING ARTS

Teatro Comunale di Firenze/Maggio Musicale Fiorentino ★★★, Corso Italia 16 (✆ **055-27791**), is Florence's main theater, with opera and ballet seasons presented September through December and a concert season January through April. From May to July, the city welcomes classical musicians for its **Maggio Musicale** festival of cantatas, madrigals, concertos, operas, and ballets, many of which are presented in Renaissance buildings. Schedule and ticket information is available by calling (✆ **055-213535**).

You'll have to understand Italian to appreciate most of its plays at **Teatro della Pergola,** Via della Pergola 18 (✆ **055-22641**), Florence's major legitimate theater. Plays are performed year-round except during the Maggio Musicale. Tickets cost 15€ to 29€ ($21–$41). The box office is open from Monday to Friday 9:30am to 6:45pm, Saturday 10am to 12:15pm.

LIVE-MUSIC CLUBS

If you want nonstop action and a free-wheeling and fun-loving atmosphere, your best show in town is **Universale,** Via Pisana 77 (✆ **055-221122**), attracting a diverse group ranging in age from 20 to 50. Entrance usually ranges from 20€ to 25€ ($28–$35). **Red Garter,** Via dei Benci 33R (✆ **055-2344904**), right off Piazza Santa Croce, has an American Prohibition-era theme and features everything from rock to bluegrass. Cover 7€ to 10€ ($9.80–$14).

CAFES

Café Rivoire ★, Piazza della Signoria 4R (✆ **055-214412**), offers a classy and amusing old-world ambience with a direct view of the statues on one of our favorite squares in the world. There's a selection of small sandwiches, omelets, and ice creams, and the cafe is noted for its hot chocolate.

Procacci ★, Via de Tornabuoni 64R (✆ **055-211656**), has attracted the movers and shakers in Florentine couture. Ask for a glass of prosecco while surveying the food on the shelves, everything from Sicilian orange marmalade (which we consider Italy's finest) to the rarest of balsamic vinegars.

PUBS & BARS

La Dolce Vita, Piazza del Carmine 6R (✆ **055-284595**), draws the beautiful people. It's a see-and-be-seen type of place, lying south of the Arno and west of the historic core. You come here to drink, gossip, and look ever so chic. So you can see how you're doing, the owners have wisely covered the walls in mirrors.

Noir ★, Lungarno 12R (✆ **055-210751**), draws the fashionistas to its black environs—hence its name of noir. In an elegant 19th-century setting, the bar lies one bridge north of the Ponte Vecchio right along the Arno between Ponta Santa Trinità and Ponte alla Carraia. At the *aperitivo* (happy hour) a bountiful buffet is set out, and it's free if you order a drink, costing from 9€ ($13). A lot of patrons come here for sunset watching over the Arno.

A SIDE TRIP TO FIESOLE

Fiesole, once an Etruscan settlement, is a virtual suburb of Florence and its most popular outing. Florentines often head for these hills when it's just too hot in the city. Bus no. 7, leaving from Piazza San Marco, will take you here in 25 minutes and give you a breathtaking view along the way. You'll pass fountains, statuary, and gardens strung out over the hills like a scrambled jigsaw puzzle.

When it comes to accommodation and dining options, consider the **Villa San Michele** ★★★, Via Doccia 4 (✆ **800/237-1236** in the U.S., or 055-5678200). This ancient monastery of unsurpassed beauty set a hill below Fiesole is a 15-minute walk south of the center. It was built in the 15th century, damaged in World War II, and then restored. The facade and loggia were reportedly designed by Michelangelo. A curving driveway, lined with blossoming trees and flowers, leads to the entrance, and a 10-arch covered loggia continues around the view side of the building to the Italian gardens at the rear.

In Fiesole you won't find anything as dazzling as the Renaissance treasures of Florence; the town's charms are more subtle. Fortunately, all major sights branch out within walking distance of the main square, **Piazza Mino da Fiesole,** beginning with the **Cattedrale di San Romolo (Duomo).** At first this cathedral might seem austere, with its concrete-gray Corinthian columns and Romanesque arches. But it has its own beauty. Dating from A.D. 1000, it was much altered during the Renaissance, and in the Salutati Chapel are important sculptural works by Mino da Fiesole. It's open daily from 7:30am to noon and 4 to 7pm.

The hardest task you'll have in Fiesole is to take the steep goat-climb up to the **Convent of San Francesco,** Via San Francesco 13 (✆ **055-59118**). You can visit the Gothic-style Franciscan church, built in the first years of the 1400s and consecrated in 1516. Inside are many paintings by well-known Florentine artists. In the basement of the church is the ethnological museum. Begun in 1906, the collection has a large section of Chinese artifacts, including ancient bronzes. An Etruscan-Roman section contains some 330 archaeological pieces, and an Egyptian section also has numerous objects.

This ecclesiastical **Bandini Museum** (✆ **055-59118**) belongs to the Fiesole Cathedral Chapter, established in 1913. On the ground floor are della Robbia terra-cotta works, as well as art by Michelangelo and Pisano. On the top floors are paintings by the best Giotto students, reflecting ecclesiastical and worldly themes, most of them the work of Tuscan artists of the 14th century.

3 Highlights of the Tuscan & Umbrian Countryside

Rome may rule Italy, but **Tuscany** presides over its heart. The Tuscan landscapes, little changed since the days of the Medicis, look just like Renaissance paintings, with cypress trees, olive groves, evocative hill towns, and those fabled Chianti vineyards.

Tuscany was the place where the Etruscans first appeared in Italy. The Romans followed, absorbing and conquering them, and by the 11th century, the region had evolved into a collection of independent city-states, such as Florence and Siena, each trying to dominate the other. Although the Renaissance was immensely popular in Florence, it was slow to spread into the surrounding region.

When the Renaissance did arrive, however, with its titans of art, like Giotto, Michelangelo, and Leonardo, critics claim that Western civilization was "rediscovered" in Tuscany. Art flourished under the patronage of the powerful Medicis, and the legacy remains through Masaccio, della Francesca, Signorelli, Rahael, Donatello, Botticielli, and countless others. Tuscany also became known for its men of letters, like Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio.

PISA ★★★

Few buildings in the world have captured imaginations as much as the Leaning Tower of Pisa, possibly the most instantly recognizable building in the Western world. But there's more to Pisa than just the Tower. In addition to other historic sights, enjoy the bustling streets that today surround the university and the market.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE Flights arrive at Pisa's **Galileo Galilei Airport** (✆ **050-849111;** www.pisa-airport.com). From the airport, trains depart every 15 to 30 minutes for the 5-minute trip into Pisa. As an alternative, bus no. 1 leaves the airport every 40 minutes for the city.

Trains link Pisa and Florence every 1½ hours for the 1-hour trip, costing 5.90€ ($7.65) one-way. Trains running along the seacoast link Pisa with Rome and require about 3 hours travel time. One-way fares are 16€ to 33€ ($22–$46). In Pisa, trains arrive at the **Stazione Pisa Centrale,** Piazza Stazione (✆ **892021** for information in Italy), about a 10- to 15-minute walk from the Leaning Tower. Otherwise, you can take bus LAM rossa from the station to the heart of the city. A ticket costs .90€ ($1.30) (1.50€/$2.10 if you buy it on board) and is valid for 60 min.

VISITOR INFORMATION The **tourist office** is at Piazza Vittorio Emanuele (✆ **050-42291**), open Monday to Friday 9am to 7pm and Saturday 9am to 1:30pm.

WHERE TO STAY

Amalfitana ★ Value Just 250m (820 ft.) away from the Leaning Tower, this former 15th century monastery today is a comfortable hotel. Converted in 1992, the hotel has small to midsize bedrooms that are simply but comfortably furnished. Amalfitana also boasts a little garden and a welcoming, inviting staff.

Via Roma 44, 56126 Pisa. ✆ **050-29000.** Fax 050-25218. www.hotelamalfitana.it. 21 units. 80€ ($112) double. Rates include breakfast. AE, MC, V. Free parking on street. Bus: 4. **Amenities:** Room service; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer.

WHERE TO DINE

Antica Trattoria Da Bruno PISAN For around half a century, Da Bruno has flourished in this spot near the Leaning Tower. It serves old-fashioned and market-fresh dishes of the Pisan kitchen, including hare with pappardelle, *zuppa alla pisana* (thick vegetable soup), and grilled salt cod with chickpeas. Some new specialties have appeared on the menu, including *zuppa pisana* (minestrone with black cabbage) and wild boar with olives and polenta.

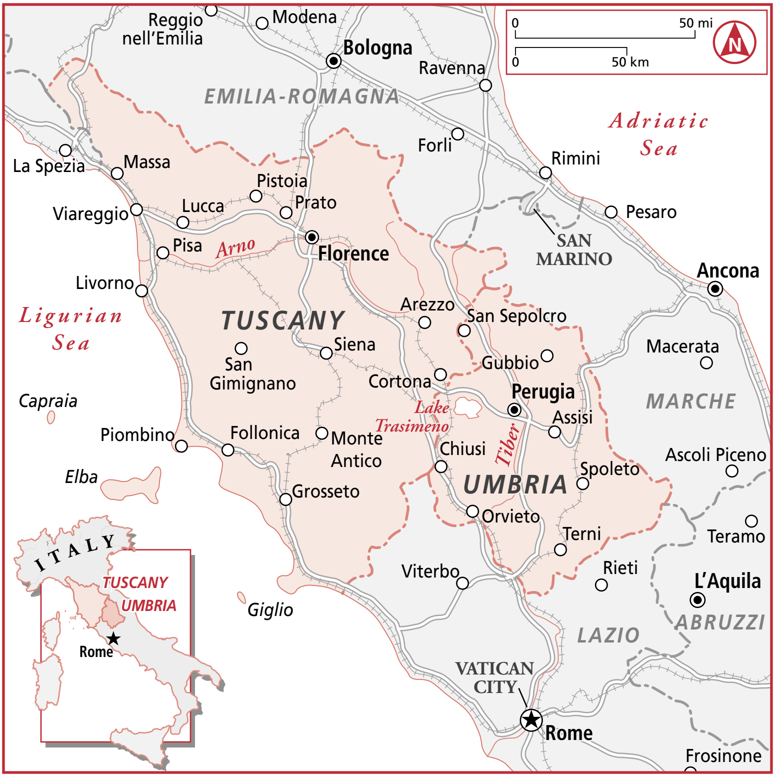
Via Luigi Bianchi 12. ✆ **050-560818.** Reservations recommended for dinner. Main courses 12€–20€ ($17–$28). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon noon–3pm; Wed–Sun noon–3pm and 7–10:30pm. Bus: 4.

EXPLORING THE TOWN

Pisa's greatest legacy remains at **Piazza del Duomo,** where you'll find the top three attractions: the Duomo, the baptistery, and the campanile (that famous Leaning Tower). A 6€ ($8.40) **combination ticket** (you can buy it at any of the included attractions) allows you to visit two of these three sights: the baptistery, the cemetery, and the Duomo Museum. For 10€ ($14), you can visit the five major attractions: the baptistery, the Duomo, the cemetery, the Duomo Museum, and the Museum of Preliminary Frescoes.

Baptistery (Battistero) ★★★ Begun in 1153, the baptistery's most beautiful feature is the exterior, but you should also visit the interior to see the hexagonal pulpit (1255–60) by Nicola Pisano. Supported by pillars resting on the backs of three marble lions, the pulpit contains bas-reliefs of the Crucifixion, the Adoration of the Magi,

Tuscany & Umbria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Livorno
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TUSCANY
Arezzo
San Sepolcro
Siena
San Gimignano
Gubbio
Macerata
Cortona
Perugia
MARCHE
Capraia
Lake Trasimeno
Assisi
Piombino
Follonica
Monte Antico
Chiusi
Tiber
Ascoli Piceno
Elba
Spoleto
UMBRIA
Grosseto
Orvieto
Terni
Teramo
ITALY
TUSCANY
UMBRIA
Rome
Viterbo
Rieti
L'Aquila
Giglio
ABRUZZI
LAZIO
VATICAN CITY
Rome
Frosinone

the presentation of the Christ Child at the temple, and the Last Judgment. The echo inside the baptistery shell has enthralled visitors for years.

Piazza del Duomo. ✆ **050-3872210.** Admission 5€ ($7). Nov–Feb daily 10am–5pm; Mar and Oct daily 9am–7pm; Apr–Sept daily 8am–8pm. Bus: LAM rossa.

Duomo Museum (Museo dell'Opera del Duomo) ★★ This museum exhibits works of art removed from the monumental buildings on the piazza. The heart of the collection comprises sculptures spanning the 11th to the 13th centuries. The most famous exhibit is the *Madonna and the Crucifix,* by Giovanni Pisano, carved from an ivory tusk in 1299. Upstairs are paintings from the 15th to the 18th centuries. Some of the textiles and embroideries date from the 15th century; another section of the museum is devoted to Egyptian, Etruscan, and Roman works.

Piazza Arcivescovado. ✆ **050-3872210.** Admission 5€ ($7). Nov–Feb daily 10am–5pm; Mar and Oct daily 9am–7pm; Apr–Sept daily 8am–8pm. Bus: LAM rossa.

Il Duomo ★★ This cathedral was designed by Buschetto in 1063. In the 13th century Rainaldo erected the unusual facade with its four layers of open-air arches diminishing in size as they ascend. In the restored interior, the chief treasure is the polygonal pulpit by Giovanni Pisano, finished in 1310. There are other treasures, too, including

Galileo's lamp (according to tradition, the Pisa-born astronomer used it to formulate his laws of the pendulum).

Piazza del Duomo 17. ✆ **050-3872210.** Admission 2€ ($2.80); free Nov–Mar. Nov–Feb daily 10am–1pm and 2–5pm; Oct and Mar daily 10am–7pm; Apr–Sept daily 10am–8pm. Sightseeing visits are discouraged during Masses and religious rites. Bus: LAM rossa.

Leaning Tower of Pisa (Campanile) ★★★ In 1174, Bonnano began construction of this eight-story marble campanile, intended as a free-standing bell tower for the Duomo (see above). When the tower began to tilt after the completion of the first three stories, its builders discover that the foundation was water-soaked clay. Construction was suspended for a century, but the tower was finally completed in the late 14th century. The tower leans at least 4m. (14ft.) from perpendicular; if it stood straight, it would measure about 55m (180 ft.) tall.

Piazza del Duomo 17. ✆ **050-3872210.** Fax 050-560505. www.duomo.pisa.it. Admission 15€ ($21). Only a group of 40 admitted at a time. Children under age 8 not admitted. Nov–Feb daily 10am–5pm; Oct and Mar daily 9am–7pm; Apr–June and Sept daily 8:30am–8:30pm; July–Aug daily 8:30am–11pm. Bus: LAM rossa.

SAN GIMIGNANO

In its medieval heyday San Gimignano boasted as many as 72 towers, giving it an imposing skyline. Today, 13 of its noble towers remain. The city's fortresslike severity is softened by the subtlety of its harmonious squares, and many of its palaces and churches are enhanced by Renaissance frescoes. Stay overnight, if you can, so that you can enjoy the late afternoon or early evening and get a sense of the town without its tourist crowds.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE The **rail station** nearest to San Gimignano is at Poggibonsi, serviced by regular trains from Florence and Siena. At Poggibonsi, buses depart from the front of the rail station at frequent intervals, charging 1.75€ ($2.50) each way to the center of San Gimignano. For information, call ✆ **0577-204246.**

Buses operated by TRA-IN (✆ **0577-204111**) service San Gimignano from Florence with a change at Poggibonsi (trip time: 85 min.); the one-way fare is 8€ ($11). TRA-IN also operates service from Siena; the one-way fare is 5€ ($7). In San Gimignano, buses stop at Piazzale Montemaggio, outside the Porta San Giovanni, the southern gate. If you have a **car,** leave Florence (1½ hr.) or Siena (1 hr., 10 min.) by the Firenze-Siena autostrada and drive to Poggibonsi, where you'll need to cut west along a secondary route (S324) to San Gimignano. There are parking lots outside the city walls.

VISITOR INFORMATION The **Associazione Pro Loco,** Piazza del Duomo 1 (✆ **0577-940008**), is open daily: November through February from 9am to 1pm and 2 to 6pm, and March to October 9am to 1pm and 3 to 7pm.

WHERE TO STAY

Hotel Belsoggiorno Value This hotel is an affordable option run since 1886 by the Gigli family. The medium-size rooms have cheap, functional furniture and beds verging on the oversoft, but the management is quite friendly. The best 10 rooms are those with private balconies. In summer, you'll be asked to take your meals at the hotel, which is no great hardship because the cuisine is excellent. The medieval-style **dining room** boasts murals depicting a wild boar hunt (see "Where to Dine," below).

Via San Giovanni 91, 53037 San Gimignano. ✆ **0577-940375.** Fax 0577-907521. www.hotelbelsoggiorno.it. 22 units. 95€–120€ ($133–$168) double; 120€–170€ ($168–$238) suite. Rates include continental breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 15€ ($21). Closed mid-Nov to Dec 27 and mid-Feb to mid-Mar. **Amenities:** Restaurant (reviewed below); bar; all nonsmoking rooms; wine cellar. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar (in some), hair dryer.

La Collegiata ★★★ Outside of town and surrounded by a park of Tuscan cypresses, this elegant choice offers the finest accommodations in the San Gimignano area. The villa dates from 1587, when it housed Franciscan fathers. Today, the cloister opens into the reception area, a wine bar, a coffee shop, sitting rooms, and a reading room. Bedrooms are beautifully furnished; most of those on the first floor open onto the inner courtyard. An Italian garden and open-air swimming pool help make the most of the gorgeous Tuscan location.

Località Strada 27, 53037 San Gimignano. ✆ **800/735-2478** or 0577-943201. Fax 0577-940566. www.lacollegiata.it. 22 units. 220€–525€ ($308–$735) double; from 670€ ($938) suite. AE, MC, V. Free parking. Closed Jan 2–Feb. **Amenities:** Restaurant; wine bar; coffee shop; outdoor pool; wellness center; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

WHERE TO DINE

Ristorante Belsoggiorno TUSCAN Its windows and terrace overlook the countryside, and its kitchen uses only fresh ingredients from nearby farms. Two specialties (in season only) are roasted wild boar with red wine and mixed vegetables, and pappardelle pasta garnished with a savory ragout of pheasant. Pastas include pappardelle with roasted hare, and risotto with herbs and seasonal vegetables. The main courses stress vegetable garnishes and thin-sliced meats that are simply but flavorfully grilled over charcoal. Breads are homemade and baked on-site.

In the Hotel Belsoggiorno, Via San Giovanni 91. ✆ **0577-940375.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 14€–16€ ($20–$22); fixed-price menu 50€ ($70). AE, DC, MC, V. Thurs–Tues 12:30–2:30pm and 7:30–10pm. Closed mid-Nov to Dec 27 and mid-Feb to mid-Mar.

Ristorante La Terrazze TUSCAN One of this restaurant's two dining rooms boasts stones laid in the 1300s, while the other offers large windows overlooking the old town and the Val d'Elsa. Excellent local food features an assortment of produce from nearby towns. Specialties of the house include sliced wild boar with polenta and Chianti, Florentine-style steaks, and *risotto con funghi porcini* (risotto with porcini mushrooms. For a superb dessert, try a glass of *vin santo* with a *cantucci* (almond biscuit).

In La Cisterna, Piazza della Cisterna 24. ✆ **0577-940328.** Reservations required. Main courses 13€–19€ ($18–$27). AE, DC, MC, V. Mar 11–Oct 31 Wed 7:30–10pm; Thurs–Mon 12:30–2:30pm and 7:30–9:30pm. Nov 1–Jan 6 Mon and Wed–Sat 7:30–9:30pm. Closed Jan 7–Mar 10.

EXPLORING THE SAN GIMIGNANO

In the town center is the **Piazza della Cisterna,** so named because of the 13th-century cistern in its heart. Connected with the irregularly shaped square is its satellite, **Piazza del Duomo** ★★, whose medieval architecture of towers and palaces is almost unchanged. It's the most beautiful spot in town. On the square, the **Palazzo del Popolo** ★ was designed in the 13th century, and its **Torre Grossa,** built a few years later, is believed to have been the tallest "skyscraper" (about 53m/178 ft. high) in town. (You can climb the tower, which is open during the same hours as the **Museo Civico.** Admission is 5€/$7 for adults; 4€/$5.60 for students under 18 and children.)

Civic Museum (Museo Civico) ★ Upstairs in the *Palazzo del Popolo* (town hall) is the Museo Civico. Look for one of the masterpieces of San Gimignano: ***La Maestà*** (a Madonna enthroned), by Lippo Memmi (later touched up by Gozzoli). The first large room upstairs contains the other masterpiece: a ***Madonna in Glory,*** with Sts. Gregory and Benedict, painted by Pinturicchio. On the opposite wall, note the magnificent Byzantine Crucifix by Coppo di Marcovaldo.

In the Palazzo del Popolo, Piazza del Duomo 1. ✆ **0577-990312.** Admission 5€ ($7). Mar–Oct daily 9:30am–7pm; Nov–Feb daily 10am–5:30pm.

Duomo Collegiata o Basilica di Santa Maria Assunta ★ Despite its unfinished and austere 12th-century facade, the interior of the duomo is a world of tiger-striped arches and a galaxy of gold stars. View Bartolo di Fredi's scenes from the Old Testament, painted in the 1360s, then check out his horrendous *Last Judgment,* one of the most perverse paintings in Italy. In the **Chapel of Santa Fina (Cappella Santa Fina),** are frescoes of scenes form the life Fina, the town's patron saint. They were created by Domenico Ghirlandaio, Michelangelo's fresco teacher.

Piazza del Duomo. ✆ **0577-940316.** Church free admission; chapel 3.50€ ($4.90) adults, free for children 5 and under. Mar–Oct daily 9:30am–7pm; Nov–Feb Mon–Sat 9:30am–5pm, Sun 1–5pm.

SIENA ★★★

Spread over three sienna-colored hills in Tuscany's center, Sena Vetus lies in Chianti country. Take your time enjoying this city of contemplation and profound exploration, characterized by Gothic palaces, almond-eyed Madonnas, aristocratic mansions, letter-writing St. Catherine (patron saint of Italy), narrow streets, and medieval gates, walls, and towers.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE The **rail** link between Siena and Florence is sometimes inconvenient because you often have to change and wait at other stations, such as Empoli. But trains run every hour from Florence, costing 5.90€ ($8.30) one-way. You arrive at the station at Piazza Carlo Rosselli. Take bus no. 10 to Piazza Gramsci near the center to avoid an awkward climb. For information and schedules, call ✆ **892021.**

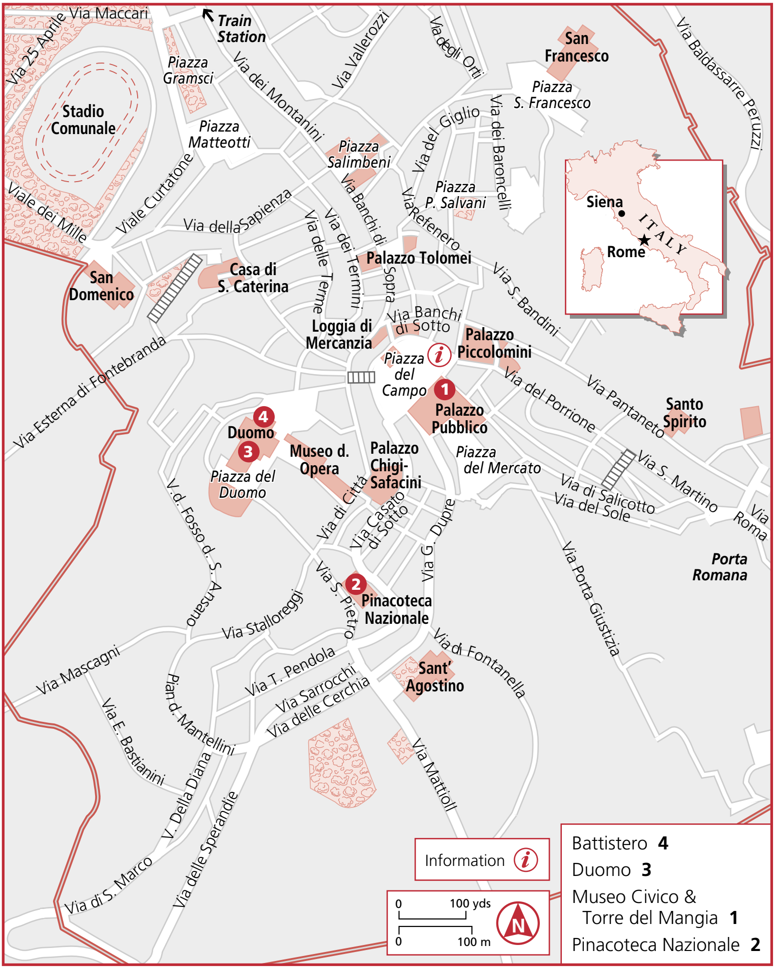
TRA-IN, Piazza La Lizza (✆ **0577-204111**), offers bus service from all of Tuscany in air-conditioned coaches. The one-way fare between Florence and Siena is 6.50€ ($9.10). The trip takes 1¼ hours. Ticket offices are open daily from 5:50am to 7:30pm.

VISITOR INFORMATION The **tourist office** is at Piazza del Campo 56 (✆ **0577-280551;** www.terresiena.it). It's open daily 9am to 7pm. The office will give you a good free map.

WHERE TO STAY

Certosa di Maggiano ★★ Now affiliated with Relais & Châteaux, this 13th-century Certosinian monastery has been transformed into an intimate, plush retreat. Stylish public rooms fill what used to be the ambulatory of the central courtyard, and the complex's medieval church still holds Mass on Sunday. The individually decorated guest rooms are spacious and beautiful. Phone ahead for directions. Most guests take a taxi into the historic center of town, but a shuttle is available.

Strada di Certosa 82, 53100 Siena. ✆ **0577-288180.** Fax 0577-288189. www.certosadimaggiano.com. 17 units. 300€–590€ ($420–$826) double; 650€–1,030€ ($910–$1,442) suite. Rates include American buffet breakfast. AE, MC, V. Parking 30€ ($42). Children under 12 are not accepted. Closed Nov–Mar. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; outdoor heated pool; tennis court; exercise room; room service; massage; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms; jogging track; shuttle into the historic walls; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.



Siena

Via Maccari
Via 25 Aprile
Train Station
Piazza Gramsci
Stadio Comunale
Via dei Montanini
Via Vallerozzi
Via degli Orti
San Francesco
Piazza S. Francesco
Via Baldassarre Peruzzi
Piazza Matteotti
Via del Giglio
Via dei Baroncelli
Piazza Salimbeni
Viale Curtatone
Viale dei Mille
Via Banchi di Sopra
Piazza P. Salvani
Via della Sapienza
Via delle Terme
Via dei Termini
Via Refenero
Siena
ITALY
Rome
San Domenico
Casa di S. Caterina
Palazzo Tolomei
Via S. Bandini
Via Esterna di Fontebranda
Loggia di Mercanzia
Via Banchi di Sotto
Palazzo Piccolomini
Piazza del Campo
Via del Porrione
Via Pantaneto
Santo Spirito
Duomo
Palazzo Pubblico
Museo d. Opera
Palazzo Chigi-Safacini
Piazza del Mercato
Via S. Martino
Piazza del Duomo
Via di Città
Via Casato di Sotto
Via di Salicotto
Via del Sole
Via Roma
V.d. Fosso d. S. Ansano
Via G. Dupre
Porta Romana
Via S. Pietro
Pinacoteca Nazionale
Via Porta Giustizia
Via Stalloreggi
Via di Fontanella
Via Mascagni
Via T. Pendola
Sant' Agostino
Via Sarrocchi
Via delle Cerchia
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Via E. Bastianini
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Via Mattioli
Via di S. Marco
Via delle Sperandie
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Battistero 4
Duomo 3
Museo Civico & Torre del Mangia 1
Pinacoteca Nazionale 2

Piccolo Hotel Etruria ★ *Value* This small family-run hotel could thumb its nose at the big corporate chains; it offers equally comfortable modern luxuries with twice the character at a fourth of the price. In both the main building and the annex across the street, the guest rooms have tiled floors, wood-toned built-in furnishings with stone-topped desks and end tables, leather strap chairs, and quite decent beds. The only real drawback is that the hotel closes from 1am to 7:15am.

Via Donzelle 3, 53100 Siena. ✆ **0577-288088.** Fax 0577-288461. www.hoteletruria.com. 13 units (shower only). 86€ ($120) double; 114€ ($160) triple. AE, MC, V. Closed Nov 5–23 and Dec 17–27. Bus: A, B, N, 3, 9, or 10. **Amenities:** Lounge; room service. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer, safe.

WHERE TO DINE

Antica Trattoria Botteganova ★★★ TUSCAN This outstanding restaurant lies just outside the city walls on the road that leads north to Chianti. Chef Michele

Sonentino's cuisine pleases discerning locals as well as visitors. Standard Italian dishes are given a modern touch; he serves old-time favorites along with more inventive platters. Every day he offers perfectly baked or grilled fish along with the finest seasonal vegetables. Save room for *tortino di mele,* a little Sienese apple pie served warm.

Strada Chiantigiana 408 (reached via Porta Ovile, 1.5km/1 mile north of the center of Siena). ☎ **0577-284230.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 12€–24€ ($17–$34); tasting menu 40€–45€ ($56–$63). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat 12:30–2pm and 7:30–10:30pm. Closed 1 week in July and 1 week in Aug. Bus: 3 or 8.

Osteria Castelvecchio ★ *Finds* TUSCAN/VEGETARIAN Sabrina Fabi and Simone Romi shop early every morning for the creative Tuscan specialties. They draw primarily local diners, as well as a few discerning visitors who have heard of their "restaurant with a soul," as one visitor dubbed it. Every day features two different kinds of risotto, along with other dishes that feature local vegetables. Their meat and poultry dishes are also excellent. The 700-year-old setting is in the center of town, about 30m (100 ft.) from the Duomo.

Via Castelvecchio 65 (off Via San Pietro). ☎ **0577-49586.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 8.50€–11€ ($12–$15). DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat 12:30–2:30pm and 7:30–9:30pm.

EXPLORING SIENA

Start in the heart of Siena, the shell-shaped **Piazza del Campo** ★★★, described by Montaigne as "the finest of any city in the world." Pause to enjoy the **Fonte Gaia,** which locals sometimes call the Fountain of Joy. The square is truly stunning, designed like a sloping scallop shell; you'll want to linger in one of the cafes along its edge.

Baptistery (Battistero) ★ Although the lavish and intricate frescoes inside are a draw, the star of the place is one of the greatest **baptismal fonts** (1417–30) in all Italy. The foremost sculptors of the early Renaissance—including Jacopo della Quercia, Giovanni di Turino, Lorenzo Ghiberti, Giuliano di Ser Andrea, and Donatello—helped create this masterpiece.

Piazza San Giovanni (behind the Duomo). ☎ **0577-283048.** Admission 3€ ($4.20). Mar–May and Sept–Oct daily 9:30am–7pm; June–Aug daily 9:30am–8pm; Nov–Feb daily 10am–5pm. Closed Jan 1 and Dec 25. Bus: A.

Civic Museum (Museo Civico) & Torre del Mangia ★★★ The Museo Civico, in the Palazzo Pubblico (1288–1309), is filled with artworks by some of the leaders in the Sienese school of painting and sculpture. Accessible from the courtyard of the Palazzo Pubblico is the **Torre del Mangia,** the most prominent architectural landmark on the skyline of Siena. Dating from the 14th century, it soars to a height of 102m (335 ft.). The tower is open the same hours as the Civic Museum and charges 6€ ($8.40) for you to climb it.

In the Palazzo Pubblico, Piazza del Campo. ☎ **0577-226230.** Admission 7€ ($9.80). Mid-Mar to Oct daily 10am–7pm; Nov to mid-Mar daily 10am–6:30pm. Bus: A, B, or N.

Duomo Museum (Museo dell'Opera Metropolitana) ★★ This museum houses paintings and sculptures created for the Duomo. Duccio di Buoninsegna was the first great name in the school of Sienese painting; view his fragmented ***La Maestà*** ★★ (1308–11), one of Europe's greatest late-medieval paintings. Upstairs are the collections of the treasury, and on the top floor is a display of paintings from the early Sienese school.

Piazza del Duomo 8. ☎ **0577-283048.** Admission 6€ ($8.40). Mar–May and Sept–Oct daily 9:30am–7pm; June–Aug daily 9:30am–8pm; Nov–Feb daily 10am–5pm. Bus: A.

Il Duomo ★★★ With its colored bands of marble, the Sienese Duomo is an architectural fantasy, erected in the Romanesque and Italian Gothic styles in the 12th century. The floor consists of various inlaid works of art depicting both biblical and mythological subjects. In the chapel of the left transept (near the library) is a glass box containing an arm that tradition maintains is the one John the Baptist used to baptize Christ; the box also contains Donatello's bronze of John the Baptist. Inside the Duomo is the **Piccolomini Library ★★**, renowned for its cycle of frescoes by the Umbrian master Pinturicchio.

Piazza del Duomo. ✆ **0577-283048.** Duomo free admission; library 3€ ($4.20). Duomo Nov–Mar 15 daily 8am–1pm and 2:30–5pm (Mar 16–Oct to 7:30pm). Library Mar 15–Oct 31 daily 9am–7:30pm; Nov 1–Mar 14 daily 10am–1pm and 2:30–5pm. Closed Sun mornings, Jan 1, and Dec 25. Bus: A.

National Picture Gallery (Pinacoteca Nazionale) ★★ Housed in a 14th-century palazzo near Piazza del Campo is the National Gallery's collection of the Sienese school of painting. Displayed are some of the giants of the pre-Renaissance, with most of the paintings covering the period from the late 12th century to the mid–16th century. Of exceptional interest are the cartoons of Mannerist master Beccafumi, from which many of the panels in the cathedral floor were created.

In the Palazzo Buonsignori, Via San Pietro 29. ✆ **0577-281161.** Admission 4€ ($5.60). Mon 8:30am–1:30pm; Tues–Sat 8:30am–7pm; Sun 8:30am–1:30pm. Closed Jan 1, May 1, and Dec 25. Bus: A.

ASSISI ★★★

Ideally placed on the rise to Mt. Subasio, watched over by the medieval Rocco Maggiore, the purple-fringed Umbrian hill town of Assisi retains a mystical air. The site of many a pilgrimage, Assisi is forever linked in legend with its native son, St. Francis. But even without St. Francis, the hill town merits a visit for its sights and architecture. We've found it best in spring or fall.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE Although there's no **rail station** in Assisi, the city lies within a 30-minute bus or taxi ride from the rail station in nearby Santa Maria degli Angeli. From Santa Maria degli Angeli, buses depart at 15-minute intervals for Piazza Matteotti in the heart of Assisi. One-way fares are 1€ ($1.45). If you're coming from Rome, expect to pay 9.50€ to 20€ ($13–$28) each way. Rail fares between Florence and Assisi are about 9€ ($13) each way. For more information call ✆ **892021.**

One **bus** a day arrives from Rome (run by SULGA; ✆ **800-099661** in Italy); it takes about 3 hours and costs 17€ ($24) one-way. Two buses pull in from Florence (also run by SULGA), taking 2½ hours and costing 11€ ($15) one-way.

VISITOR INFORMATION The **tourist office** at Piazza del Comune 10 (✆ **075-812534;** www.umbria2000.it) is open Monday to Saturday 8am to 2pm and 3 to 6pm and Sunday 9am to 1pm.

WHERE TO STAY

Grand Hotel Assisi ★★ The Grand offers the most comfortable and best-furnished rooms in town. The suites come with a hydromassage tub and a balcony opening onto a panoramic view. The Grand's roof garden terrace is the hotel's most dramatic feature. The on-site **restaurant** is also one of the best in town. Some visitors make the 40-minute walk into the center; others use the city bus.

Via Fratelli Canonichetti, 06081 Assisi. ✆ **075-81501.** Fax 075-8150777. www.grandhotelassisi.com. 156 units (some with tub only; some with shower only). 205€–240€ ($287–$336) double; 280€–350€ ($392–$490) suite.

Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; 2 bars; indoor heated pool; fitness center; sauna; room service; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Jacuzzi in some.

Hotel Sole Value For Umbrian hospitality, the Sole is a winner. The severe beauty of rough stone walls and ceilings, terra-cotta floors, and marble staircases pays homage to the past, balanced by contemporary wrought-iron beds and well-worn furnishings in the guest rooms. The hotel and the annex that houses some rooms show wear and tear, but the price is right, the location is central, and the **restaurant** is a good choice even if you aren't a guest (you might want to take the meal plan, if you are).

Corso Mazzini 35, 06081 Assisi. ✆ **075-812373.** Fax 075-813706. www.assisihotelsole.com. 38 units (shower only). 65€ ($91) double; 85€ ($119) triple. Half-board (Apr–Nov) 53€ ($74) per person. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 10€ ($14) nearby. **Amenities:** Restaurant (closed Dec–Mar); bar; room service; 1 room for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* TV, hair dryer (in some), safe.

WHERE TO DINE

La Fortezza ★★ Value UMBRIAN Up a stepped alley from Piazza del Comune, this lovely restaurant has been family-run for 40 years. Prized for its high quality and reasonable prices, La Fortezza offers several dishes in which truffles take a starring role. The delicious homemade pastas are prepared with sauces that follow the season's fresh offerings, while a wide variety of meats are available skewered or roasted on the grill *(alla brace)*. La Fortezza also rents seven rooms upstairs. A double room costs 48€ to 52€ ($67–$73).

Via della Fortezza 2B. ✆ **075-812993.** Fax 075-8198035. Reservations recommended. Main courses 8€–10€ ($11–$14). AE, DC, MC, V. Tues, Sat–Sun 12:30–3pm; Mon–Wed and Fri–Sun 7–10:30pm. Closed Feb.

Ristorante Buca di San Francesco UMBRIAN/ITALIAN Evocative of the Middle Ages, this restaurant occupies a cave near the foundation of a 12th-century palace. Menu items change often, based on the availability of ingredients, but you're likely to find homemade tagliatelle with truffles; *umbricelli* (big noodles) with asparagus sauce; *carlaccia* (baked crepes) stuffed with cheese, prosciutto, and roasted veal; and *piccione alla sisana* (roasted pigeon with olive oil, capers, and aromatic herbs).

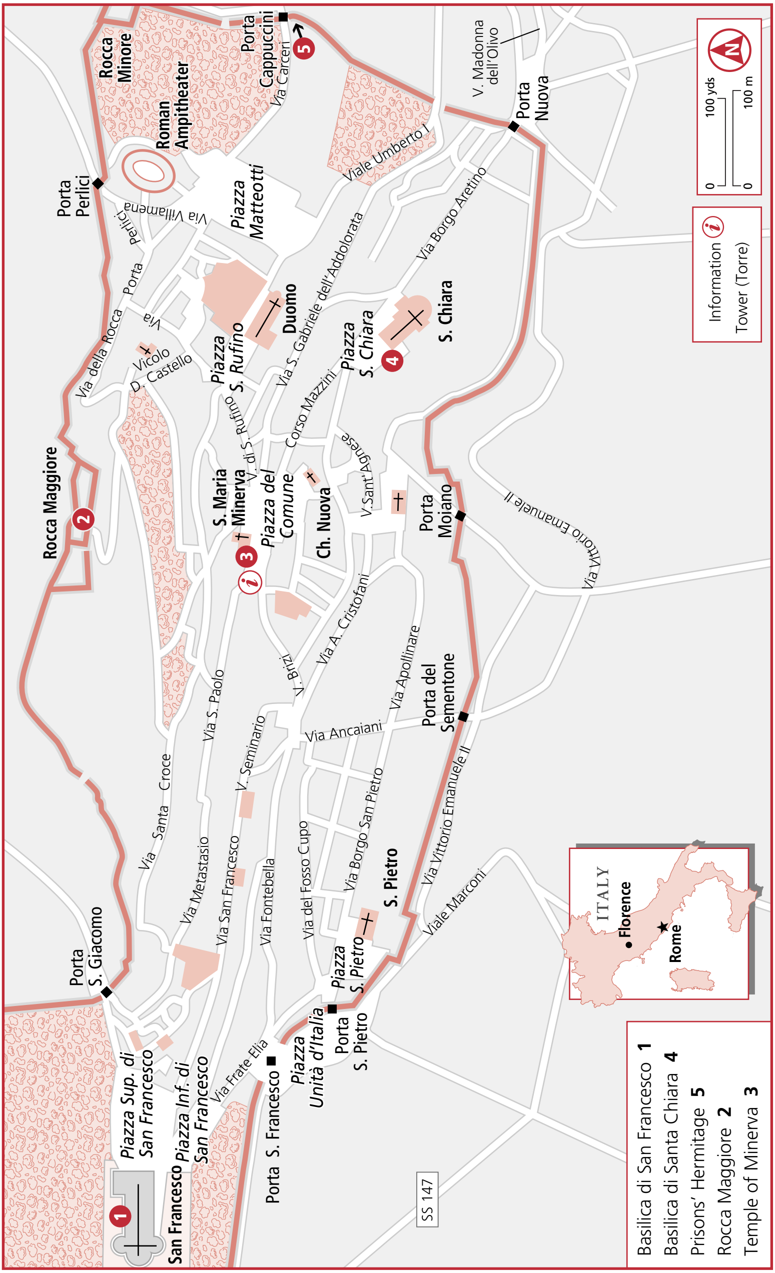
Via Brizi 1. ✆ **075-812204.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 8€–16€ ($11–$22). AE, DC, MC, V. Tues–Sun noon–2:30pm and 7–10pm. Closed July 1–15 and Jan 6–Feb 6.

EXPLORING THE ASSISI

Piazza del Comune, in the heart of Assisi, is a dream for lovers of architecture from the 12th to the 14th centuries. On the square is a pagan structure, with six Corinthian columns, called the **Temple of Minerva (Tempio di Minerva),** from the 1st century B.C. With Minerva-like wisdom, the people of Assisi turned the interior into a baroque church so as not to offend the devout. Adjoining the temple is the 13th-century **Tower (Torre)** built by Ghibelline supporters. The site is open daily from 7am to noon and 2:30pm to dusk.

Basilica di Santa Chiara (Clare) ★★ The basilica is dedicated to "the little plant of Blessed Francis," as St. Clare liked to describe herself. Born in 1193 into one of the noblest families of Assisi, Clare gave all her wealth to the poor and founded, together with St. Francis, the Order of the Poor Clares. The basilica houses the remains of St. Clare, as well as the crucifix under which St. Francis received his command from above, several beautiful icons, and a striking *Crucifix* behind the main altar, a painting on wood dating from the time of the church itself (ca. 1260).

Assisi


Rocca Minore
Roman Ampitheater
Porta Cappuccini
Via Carceri
5
Porta Perlici
Via Villamena
Perlici
Piazza Matteotti
Viale Umberto I
V. Madonna dell'Olivo
Porta Nuova
Porta
Via
Via della Rocca
Vicolo D. Castello
Piazza S. Rufino
Duomo
Via S. Gabriele dell'Addolorata
Via Borgo Aretino
Piazza S. Chiara
4
S. Chiara
Corso Mazzini
V. di S. Rufino
Rocca Maggiore
2
S. Maria Minerva
3
Piazza del Comune
Ch. Nuova
V. Sant'Agnese
Porta Mojano
Via Vittorio Emanuele II
Via A. Cristofani
V. Brizi
Via S. Paolo
Via Apollinare
Porta del Sementone
Via Ancaiani
V. Seminario
Via Santa Croce
Via Metastasio
Via San Francesco
Via Fontebella
Via del Fosso Cupo
Via Borgo San Pietro
S. Pietro
Via Vittorio Emanuele II
Viale Marconi
Porta S. Giacomo
Piazza Sup. di San Francesco
Piazza Inf. di San Francesco
San Francesco
1
Via Frate Elia
Porta S. Francesco
Piazza Unità d'Italia
Piazza S. Pietro
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ITALY
Florence
Rome
Basilica di San Francesco 1
Basilica di Santa Chiara 4
Prisons' Hermitage 5
Rocca Maggiore 2
Temple of Minerva 3

Tips A San Francesco Warning: Cover Up!

The church has a strict dress code: Entrance to the basilica is absolutely forbidden to those in shorts or miniskirts or showing bare shoulders. You must remain silent and cannot take any photographs in the Upper Church. The same dress code applies at the Basilica of St. Clare.

Warning: The custodian turns away visitors in shorts, miniskirts, plunging necklines, and backless or sleeveless attire.

Piazza di Santa Chiara 1. ✆ **075-812282.** Free admission. Nov–Mar daily 6:30am–noon and 2–6:30pm; Apr–Oct daily 6:30am–noon and 2–7pm.

Basilica di San Francesco ★★★ This basilica, with both an upper church (1230–53) and a lower church (1228–30), houses some of the most important **cycles of frescoes** in Italy, including works by such pre-Renaissance giants as Cimabue and Giotto. Reached by the entrance in Piazza Inferiore on the south side of the basilica, the **lower church** is dark and mystical and almost entirely covered with **frescoes** ★★★ by the greatest pre-Renaissance painters of the 13th and 14th centuries. Under the lower church is the **crypt of St. Francis,** with some relics of the saint.

Piazza San Francesco. ✆ **075-819001.** Free admission. Daily 8:30am–6:30pm.

Prisons' Hermitage (Eremo delle Carceri) ★★ This "prison," from the 14th and 15th centuries, is not a penal institution but a spiritual retreat. It's believed that St. Francis retired to this spot for meditation and prayer. One of the handful of friars who still inhabit the retreat will show you through. (In keeping with the Franciscan tradition, they're completely dependent on donations for their support.)

About 4km (2½ miles) east of Assisi (out Via Eremo delle Carceri), on Via Eremo delle Carceri. ✆ **075-812301.** Free admission (donations accepted). Apr–Oct daily 6:30am–7pm; Nov–Mar daily 6:30am–6pm.

4 Venice ★★★

Venice is a preposterous monument to both the folly and the obstinacy of humankind. It shouldn't exist, but it does, much to the delight of thousands of visitors, gondoliers, lace makers, hoteliers, restaurateurs, and glass blowers.

Centuries ago, in an effort to flee barbarians, Venetians left dry land and drifted out to a flotilla of "uninhabitable" islands in the lagoon. Survival was difficult enough, but no Venetian has ever settled for mere survival. The remote ancestors of the present inhabitants created the world's most beautiful city.

Today, the city is sinking at an alarming rate of about 2½ inches per decade. The damp climate, mold, and pollution further contribute to the city's decay. Without immediate action, estimates suggest one-third of the city's art will deteriorate within the next decade or so.

There is a price for the enchanting beauty of this city. Everyone complains about the outrageous prices, which can be double what they are elsewhere in the country. And the sultry heat of the Adriatic in summer translates into smelly, stewey canals. July and August are the worst times to visit; May and June or September and October are much more ideal.

Tips Finding an Address

A maniac must've numbered Venice's buildings. Before you set out for a specific place, get detailed instructions and have someone mark it on your map. Don't depend on street numbers; try to locate the nearest cross street. Because signs and numbers have decayed over 6 centuries, it's best to look for signs posted outside rather than for a number.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE The arrival scene at unattractive **Piazzale Roma** is filled with nervous expectation; even the most veteran traveler can become confused. Whether arriving by train, bus, car, or airport limo, everyone walks to the nearby docks (less than a 5-min. walk) to select a method of transport to his or her hotel.

By Plane You can now fly nonstop from North America to Venice on Delta. You'll land at the **Aeroporto Marco Polo** (✆ **041-2606111**) at Mestre, north of the city on the mainland. The **Consorzio Motoscafi** (✆ **041-5222303**) operates a *motoscafo* (shuttle boat) service that can deliver you from the airport directly to the center of Venice at Piazza San Marco in about 30 minutes. Fare begins at 90€ ($126) for up to six passengers. The **Azienda Trasporti Veneto Orientale** (✆ **041-383672**) shuttle bus links the airport with Piazzale Roma for 3€ ($4.20). The trip takes about 20 minutes (9am to midnight). Even cheaper is a local bus company, **ACTV** (✆ **041-2424**), whose bus no. 5 makes the run for 2€ ($2.80).

By Train Trains pull into the **Stazione di Santa Lucia,** at Piazzale Roma (✆ **041-892021** in Italy only). Anyone between the ages of 14 and 29 is eligible for a **Rolling Venice pass,** entitling you to discounts for museums, restaurants, stores, language courses, hotels, and bars. Valid for 1 year, it costs 4€ ($5.60) and can be picked up at any tourist office in Venice. The best and least expensive way to get to the rest of town is to take a *vaporetto* (motorboat), which departs near the main entrance to the station.

By Car The autostrada links Venice with the rest of Italy, with direct routes from such cities as Trieste (driving time: 1½ hr.), Milan (3 hr.), and Bologna (2 hr.). Bologna is 151km (94 miles) southwest of Venice; Milan is 266km (165 miles) west; and Trieste is 156km (97 miles) east; Rome is 526km (327 miles) southwest.

If you arrive by car, there are several multitiered parking areas where the roads end and the canals begin. One of the most prominent is the **Garage San Marco,** Piazzale Roma (✆ **041-5232213**), near the vaporetto, gondola, and motor launch docks. The charge is 20€ ($28) for 12 hours or 26€ ($36) for 24 hours for any kind of car.

VISITOR INFORMATION Visitor information is available at the **Azienda di Promozione Turistica,** San Marco 71/F (✆ **041-5298711**). Year-round hours are daily 9am to 3:30pm. There is also another tourist office at the airport open daily from 9:30am to 7:30pm (✆ **041-5298711**).

CITY LAYOUT Venice lies 4km (2½ miles) from the Italian mainland (connected to Mestre by the Ponte della Libertà) and 2km (1¼ miles) from the open Adriatic. It's an archipelago of 118 islands. Most visitors, however, concern themselves only with **Piazza San Marco** and its vicinity. In fact, the entire city has only one piazza, which is San Marco (all the other squares are *campos*). Venice is divided into six quarters *(sestieri):* **San Marco, Santa Croce, San Polo, Castello, Cannaregio,** and **Dorsoduro.**

Venice

ATTRACTIONS ●

Academy Gallery	**4**
Bridge of Sighs	**13**
Ca' d'Oro	**16**
Ca' Rezzonico	**3**
Correr Civic Museum	**9**
Ducal Palace	**12**
The Grand Canal	**2**
Peggy Guggenheim Collection	**5**
Piazza San Marco	**10**
St. Mark's Basilica & Campanile	**11**

ACCOMMODATIONS ■

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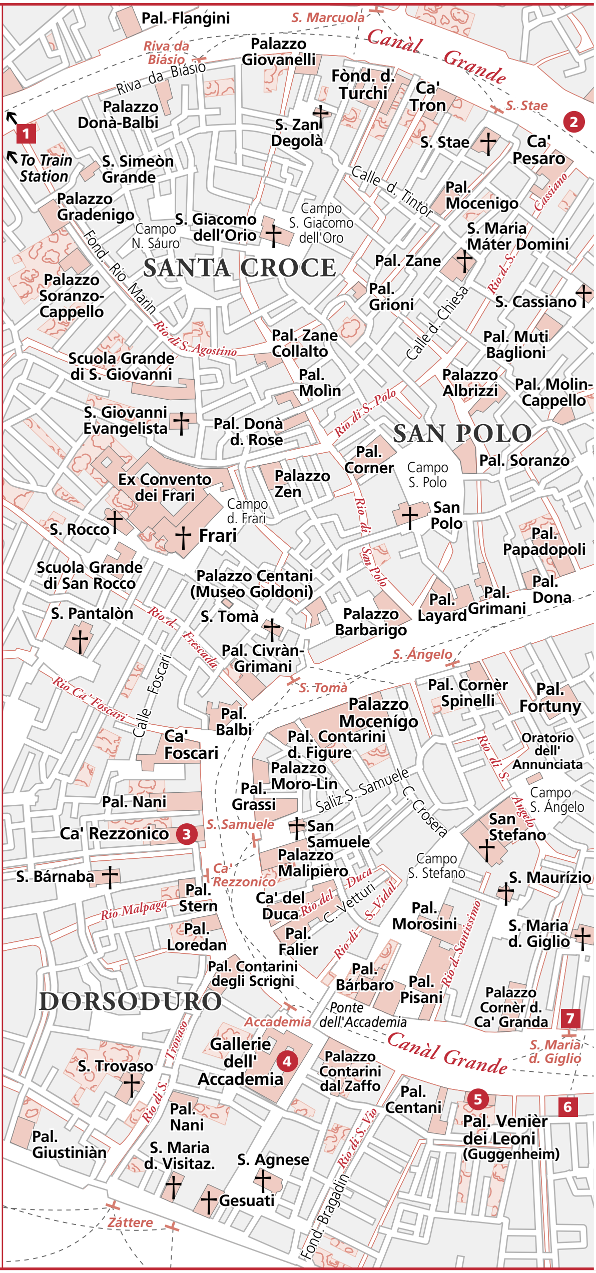
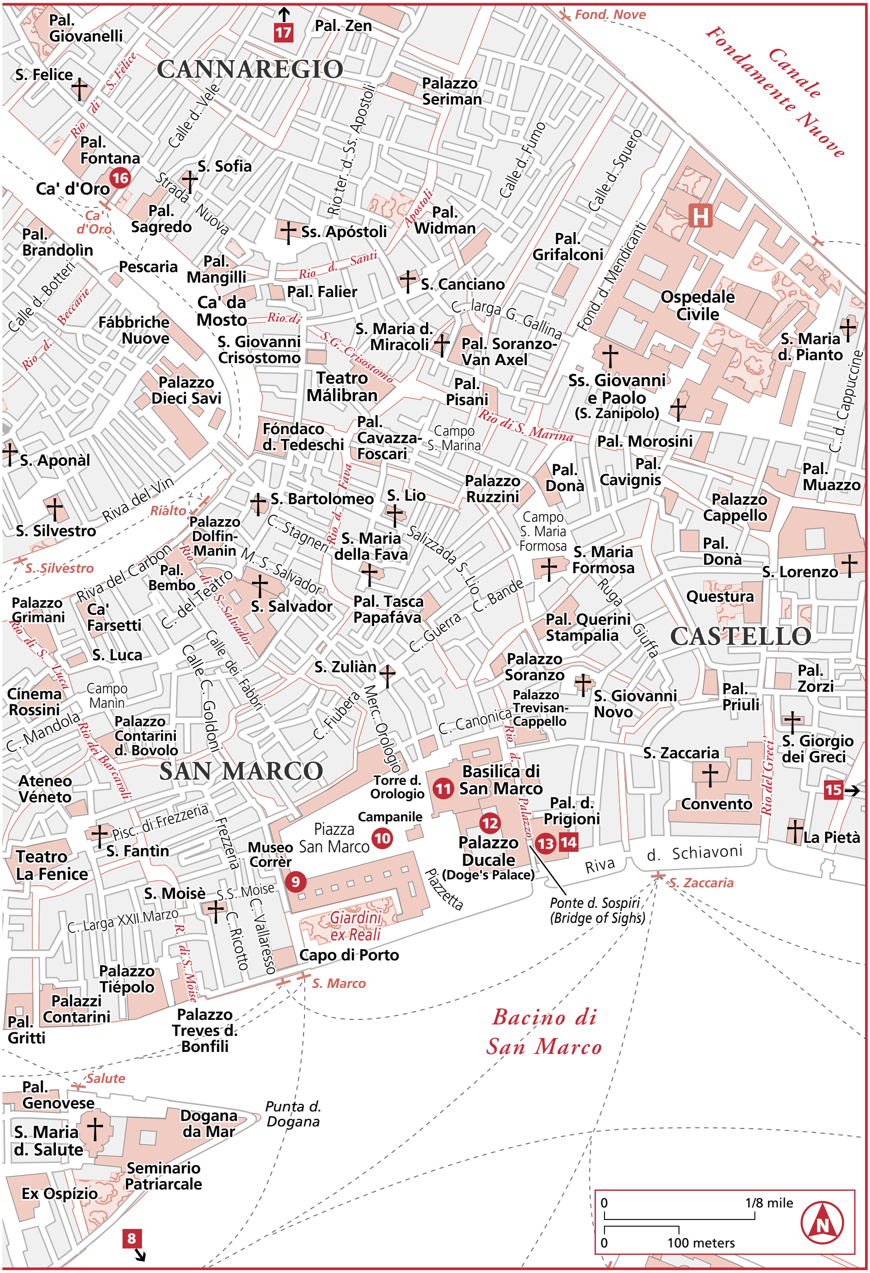
La Residenza	**15**

Venice
Florence
Rome
Naples
ITALY



Pal. Flangini
S. Marcuola
Canàl Grande
Riva da Biásio
Palazzo Giovanelli
Riva da Biásio
Fònd. d. Turchi
Ca' Tron
S. Stae
2
Palazzo Donà-Balbi
S. Zan Degolà
1
To Train Station
S. Simeòn Grande
S. Stae
Ca' Pesaro
Calle d. Tintor
Pal. Mocenigo
Cassiano
Palazzo Gradenigo
Campo N. Sáuro
S. Giacomo dell'Orio
Campo S. Giacomo dell'Oro
S. Maria Máter Domini
Fond. Rio Marin
SANTA CROCE
Pal. Zane
Palazzo Soranzo-Cappello
Pal. Grioni
Rio d. S.
Calle d. Chiesa
S. Cassiano
Rio di S. Agostino
Pal. Zane Collalto
Pal. Muti Baglioni
Scuola Grande di S. Giovanni
Pal. Molin
Palazzo Albrizzi
Pal. Molin-Cappello
Rio di S. Polo
S. Giovanni Evangelista
Pal. Donà d. Rose
SAN POLO
Pal. Corner
Campo S. Polo
Pal. Soranzo
Ex Convento dei Frari
Palazzo Zen
Campo d. Frari
Rio di San Polo
San Polo
S. Rocco
Frari
Pal. Papadopoli
Scuola Grande di San Rocco
Palazzo Centani (Museo Goldoni)
Pal. Dona
S. Pantalòn
Rio d. Frescada
S. Tomà
Palazzo Barbarigo
Pal. Layard
Pal. Grimani
Pal. Civràn-Grimani
S. Ángelo
Rio Ca' Foscari
Calle Foscari
S. Tomà
Pal. Cornèr Spinelli
Pal. Fortuny
Pal. Balbi
Palazzo Mocénigo
Ca' Foscari
Pal. Contarini d. Figure
Rio di S. Angelo
Oratorio dell' Annunciata
Palazzo Moro-Lin
Pal. Grassi
Saliz S. Samuele
C. Crosera
Campo S. Ángelo
Pal. Nani
S. Samuele
San Samuele
San Stefano
Ca' Rezzonico
3
Palazzo Malipiero
Campo S. Stefano
S. Bárnaba
Ca' Rezzonico
Rio del Duca
S. Maurízio
Rio Malpaga
Pal. Stern
Ca' del Duca
C. Vetturi
S. Vidal
Pal. Morosini
Pal. Loredan
Pal. Falier
Rio di
Rio d. Santíssimo
S. Maria d. Giglio
Pal. Contarini degli Scrigni
Pal. Bárbaro
Pal. Pisani
DORSODURO
Palazzo Corner d. Ca' Granda
7
Accademia
Ponte dell'Accademia
Canàl Grande
S. Maria d. Giglio
Gallerie dell' Accademia
4
Palazzo Contarini dal Zaffo
S. Trovaso
Rio di S. Trovaso
Pal. Centani
5
6
Pal. Nani
Rio di S. Vio
Pal. Venièr dei Leoni (Guggenheim)
Pal. Giustiniàn
S. Maria d. Visitaz.
S. Agnese
Gesuati
Záttere
Fond. Bragadin


Pal. Giovanelli
17
Pal. Zen
Fond. Nove
Canale Fondamente Nuove
CANNAREGIO
S. Felice
Rio di S. Felice
Calle d. Vele
Palazzo Seriman
Pal. Fontana
16
Ca' d'Oro
S. Sofia
Strada Nuova
Ca' d'Oro
Rio ter. d. Ss. Apostoli
Calle d. Fumo
Calle d. Squero
Pal. Sagredo
Pal. Brandolìn
Apostoli
Pal. Widman
Ss. Apóstoli
H
Pal. Grifalconi
Pescaria
Pal. Mangilli
Rio d. Santi
Calle d. Botteri
Beccarie
Pal. Falier
S. Canciano
Fond. d. Mendicanti
Ospedale Civile
Ca' da Mosto
Rio di
C. larga G. Gallina
Fàbbriche Nuove
S. Giovanni Crisostomo
S. Maria d. Miracoli
S. G. Crisostomo
Pal. Soranzo-Van Axel
S. Maria d. Pianto
Rio d.
Ss. Giovanni e Paolo (S. Zanipolo)
C. d. Cappuccine
Palazzo Dieci Savi
Teatro Málibran
Pal. Pisani
Rio di S. Marina
Fóndaco d. Tedeschi
Pal. Cavazza-Foscari
Campo S. Marina
Pal. Morosini
S. Aponàl
Pal. Donà
Pal. Cavignis
Pal. Muazzo
Riva del Vin
Palazzo Ruzzini
S. Bartolomeo
S. Lio
Fava
Palazzo Cappello
Riálto
S. Silvestro
Palazzo Dolfin-Manin
C. Stagneri
Rio d.
Campo S. Maria Formosa
S. Maria della Fava
Salizzada S. Lio
Pal. Donà
S. Silvestro
Riva del Carbon
S. Maria Formosa
S. Lorenzo
Rio
Pal. Bembo
M. S. Salvador
Ruga Giuffa
Palazzo Grimani
Ca' Farsetti
di S. Salvador
C. Bande
Questura
C. del Teatro
S. Salvador
Pal. Tasca Papafàva
Rio di S. Luca
Pal. Querini Stampalia
CASTELLO
C. Guerra
S. Luca
Calle dei Fabbri
Calle C. Goldoni
Palazzo Soranzo
S. Zuliàn
Pal. Zorzi
Cínema Rossini
Campo Manin
C. Fiubera
Merc. Orologio
Palazzo Trevisan-Cappello
S. Giovanni Novo
Pal. Priuli
C. Mandola
Palazzo Contarini d. Bovolo
Rio dei Barcaroli
C. Canonica
Rio d. Palazzo
S. Giorgio dei Greci
SAN MARCO
S. Zaccaria
Ateneo Véneto
Basilica di San Marco
11
Torre d. Orologio
Rio del Greci
15
Campanile
Convento
Pal. d. Prigioni
12
Pisc. di Frezzeria
Piazza San Marco
10
S. Fantìn
Frezzeria
13
14
La Pietà
Palazzo Ducale (Doge's Palace)
Teatro La Fenice
Museo Corrèr
9
Piazzetta
Riva d. Schiavoni
S. Zaccaria
S. Moisè
S.S. Moise
Ponte d. Sospiri (Bridge of Sighs)
C. Larga XXII Marzo
Giardini ex Reali
C. Ricotto
C. Vallaresso
Capo di Porto
R. di S. Moisè
Palazzo Tiépolo
S. Marco
Palazzi Contarini
Pal. Gritti
Palazzo Treves d. Bonfili
Bacino di San Marco
Salute
Pal. Genovese
Punta d. Dogana
Dogana da Mar
S. Maria d. Salute
Seminario Patriarcale
Ex Ospízio
8
0
1/8 mile
0
100 meters
N

Many of Venice's so-called streets are actually canals *(rios)*—more than 150 in all, spanned by a total of 400 bridges. Venice's version of a main street is the **Grand Canal (Canal Grande),** which snakes through the city. Three bridges cross the Grand Canal: the white marble **Ponte Rialto,** the wooden **Ponte Accademia,** and the stone **Ponte degli Scalzi.** The Grand Canal splits Venice into two unequal parts.

South of Dorsoduro, which is south of the Grand Canal, is the **Canale della Guidecca,** a major channel separating Dorsoduro from the large island of La Guidecca. At the point where Canale della Guidecca meets the **Canale di San Marco,** you'll spot the little **Isola di San Giorgio Maggiore,** with a church by Palladio. The most-visited islands in the lagoon, aside from the **Lido,** are **Murano, Burano,** and **Torcello.**

If you really want to tour Venice and experience that hidden, romantic trattoria on a nearly forgotten street, bring along a map that details every street and that has an index on the back.

GETTING AROUND You can't hail a taxi—at least, not on land—so get ready to walk and walk and walk. Of course, you can break up your walks with vaporetto or boat rides, which are great respites from the packed (and we mean *packed*) streets in summer.

By Vaporetto The **motorboats (vaporetti)** of Venice provide inexpensive and frequent, if not always fast, transportation in this canal city. Traveling by water is usually faster than traveling by land. The service is operated by **ACTV (Azienda del Consorzio Trasporti Veneziano),** Cannareggio 3935 (✆ **041-2424**). An *accelerato* is a vessel that makes every stop; a *diretto* makes express stops. The average fare is 6€ ($8.40). ***Note:*** In summer, the vaporetti are often fiercely crowded.

By Water Taxi/Motor Launch The city's many **motor launches *(taxi acquei)*** cost more than public vaporetti, but you won't be hassled as much when you arrive with your luggage if you hire one of the many private ones. You might or might not have the cabin of one of these sleek vessels to yourself because the captains fill their boats with as many passengers as the law allows before taking off. The price of a transit by water taxi from Piazzale Roma (the road/rail terminus) to Piazza San Marco begins at 60€ ($84) for up to four passengers and 50€ ($70) for more than four. You can also call for a water taxi; try the **Consorzio Motoscafi** at ✆ **041-5222303.**

FAST FACTS: Venice

American Express The office is at Salizzada San Moisè, San Marco 1471 (✆ **041-5200844;** vaporetto: San Marco). The staff can arrange city tours and mail handling. From May to October, hours are Monday to Friday 8am to 8pm for currency exchange, and 9am to 5:30pm for all other transactions; from November to April, hours are Monday to Friday 9am to 5:30pm.

Consulates The **U.K. Consulate** is at Piazzale Donatori di Sangue 2/5, Mestre (✆ **041-5055990**), open Monday to Friday 10am to 1pm. The **United States, Canada,** and **Australia** have consulates in Milan, about 3 hours away by train.

Currency Exchange There are many banks in Venice where you can exchange money. You might try the **Banca Intesa,** Calle Larga XXII Marzo, San Marco 2188

(✆ **041-5296811;** vaporetto: San Marco), or Banco San Marco, Calle Larga San Marco, San Marco 383 (✆ **041-5293711;** vaporetto: San Marco). Hours are Monday to Friday 8:30am to 1:30pm and 2:45 to 4:15pm.

Dentists & Doctors Your best bet is to have your hotel set up an appointment with an English-speaking dentist or doctor. The American Express office and the British Consulate also have lists. Also see "Hospitals," below.

Drugstores If you need a pharmacist in the middle of the night, go to any drugstore, even a closed one. A list of after-hours pharmacies will be posted on the door. These drugstores operate on a rotational system of late nights. A well-recommended central one is **Antica Farmacia al Mondo,** Piscina Frezzeria, San Marco 1676 (✆ **041-5225813;** vaporetto: San Marco).

Emergencies Call ✆ **113** for the police, ✆ **118** for an ambulance, or ✆ **115** to report a fire.

Hospitals Get in touch with the **Ospedale Civile Santi Giovanni e Paolo,** Campo Santi Giovanni e Paolo in Castello (✆ **041-5294111;** vaporetto: San Toma), staffed with English-speaking doctors 24 hours.

Internet For laptop links or international calls, head for **Venetian Navigator,** Castello 5300 (✆ **041-2771056;** Vaporetto: S. Marco), which lies near Piazza San Marco in the heart of Venice. You can search the Web with an American-style keyboard, send a fax, download pictures from your digital camera, and even burn CDs and DVDs. You can purchase a card to use the facilities, costing 3€ ($4.20) for 15 minutes or 8€ ($11) for up to an hour.

Laundry & Dry Cleaning A convenient coin-operated laundromat and dry-cleaning enterprise is **Lavanderia Gabriella,** Calle Fiubera, San Marco 985 (✆ **041-5221758;** vaporetto: San Marco), behind Piazza San Marco. Its washing machines are available daily 8am to 12:30pm in winter and 8am to 7pm in summer, and its dry-cleaning facilities are open Monday to Saturday 8am to 12:30pm in winter, 3 to 7pm in summer.

Police See "Emergencies," above.

Safety The curse of Venice is the pickpocket. Violent crime is rare. But because of the overcrowding in vaporetti and on the narrow streets, it's easy to pick pockets. Purse-snatchers are commonplace as well. They can dart out of nowhere, grab a purse, and disappear in seconds down some dark alley. Keep valuables locked in a safe in your hotel, if one is provided.

Telephone The **country code** for Italy is **39.** The **city code** for Venice is **041;** use this code for all calls—even within Venice itself (and you must now include the zero every time, even when calling from abroad).

Toilets These are available at Piazzale Roma and various other places, but they aren't as plentiful as they should be. A truly spotless one is at the foot of the Accademia Bridge. Often you'll have to rely on the restrooms in cafes, although you should buy something, perhaps a light coffee, because, in theory, the toilets are for customers only. Most museums and galleries have public toilets. You can also use the public toilets at the Albergo Diurno, Via Ascensione, just behind Piazza San Marco. Remember, *signori* means men and *signore* means women.

WHERE TO STAY

NEAR PIAZZA SAN MARCO

Very Expensive

Gritti Palace ★★★ The Gritti is the renovated palazzo of 15th-century doge Andrea Gritti. Even after its takeover by ITT Sheraton, it's still a bit starchy and has a museum aura (some of the furnishings are roped off), but for sheer glamour and history, only the **Cipriani** tops it. The Gritti evokes a well-tailored, well-upholstered private home of a Venetian nobleman—discreet, tranquil, and horrendously upscale, providing a shelter for billionaires. The variety of guest rooms seems almost limitless, from elaborate suites to small singles. But throughout, the elegance is evident, as exemplified by the gilt mirrors, the antiques, and the hand-painted 18th-century-style furnishings.

Campo Santa Maria del Giglio, San Marco 2467, 30124 Venezia. ✆ **800/325-3535** in the U.S., or 041-794611. Fax 041-5200942. www.hotelgrittivenice.com. 91 units. 657€–1,355€ ($920–$1,897) double; from 2,275€ ($3,185) suite. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Vaporetto: Santa Maria del Giglio. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; salon; room service; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms; private boat launches. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Inexpensive

Ca' Dei Dogi ★★ This small *albergo* (Italian hotel) in a tranquil pocket of Venice is reached down a maze of narrow alleyways, just a surprisingly short walk from the Bridge of Sighs and the Doge's Palace. At night you can sit out on the rooftop patio listening to the gondoliers singing beneath the bridge. This remarkable find combines luxury and value, two elements that rarely, if ever, come together in Venice. Each of the midsize bedrooms is individually decorated, the details of the decor carefully chosen for both taste and comfort.

Corte Santa Scolastica, Castello 4242, 30122 Venezia. ✆ **041-2413759.** Fax 041-5212187. www.cadeidogi.it. 6 units. 130€–250€ ($182–$350) double. MC, V. Vaporetto: San Zaccaria. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; breakfast-only room service; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

CASTELLO/RIVA DEGLI SCHIAVONI

Moderate

La Residenza ★★ In a 14th-century building that looks a lot like a miniature Doge's Palace, this little hotel is on a residential square where children play soccer and older people feed the pigeons. You'll pass through a stone vestibule lined with ancient Roman columns before ringing another doorbell at the bottom of a flight of stairs. First an iron gate and then a door open into an enormous salon filled with antiques, 300-year-old paintings, and some of the most marvelously preserved walls in Venice. The guest rooms are less opulent, with contemporary pieces and good beds. The choice rooms are usually booked far in advance, especially for Carnevale.

Campo Bandiera e Moro, Castello 3608, 30122 Venezia. ✆ **041-5285315.** Fax 041-5238859. www.venicelaresidenza.com. 15 units (shower only). 80€–180€ ($112–$252) double. Rates include breakfast. MC, V. Vaporetto: Arsenale. **Amenities:** Lounge. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, safe, Wi-Fi.

IN CANNAREGIO

Expensive

Boscolo Grand Hotel dei Dogi ★★ Once an embassy and later a convent, this is one of the hotel secrets of Venice, definitely a hidden gem. On the northern tier of Venice, dei Dogi looks across the lagoon to the mainland. The hotel lies just a short stroll down the canal from the Church of Madonna dell'Orto, where Tintoretto lies buried. Bedrooms are elegantly decorated in a palatial Venetian style, with gilt and polish.

Fondamenta Madonna dell'Orto 3500, 30121 Venezia. ✆ **041-2208111.** Fax 041-722278. www.boscolohotels.com. 76 units. 200€–840€ ($280–$1,176) double; from 1,500€ ($2,100) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Vaporetto: Madonna dell'Orto. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; room service; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

SANTA CROCE

Inexpensive

Albergo Marin *Value* Ever since the 1930s this little hotel has been a "secret address" known to savvy travelers trying to escape the high prices of Venice. The place is a simple, no-frills hotel and not a haven for devotees of Venetian aesthetics. What it does it does very well . . . and that's provide an affordable and comfortable bed for the night. It's more for travelers who like to explore Venice all day, returning to the hotel just to sleep in midsize bedrooms. You can rent a room with a full bathroom, or, for a lesser rate, one with a partial bath with the toilet outside the room. The location is a 5-minute walk from the train station at Santa Lucia.

Ramo delle Chioverete 670B, Santa Croce, 30135 Venezia. ✆ **041-718022.** Fax 041-721485. www.albergomarin.it. 60€–120€ ($84–$168) double; 30€ ($42) extra bed. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Vaporetto: Ferrovia. **Amenities:** All nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer, safe.

IN DORSODURO

Moderate

DD724 ★★ Steps away from the Peggy Guggenheim Museum and the Accademia Gallery, this one-of-a-kind hotel is the brainchild of hotelier Chiara Bocchini. The odd name comes from the hotel's location in the Dorsoduro area. A house of charm and grace, it is a luxurious choice, ideal for a romantic getaway. Abstract paintings by contemporary artists hang in the tiny lobby. Under wooden beamed ceilings, each bedroom is one of a kind with velvet armchairs and Signoria di Firenze linens. The complimentary breakfast is cooked individually for each guest.

Dorsoduro 724, 30123 Venezia. ✆ **041-2770262.** Fax 041-2960633. www.dd724.it. 7 units. 260€–390€ ($364–$546) double; 380€–400€ ($532–$560) suite. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Vaporetto: Accademia. **Amenities:** Bar; breakfast-only room service; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning; all nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

ON ISOLA DELLA GIUDECCA

Very Expensive

Cipriani ★★★ For chic, contemporary surroundings, flawless service, and refinement at every turn, the Cipriani is in a class by itself. Set in a 16th-century cloister on the island of Giudecca (reached by private hotel launch from St. Mark's Square), this pleasure palace was opened in 1958 by Giuseppe Cipriani, founder of Harry's Bar. The rooms range in design from tasteful contemporary to grand antique; all have splendid views and are sumptuous. We prefer the corner rooms, the most spacious and elaborately decorated.

Isola della Giudecca 10, 30133 Venezia. ✆ **041-5207744.** Fax 041-5203930. www.hotelcipriani.com. 110 units. 640€–1,400€ ($896–$1,960) double; from 1,760€ ($2,464) suite. Rates include full American breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Vaporetto: Zitelle. Closed Oct 27–Mar 13. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; 3 bars (including a piano bar); Olympic-size outdoor heated swimming pool; tennis court; fitness center; spa; Turkish bath and sauna; room service; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms; private boat shuttle; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

WHERE TO DINE

NEAR PIAZZA SAN MARCO

Very Expensive

Quadri ★★★ VENETIAN/INTERNATIONAL One of Europe's most famous restaurants, Quadri is even better known as a cafe. Many diners come just for the view and are often surprised by the high-quality cuisine and impeccable service (and the whopping tab). Quadri's chef is likely to tempt you with dishes such as a fine kettle of soup made with beans, leeks, and mussels, followed by such classic dishes as Venetian-style calves' liver or squid cooked in its own ink.

Piazza San Marco, San Marco 121. ☎ **041-5289299.** Reservations required. Main courses 25€–45€ ($35–$63). AE, DC, MC, V. Tues–Sun noon–2:30pm and 7–10:30pm. Vaporetto: San Marco.

Expensive

Antico Martini ★★★ VENETIAN/INTERNATIONAL Antico Martini elevates Venetian cuisine to its highest level. Elaborate chandeliers glitter and gilt-framed oil paintings adorn the paneled walls. The courtyard is splendid in summer. An excellent beginning is the smoked salmon with caviar. One of the best pasta dishes is black tagliolini with fresh zucchini, or the always reliable smoked breast of wild duck. The chefs are better at regional dishes than international ones.

Campo San Fantin, San Marco 1983. ☎ **041-5224121.** Reservations required. Main courses 26€–65€ ($36–$91); 4-course fixed-price menu 70€–75€ ($98–$105); 6-course *menu dégustation* 105€ ($147). AE, DC, MC, V. Wed 7–11:30pm; Thurs–Mon noon–2:30pm and 7–11:30pm. Vaporetto: San Marco or Santa Maria del Giglio.

Moderate

Trattoria da Fiore ★ Value VENETIAN Don't confuse this trattoria with the well-known and much more expensive Osteria da Fiore. Start with the house specialty, *penne alla Fiore* (prepared with olive oil, garlic, and seven in-season vegetables), and you might be happy to call it a night. Or skip right to another popular specialty, *fritto misto,* comprising more than a dozen varieties of fresh fish and seafood.

Calle delle Botteghe, San Marco 3461. ☎ **041-5235310.** Reservations suggested. Pasta dishes 10€–15€ ($14–$21); main courses 18€–25€ ($25–$35). MC, V. Wed–Mon noon–3pm and 7–10pm. Closed Jan 15–30 and Aug 1–15. Vaporetto: Accademia.

Inexpensive

Osteria alle Testiere ★ VENETIAN/ITALIAN This little 24-seat restaurant has its priorities in order: good, fresh food at affordable prices. Nothing is spent on fancy white linen. The tables are covered in butcher paper. In such a tavern setting, you'll be tempted by an array of well-prepared dishes washed down with a carefully selected wine list. Gnocchetti with baby squid turned out to be a savory and tasty dish, as was the white fish of the day baked with aromatic fresh herbs. For another main course, the scampi was heaven-sent, given extra flavor by a sprinkle of cinnamon, a dash of hot pepper, and freshly chopped tomatoes.

Castello 5801 (on Calle del Mondo Novo). ☎ **041-5227220.** Reservations required. Main courses 15€–22€ ($21–$31). MC, V. Tues–Sat noon–2pm and 7–10pm. Closed Aug and Dec 20–Jan 15. Vaporetto: San Marco or Rialto.

CASTELLO/RIVA DEGLI SCHIAVONI

Very Expensive

Do Leoni ★★ VENETIAN/INTERNATIONAL This restaurant offers a view of a 19th-century equestrian statue ringed with heroic women taming (you guessed it) lions. The menu is something to savor. The chef isn't afraid to dip into Venice's culinary attic at times for inspiration—take the boneless sardines fried and left to marinate in onions before being served with fresh pine seeds and Cyprus sultanas. The risottos and pastas are delectable, especially the *tagliatelle* with scampi and porcini mushrooms.

In the Londra Palace, Riva degli Schiavoni, Castello 4171. ☎ **041-5200533.** Reservations required. Main courses 16€–36€ ($22–$50). AE, DC, MC, V. Restaurant daily 12:30–2:30pm and 7:30–11pm; bar daily 11am–12:30am. Vaporetto: San Zaccaria.

Expensive

Al Covo ★★ VENETIAN/SEAFOOD Al Covo has a special charm because of its atmospheric setting, sophisticated service, and the fine cooking of Cesare Benelli and his Texas-born wife, Diane. Look for a reinvention of a medieval version of fish soup, potato gnocchi flavored with local whitefish, seafood ravioli, linguine blended with zucchini and fresh peas, and delicious fritto misto with scampi, squid, a bewildering array of fish, and deep fried vegetables such as zucchini flowers. Al Covo prides itself on not having any freezers, guaranteeing that all food is fresh every day.

Campiello della Pescaria, Castello 3968. ☎ **041-5223812.** Reservations recommended for dinner. Main courses 16€–37€ ($22–$52); fixed-price menus 69€ ($97). MC, V. Fri–Tues 12:45–2:15pm and 7:30–10pm. Vaporetto: Arsenale.

Moderate/Inexpensive

Al Nuovo Galeon Value VENETIAN Sometimes it's a good idea to go where your waiter takes his family to eat on his day off. With its two dining rooms, Al Nuovo Galeon is decorated just like the interior of a 16th-century ship and is a 15-minute walk east of Piazza San Marco. The chef prepares good value, wholesome food made with market-fresh ingredients. Specialties include scampi in saorone (fried scampi marinated in a sweet-and-sour sauce with lightly sautéed onions) or else a filet of turbot with curried vegetables.

Via Garibaldi 1308, Castello. ☎ **041-5204656.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 15€–22€ ($21–$31). AE, MC, V. Wed–Sun 12:30–2:30pm and 7:30–9:30pm. Closed Dec 9–Jan 22. Vaporetto: Ciardini.

Nuova Rivetta Value SEAFOOD Nuova Rivetta is an old-fashioned trattoria where you get good food at a good price. The most popular dish is *frittura di pesce,* a mixed fish fry that includes squid or various other seafood from the day's market. Other specialties are gnocchi stuffed with spider crab, pasticcio of fish (a main course), and spaghetti flavored with squid ink. The most typical wine is sparkling prosecco, whose bouquet is refreshing and fruity with a slightly sharp flavor; it has long been one of the most celebrated wines of the Veneto.

Campo San Filippo, Castello 4625. ☎ **041-5287302.** Reservations required. Main courses 7€–15€ ($9.80–$21). AE, MC, V. Tues–Sun noon–10pm. Closed July 20–Aug 20. Vaporetto: San Zaccaria.

NEAR THE PONTE DI RIALTO

Moderate

Fiaschetteria Toscana ★ Value VENETIAN The service at this hip restaurant might be uneven and the staff might be frantic, but lots of local foodies come here to celebrate special occasions or to soak in the see-and-be-seen ambience. The dining rooms are on two levels, the upstairs of which is somewhat more claustrophobic. In the evening, the downstairs is especially appealing with its romantic candlelit ambience. Menu items include *frittura della Serenissima* (a mixed platter of fried seafood with vegetables), a succulent ravioli filled with lobster and broccoli, and freshly caught fish from the North Adriatic along with tender and well-flavored Tuscan beefsteak.

Campo San Giovanni Crisostomo, Cannaregio 5719. ☎ **041-5285281.** Reservations required. Main courses 12€–30€ ($17–$42). MC, V. Wed 7:30–10:30pm; Thurs–Mon 12:30–2:30pm and 7:30–10:30pm. Closed July 25–Aug 20. Vaporetto: Rialto.

L'Osteria di Santa Marina ★ VENETIAN/ITALIAN In a warm, cozy setting, you feel right at home here as you partake of their savory cuisine. Come with a hearty appetite; it will be satisfied. The cuisine is light, full flavored, and impertinently inventive as evoked by the lasagna served crepe-style with fresh shrimp and purple radicchio. The ravioli with turbot and mussels in a crayfish sauce had subtly intermingled flavors. All the pasta is homemade.

Camo Santa Marina 5911. ✆ **041-5285239.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 12€–25€ ($17–$35). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon 7:30–9:30pm; Tues–Sat 12:30–2:30pm and 7:30–9:30pm. Closed Jan 10–25 and 2 weeks in Aug (dates vary). Vaporetto: Rialto.

Inexpensive

Osteria da Andrea Value VENETIAN/ITALIAN The *bacaro,* the traditional workingman's *osteria,* is back in vogue in Venice. The location of this rustic bacaro is near the Rialto on its own little square, its back door opening onto frontage of a prime bit of the Grand Canal. Downstairs the owner and manager, Andrea Varisco, dispenses excellent wines to an appreciative crowd of locals. Upstairs at well-spaced tables under brick ceiling vaults, a light, creative menu is served. The ringside view of the Grand Canal from the outdoor tables makes up for any wait. Prepare to fill up on such flavorful dishes as steamed fish with fresh vegetables, grilled radicchio with Gorgonzola, or a carpaccio of *branzino* (sea bass) with fresh and aromatic herbs. We're also fond of the grouper with artichokes.

Campo San Giacometto 122. ✆ **041-5232061.** Reservations required. Main courses 12€–18€ ($17–$25). No credit cards. Tues–Sat 10:30am–3pm and 6:30pm–midnight; Sun 10:30am–3pm. Vaporetto: Rialto.

IN DORSODURO

Expensive

Lineadombra ★★ Finds INTERNATIONAL There is such a thing as Nouveau Venice, as exemplified by this modern restaurant with sleek contemporary lines. Lineadombra faces the Canale della Giudecca. In fair weather, you can sit out on the deck and enjoy one of the most scenic spots in Venice. The chefs blend their creativity and imagination, turning out a mouth-watering range of freshly made dishes. The best of these include grilled scallops with a zucchini, yogurt, and a saffron sauce or else tortelloni filled with spinach and ricotta.

Ponte dell'Umilta, Dorsoduro 19. ✆ **041-2411881.** Reservations required. Main courses 19€–34€ ($27–$48). AE, DC, MC, V. Thurs–Tues 12:30–3pm and 7:30–10pm. Closed Jan 15–Feb 15. Vaporetto: Salute.

ON ISOLA DELLA GUIDECCA

Very Expensive

Fortuny ★★★ ITALIAN The grandest of the hotel restaurants, Cipriani's Fortuny offers a sublime but relatively simple cuisine, with the freshest of ingredients used by one of the best-trained staffs along the Adriatic. This isn't the place to bring the kids—in fact, children under 8 aren't allowed (a babysitter can be arranged). You can dine in the formal room with Murano chandeliers and Fortuny curtains when the weather is nippy or on the terrace overlooking the lagoon. Freshly made pasta is a specialty, and it's among the finest we've sampled. Try the *taglierini verdi* with noodles and ham au gratin. Chef's specialties include mixed fried scampi and squid with tender vegetables, and sautéed veal filets with spring artichokes.

In the Hotel Cipriani, Isola della Giudecca 10. ✆ **041-5207744.** Reservations required. Jacket required, tie recommended for men. Main courses 25€–43€ ($35–$60). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 12:30–3pm and 8–10:30pm. Closed Oct 27–Mar 13. Vaporetto: Zitelle.

EXPLORING THE FLOATING CITY

Unlike Florence, Venice would reward its guests with treasures even if they never ducked inside a museum or church. Take some time just to stroll and let yourself get lost in this gorgeous city.

SIGHTSEEING SUGGESTIONS FOR FIRST-TIME VISITORS

If You Have 1 Day Get up early and watch the sun over **Piazza San Marco,** as the city wakes up. The pigeons will already be there to greet you. Have an early morning cappuccino on the square, and then visit the **Basilica of San Marco** and the **Palazzo Ducale.** We recommend a lunch stop at **Poste Vecchie,** at Pescheria Rialto, San Polo 1608 (✆ **041-721822;** vaporetto: Rialto). This restaurant near the fish market is the oldest in Venice, open Wednesday through Monday from noon to 3pm and 7 to 10:30pm. Ride the **Grand Canal** in a gondola 2 hours before sunset and spend the rest of the evening wandering the narrow streets of this strangely unreal and most fascinating city. Apologize to yourself for such a short visit and vow to return someday.

If You Have 2 Days On day 2, it’s time for more concentrated sightseeing. Begin in **Piazza San Marco** (viewing it should be a daily ritual, regardless of how many days you have in Venice), and then head for the **Accademia,** in the morning. In the afternoon, visit the **Collezione Peggy Guggenheim** (modern art) and perhaps the **Ca’ d’Oro** and **Ca’ Rezzonico.**

If You Have 3 Days Begin day 3 by having a cappuccino on the **Piazza San Marco,** and then inspect the **Campanile di San Marco.** Later in the morning visit the **Museo Correr.** In the afternoon, go to the **Scuola Grande di San Rocco** to see the works of Tintoretto. Spend the rest of the day strolling the streets of Venice and ducking into shops that capture your imagination. Even if you get lost, you’ll eventually return to a familiar landmark, and you can’t help but see the signs pointing you back to Piazza San Marco. Have dinner in a typical Venetian *trattorie,* such as **Locand Montin,** at Fondamenta di Borgo, Dorsonduro 1147 (✆ **041-5208594;** vaporetto Accademia).

If You Have 4 or 5 Days On day 4 plan to visit the islands of the lagoon, including **Murano, Burano,** and **Torcello.** All three can be covered, at least briefly, in a single busy day. On day 5, relax and stroll the streets; serendipity may await around any corner.

THE GRAND CANAL ★★★

Paris has its Champs-Elysèes, and New York City has its Broadway—but Venice, for sheer uniqueness, tops them all with its **Grand Canal (Canal Grande).** Lined with palazzi—many in the Venetian Gothic style)—this great road of water is filled with vaporetti, motorboats, and gondolas. The canal begins at Piazzetta San Marco on one side and Longhena’s La Salute church opposite. At midpoint, the Rialto Bridge spans it. Eventually, the canal winds its serpentine course to the rail station. We can guarantee that there’s not a dull sight en route.

THE BASILICA, DOGES’ PALACE & CAMPANILE

Piazza San Marco (St. Mark’s Square) ★★★ was the heart of Venice in the heyday of its glory as a seafaring republic. If you have only 1 day for Venice, you need not

Tips A St. Mark's Warning

A dress code for men and women prohibiting shorts, bare arms and shoulders, and skirts above the knee is strictly enforced at all times in the basilica. You *will* be turned away. In addition, you must remain silent and cannot take photographs.

leave the square: Some of the city's major attractions, such as St. Mark's Basilica and the Doge's Palace, are centered here or nearby. Thanks to Napoleon, the square was unified architecturally. The emperor added the Fabbrica Nuova, thus bridging the Old and New Procurate. Flanked with medieval-looking palaces, Sansovino's Library, elegant shops, and colonnades, the square is now complete, unlike Piazza della Signoreia in Florence.

If Piazza San Marco is Europe's drawing room, then the piazza's satellite, **Piazzetta San Marco** ★, is Europe's antechamber. Hedged in by the Doge's Palace, Sansovino's Library, and a side of St. Mark's, the tiny square faces the Grand Canal. Two tall granite columns grace the square. A winged lion, representing St. Mark, surmounts one. A statue of a man taming a dragon, supposedly the dethroned patron saint Theodore, tops the other. Both columns came from the East in the 12th century.

St. Mark's Basilica (Basilica di San Marco) ★★★ Dominating Piazza San Marco is the Church of Gold (Chiesa d'Oro), one of the world's greatest and most richly embellished churches. In fact, it looks as if it had been moved intact from Istanbul. The basilica is a conglomeration of styles, although it's particularly indebted to Byzantium. Like Venice, St. Mark's is adorned with booty from every corner of the city's once far-flung mercantile empire: capitals from Sicily, columns from Alexandria, porphyry from Syria, and sculpture from old Constantinople.

The basilica is capped by a dome that, like a spider plant, sends off shoots—in this case, a quartet of smaller-scale bulbed cupolas. Spanning the facade is a loggia, surmounted by replicas of the four famous St. Mark's horses, the *Triumphal Quadriga.*

After touring the baptistery, proceed to the oft-looted **treasury *(tesoro)*** ★. Here you'll find the inevitable skulls and bones of some ecclesiastical authorities under glass, plus goblets, chalices, and Gothic candelabra. The entrance to the **presbytery** is nearby. In it, on the high altar, the alleged sarcophagus of St. Mark rests under a green marble blanket and is held by four Corinthian alabaster columns. Behind the altar is the rarest treasure at St. Mark's: the Byzantine-style **Pala d'Oro** ★★★, a golden altar screen measuring 3×1m (10×4 ft.). It's set with 300 emeralds, 300 sapphires, 400 garnets, 100 amethysts, and 1,300 pearls, plus rubies and topazes accompanying 157 enameled rondels and panels.

After leaving the basilica, head to the atrium to the **Marciano Museum** and the **Loggia dei Cavalli.** The star of the museum is the world-famous ***Triumphal Quadriga*** ★★, four horses looted from Constantinople by Venetian crusaders during the sack of that city in 1204.

Piazza San Marco. ✆ **041-5225205.** Basilica free admission; treasury 2€ ($2.80); presbytery 1.50€ ($2.10); Marciano Museum 3€ ($4.20). Basilica and presbytery Apr–Sept Mon–Sat 10am–5pm, Sun 2–5pm; Oct–Mar Mon–Sat 10am–4:30pm, Sun 2–4pm. Marciano Museum Apr–Sept Mon–Sat 10am–5pm, Sun 2–4pm; Oct–Mar Mon–Sat 10am–4pm, Sun 2–4pm. Vaporetto: San Marco.

Campanile di San Marco ★★ One summer night in 1902, the bell tower of St. Mark's, suffering from years of rheumatism in the damp Venetian climate, gave out a warning sound that sent the fashionable coffee drinkers in the piazza below scurrying for their lives. But the campanile gracefully waited until the next morning, July 14, before tumbling into the piazza. The Venetians rebuilt their belfry, and it's now safe to climb to the top. Unlike Italy's other bell towers, where you have to brave narrow, steep spiral staircases to reach the top, this one has an elevator so that you can get a pigeon's view. It's a particularly good vantage point for viewing the cupolas of the basilica.

Piazza San Marco. ☎ **041-5224064.** Admission 6€ ($8.40). Oct–Mar daily 9:30am–4pm; Apr–June daily 9:30am–5pm; July–Sept daily 9:30am–8pm. Vaporetto: San Marco.

Ducal Palace ★★★ You enter the Palace of the Doges through the magnificent 15th-century **Porta della Carta** ★★ at the piazzetta. This Venetian Gothic palazzo gleams in the tremulous light somewhat like a frosty birthday cake in pinkish-red marble and white Istrian stone. Italy's grandest civic structure, it dates to 1309, although a 1577 fire destroyed much of the original building.

After climbing the Sansovino stairway, you'll enter some get-acquainted rooms. Proceed to the **Sala di Anti-Collegio,** housing the palace's greatest works, notably Veronese's *Rape of Europa,* to the far left on the right wall. Tintoretto is well represented with his *Three Graces* and his *Bacchus and Ariadne.* Some critics consider the latter his supreme achievement.

The excitement continues downstairs. You can wander through the once-private apartments of the doges to the grand **Maggior Consiglio,** with Veronese's allegorical *Triumph of Venice* on the ceiling. The most outstanding feature, however, is over the Grand Council chamber: Tintoretto's *Paradise,* said to be the world's largest oil painting.

Reentering the Maggior Consiglio, follow the arrows on their trail across the **Bridge of Sighs (Ponte dei Sospiri)** ★★, linking the Doge's Palace with the Palazzo delle Prigioni. Here you'll see the cellblocks that once lodged the prisoners who felt the quick justice of the Terrible Ten, a series of state inquisitors appointed by the city of Venice to dispense justice to the citizens. This often meant torture even for what could be viewed as a minor infraction.

If you're intrigued by the palace, you might want to check out the popular guided tours of the **Secret Trails of the Palazzo Ducale (Itinerari Segreti del Palazzo Ducale).** (English-language reservations are available in advance at the ticket-buyers' entrance or by calling ☎ **041-5209070**.)

Piazzetta San Marco. ☎ **041-2715911.** Admission 13€ ($18) adults. Apr–Oct daily 9am–7pm; Nov–Mar daily 9am–5pm. Closed Dec 25 and Jan 1. Vaporetto: San Marco.

MUSEUMS & GALLERIES

Academy Gallery (Gallerie dell'Accademia) ★★★ The pomp and circumstance, the glory that was Venice, lives on in this remarkable collection of paintings spanning the 13th to 18th centuries. The hallmark of the Venetian school is color and more color. From Giorgione to Veronese, from Titian to Tintoretto, with a Carpaccio cycle thrown in, the Accademia has samples of its most famous sons.

You'll first see works by such 14th-century artists as Paolo and Lorenzo Veneziano, who bridged the gap from Byzantine art to Gothic (see the latter's *Annunciation*). Next, you'll view Giovanni Bellini's *Madonna and Saint* (poor Sebastian, not another arrow) and Carpaccio's fascinating yet gruesome work of mass crucifixion. Two of the most important works with secular themes are Mantegna's armored *St. George,* with the slain dragon at his feet, and Hans Memling's 15th-century portrait of a young man. Giorgione's *Tempest* is the most famous painting at the Accademia.

Campo della Carità, Dorsoduro. ✆ **041-5222247.** Admission 6.50€ ($9.10). Mon 8:15am–2pm; Tues–Sun 8:15am–7:15pm. Closed Jan 1, May 1, and Dec 25. Vaporetto: Accademia.

Ca' d'Oro ★★★ Ca' d'Oro's architecture and décor compete with the works of art displayed here. Although it contains the important of Galleria Giorgio Franchetti, the House of Gold (so named because of its once gilded facade) distracts visitors from its paintings. The interconnected buildings contain the Baron Franchetti's valuable private collection of paintings, sculpture, and furniture, all donated to the Italian government during World War I. In a niche reserved for the masterpiece of the collection is Andrea Mantegna's icy-cold *St. Sebastian,* the central figure riddled with what must be a record number of arrows.

Cannaregio 3931–3932. ✆ **041-5238790.** Admission 5€ ($7). Mon 8:15am–2pm; Tues–Sun 8:15am–7:15pm. Closed Jan 1, May 1, and Dec 25. Vaporetto: Ca' d'Oro.

Ca' Rezzonico ★★ This 17th- and 18th-century palace along the Grand Canal is where Robert Browning set up his bachelor headquarters and eventually died in 1889. Pope Clement XIII also stayed here. It's a virtual treasure house, known for its baroque paintings and furniture. First you enter the **Grand Ballroom** with its allegorical ceiling, and then you proceed through lavishly embellished rooms with Venetian chandeliers, brocaded walls, portraits of patricians, tapestries, gilded furnishings, and touches of chinoiserie. At the end of the first walk is the **Throne Room,** with its allegorical ceilings by Giovanni Battista Tiepolo.

Upstairs you'll find a survey of 18th-century Venetian art. Head for the **first salon** on your right (facing the canal), which contains the best works, paintings from the brush of Pietro Longhi. His most famous work, *The Lady and the Hairdresser,* is the first canvas to the right on the entrance wall.

Fondamenta Rezzonico, Dorsoduro 3136. ✆ **041-2410100.** Admission 6.50€ ($9.10). Nov–Mar Wed–Mon 10am–5pm; Apr–Oct Wed–Mon 10am–6pm. Closed Jan 1, May 1, and Dec 25. Vaporetto: Ca' Rezzonico.

Correr Civic Museum (Museo Civico Correr) ★★ This museum traces the development of Venetian painting from the 14th to 16th centuries. On the second floor are the red-and-maroon robes once worn by the doges, plus some fabulous street lanterns and an illustrated copy of *Marco Polo in Tartaria.* You can see Cosmà Tura's *Pietà,* a miniature of renown from the genius in the Ferrara School. This is one of his more gruesome works, depicting a bony, gnarled Christ sprawled on the lap of the Madonna. Farther on, search out Schiavone's *Madonna and Child* (no. 545), our candidate for ugliest bambino ever depicted on canvas (no wonder his mother looks askance). One of the most important rooms boasts three masterpieces: a *Pietà* by Antonello da Messina, a *Crucifixion* by Flemish Hugo van der Goes, and a *Madonna and Child* by Dieric Bouts, who depicted the baby suckling at his mother's breast in a sensual manner. The star attraction of the Correr is the **Bellini salon,** which includes works by founding padre Jacopo and his son, Gentile. But the real master of the household was the other son, Giovanni.

In the Procuratie Nuove, Piazza San Marco. ✆ **041-2405211.** Admission (including entrance to the Ducal Palace above) 12€ ($17). Apr–Oct daily 9am–7pm; Nov–Mar daily 9am–5pm. Closed Dec 25 and Jan 1. Vaporetto: San Marco.

Tips A Note on Museum Hours

As throughout Italy, visiting hours in Venice's museums are often subject to major variations, both in hours and in days. Many visitors who have budgeted only 2 or 3 days for Venice often express disappointment when, for some unknown reason, a major attraction closes abruptly, sometimes for the entire day. When you arrive, check with the tourist office for a list of the latest open hours.

Peggy Guggenheim Collection (Collezione Peggy Guggenheim) ★★★ This is one of the most comprehensive and brilliant, modern art collections in the Western world, and it reveals both the foresight and the critical judgment of its founder. The collection is housed in an unfinished palazzo, the former Venetian home of Peggy Guggenheim. In the tradition of her family, Guggenheim was a lifelong patron of contemporary painters and sculptors. As her private collection increased, she decided to find a larger showcase and selected Venice. Today you can wander through the home and enjoy art in an informal and relaxed way. Displayed here are works not only by Pollock and Ernst but also by Picasso (see his 1911 cubist *The Poet*), Duchamp, Chagall, Mondrian, Brancusi, Delvaux, and Dalí, plus a garden of modern sculpture with works by Giacometti.

In the Palazzo Venier dei Leoni, Calle Venier dei Leoni, Dorsoduro 701. ✆ **041-2405411.** Admission 10€ ($14) adults, 5€ ($7) children/students, free for children under 12. Audio guides 5€ ($7). Wed–Mon 10am–6pm. Vaporetto: Accademia.

ORGANIZED TOURS

Tours through the streets and canals of Venice are distinctly different from tours through other cities of Italy because of the complete absence of traffic. You can always wander at will through the labyrinth of streets, but many visitors opt for a guided tour to at least familiarize themselves with the city's geography.

American Express, Calle San Moisè, San Marco 1471 (✆ **041-5200844**), which operates from a historic building a few steps from St. Mark's Square, offers an array of guided city tours. Call ahead to ask about the current schedule and to make reservations. The offerings include a daily 2-hour guided tour of the city for 34€ ($48), and a tour of the islands of the Venetian lagoon for 20€ ($28).

SHOPPING

Venetian glass and lace are known throughout the world. However, selecting quality products in either craft requires a shrewd eye. Some of the glassware hawked isn't worth the cost of shipping it home. Yet other pieces represent some of the world's finest artistic and ornamental glass. Murano is the island famous for its handmade glass. However, you can find little glass-animal souvenirs in shops all over Venice.

For lace, head out to Burano, where women put in painstaking hours to produce some of the finest lace in the world.

SHOPPING STROLLS

All the main shopping streets, even the side streets, are touristy and overrun. The greatest concentration of shops is around **Piazza San Marco** and the **Rialto Bridge.** Prices are much higher at San Marco, but the quality of merchandise is also higher.

There are two major shopping strolls in Venice. First, from **Piazza San Marco** you can stroll west toward spacious **Campo Morosini.** You just follow one shop-lined street all the way to its end (although the name will change several times). Begin at Salizzada San Moisè, which becomes Via 22 Marzo and then Calle delle Ostreghe before it opens onto Campo Santa Maria Zobenigo. The street then narrows and changes to Calle Zaguri before widening into Campo San Maurizio, finally becoming Calle Piovan before reaching Campo Morosini. Detour down Calle Vallaressa, between San Moisè and the Grand Canal; this is one of the major shopping arteries with some of the biggest designer names in the business.

The other great shopping stroll wanders from Piazza San Marco to the Rialto in a succession of streets collectively known as the **Mercerie.** It's virtually impossible to get lost because each street name is preceded by the word *merceria*. Many commercial places, mainly shops, line the Mercerie before it reaches the Rialto, which then explodes into one vast shopping emporium.

SOME SHOPS WORTH A LOOK

Founded in 1913, **Valese Fonditore** ★★, Calle Fiubera, San Marco 793 (✆ **041-5227282**), serves as a showcase for one of the most famous of the several foundries with headquarters in Venice. Many of the brass copies of 18th-century chandeliers produced by this company grace some fine homes in the United States. A pair of medium-size brass sea horses like those that grace the sides of many of the gondolas, each about .25m (11 in.) tall, begins at 150€ ($210).

The best place to buy Carnevale masks is **Mondonovo,** Rio Terrà Canal, Dorsoduro 3063 (✆ **041-5287344**), where talented artisans labor to produce copies of both traditional and more modern masks. Prices range from 31€ ($43) for a fairly basic mask to 1,530€ ($2,142) for something display quality.

The art glass sold by **Venini** ★★★, Piazzetta Leoncini, San Marco 314 (✆ **041-5224045**), has caught the attention of collectors from all over the world. Its best-known glass has a distinctive swirl pattern in several colors, called a *venature.* Much of this shop's refined-quality glass is very fragile, but they learned long ago how to ship it anywhere safely. To visit the furnace, call ✆ **041-2737211.**

For serious lace purchases, **Jesurum** ★★★, Fondamenta della Sensa, Cannaregio 3219 (✆ **041-5242540**), is tops. You'll find Venetian handmade or machine-made lace and embroidery on table, bed, and bath linens, as well as hand-printed swimsuits. Prices are high, but quality and originality are guaranteed and special orders are accepted. Staff members insist that everything sold is made in or around Venice in traditional patterns.

VENICE AFTER DARK

For such a fabled city, Venice's nightlife is pretty meager. The best guide to what's happening is **"Un Ospite di Venezia,"** a free pamphlet (part in English, part in Italian) distributed by the tourist office every 15 days. It lists any music and opera or theatrical presentation, along with art exhibits and local special events.

THE PERFORMING ARTS

Teatro La Fenice ★★★ (✆ **041-786511;** www.teatrolafenice.it), reopened in 2004 after a devastating fire. New seating gives the renovated hall a total of 1,076 seats, and the stage curtain was donated by Italian fashion designer Laura Biagiotti. Tickets and subscriptions can be purchased in person from the following **Ve.La** box offices in

Venice: **Piazzale Roma; Ferrovia Scalzi,** both of which are open daily 9:30am to 6:30pm. For further information call **Ve.La** (✆ **041-2424**).

The **Teatro Goldoni** ★, Calle Goldoni, near Campo San Luca, San Marco 4650B (✆ **041-2402011**), honors Carlo Goldoni (1707–93), the most prolific and one of the best of the Italian playwrights. The theater presents a changing repertoire of productions, often plays in Italian but musical presentations as well. The box office is open Monday to Saturday 10am to 1pm and 4:30 to 7pm, and tickets cost 14€ to 25€ ($20–$35).

Since May 2007 and ongoing for an exclusive five-season engagement, Johann Strauss' *Eine Nacht in Venedig* (A Night in Venice) has been performed as the sun sets and the stars come out at **Teatro Verde** on the island of San Giorgio Maggiore in Venice. Ticket prices begin at 59€ ($80). Guests can purchase tickets for this historical event online at www.teatro-verde.de, or by calling ✆ **011-41900800800**.

CAFES

All the cafes on Piazza San Marco offer a simply magical setting, several with full orchestras playing in the background. But you'll pay shockingly high prices (plus a hefty music charge) to enjoy a drink or a snack while you soak in the atmosphere. Prepare yourself for it, and splurge on a beer, a cappuccino, or an ice cream, anyway. It'll be the most memorable 15€ to 20€ ($21–$28) (that's *per person*) that you'll drop on your trip.

Venice's most famous spot is **Caffè Florian** ★★★, Piazza San Marco, San Marco 56–59 (✆ **041-5205641**), built in 1720 and elaborately decorated with red banquettes, elaborate murals under glass, and Art Nouveau lighting. The hippest cafe in Venice today is funky little **Cip's** ★, on Isola della Giudecca within the Cipriani Hotel (✆ **041-5207744,** Vaporetto: Zittelle). Pronounced *chips* (as in potato), this cafe with its summer terrace frames one of the grandest views of Piazza San Marco.

BARS & DANCE CLUBS

Want more in the way of nightlife? All right, but be warned: The Venetian bar owners might sock it to you when they present the bill.

The most famous of all the watering holes of Ernest Hemingway is **Harry's Bar,** Calle Vallaresso, San Marco 1323 (✆ **041-5285777**). Harry's is known for inventing its own drinks and exporting them around the world, and it's said that carpaccio, the delicate raw-beef dish, was invented here.

Near the Accademia, **Il Piccolo Mondo,** Calle Contarini Corfu, Dorsoduro 1056A (✆ **041-5200371**), is open during the day but comes alive with dance music at night. The crowd is often young. It's open daily 10pm to 4am, but the action actually doesn't begin until after midnight. Cover, including the first drink, is 10€ ($14) Thursday and Friday, and 15€ ($21) Saturday.

DAY TRIPS FROM VENICE

MURANO ★★ For centuries, glass blowers on the island of Murano have turned out those fantastic chandeliers that Victorian ladies used to prize so highly. They also produce heavily ornamented glasses so ruby red or so indigo blue that you can't tell whether you're drinking blackberry juice or pure-grain alcohol. Happily, the glass blowers are still plying their trade, although increasing competition (notably from Sweden) has compelled a greater degree of sophistication in design.

Murano remains the chief expedition from Venice, but it's not the most beautiful nearby island. (Burano and Torcello are far more attractive.)

You can combine a tour of Murano with a trip along the lagoon. To reach Murano, take **vaporetto no. 5 or 13** at Riva degli Schiavoni, a short walk from Piazzetta San Marco. The boat docks at the landing platform at Murano where the first furnace awaits conveniently. It's best to go Monday to Friday 10am to noon if you want to see some glass-blowing action.

BURANO ★★ Burano became world famous as a center of lace making, a craft that reached its pinnacle in the 18th century. The visitor who can spare a morning to visit this island will be rewarded with a charming fishing village far removed in spirit from the grandeur of Venice but only half an hour away by ferry. **Boats** leave from Fondamente Nuove, overlooking the Venetian graveyard (which is well worth the trip all on its own). To reach Fondamente Nuove, take **vaporetto no. 52** from Riva degli Schiavoni. Once at Burano, you'll discover that the houses of the islanders come in varied colors: sienna, robin's egg or cobalt blue, barn red, butterscotch, and grass green.

Check out the **Scuola di Merletti di Burano,** "Museo del Merletto," Piazza Galuppi 187 (✆ **041-730034**), in the center of the village at Piazza Baldassare Galuppi. This school of lace was founded in 1872 as part of a movement aimed at restoring the age-old craft that had earlier declined.

After visiting the lace school, walk across the square to the **Duomo** and its leaning **campanile** (inside, look for the *Crucifixion,* by Tiepolo). See it while you can, because the bell tower is leaning so precariously that it looks as if it might topple at any moment.

TORCELLO Of all the islands of the lagoon, Torcello, the so-called Mother of Venice, offers the most charm. If Burano is behind the times, Torcello is positively antediluvian. You can stroll across a grassy meadow, traverse an ancient stone bridge, and step back into that time when the Venetians first fled from invading barbarians to create a city of Neptune in the lagoon. To reach Torcello, take **vaporetto LN** from Fondamenta Nuova on Murano. The trip takes about 45 minutes, and the cathedral and the locanda are both reached after a leisurely 12-to 15-minute walk along the canal (though the gondoliers are notorious for trying to tell you otherwise).

Cattedrale di Torcello, also called **Santa Maria Assunta Isola di Torcello** ★ (✆ **041-2960630**), was founded in A.D. 639 and subsequently rebuilt. It stands in a lonely grassy meadow beside an 11th-century campanile. Most visit to see the church's Byzantine mosaics. It's open daily: March to October 10:30am to 6pm (to 5pm Nov–Feb). Admission is 3€ ($4.20).

13

The Netherlands

by George McDonald

Like an Atlantis in reverse, Holland has emerged from the sea. Much of the country was once underwater. As the centuries rolled past, the land was recovered and stitched together through a combination of Dutch ingenuity and hard work. The result: a green-and-silver Mondrian of a country, with nearly half its land and two-thirds of its 16 million people below sea level.

The principal highlight of the Netherlands—the city of Amsterdam—happens also to be one of the highlights of the entire world. That's why it's as much a fixture on any well-conceived European tour as London, Paris, and Rome. From Amsterdam you can make easy day trips to historic Haarlem; brash Zandvoort on the North Sea coast; the pretty conservation village of Zaanse Schans; and the old IJsselmeer lakeside villages of Volendam and Marken.

Also, you should make time for Delft, an ancient seat of Dutch royalty, hometown of Dutch master Vermeer, and famous for its blue-and-white porcelain; and for Leiden, known for its associations with the Pilgrim Fathers.

1 Amsterdam

Easygoing and prosperous, the Dutch capital is the natural focus of a visit to the Netherlands. The historic center—a graceful cityscape of waterways, bridges, and venerable town houses—recalls Amsterdam's 17th-century golden age as the command post of a vast trading network and colonial empire, when wealthy merchants constructed gabled residences along neatly laid-out canals.

A delicious irony is that some of the placid old structures now host brothels, smoke shops, and extravagant nightlife. The city's inhabitants, heirs to a live-and-let-live attitude, which is based on pragmatism as much as a long history of tolerance, aim to control what they cannot effectively outlaw. They permit licensed prostitution in the Rosse Buurt (Red-Light District) and the sale of hashish and marijuana in designated "coffee shops." Tolerance may have been a long-term tradition, but recent years have seen growing tensions between some Dutch and some members of ethnic minorities in Amsterdam, where migrants and their descendants and foreign residents are due to outnumber native locals by 2010. And both the coffee shops and the red-light haunts have been under pressure as the city works to improve its quality of life and reduce the negative values in its portfolio.

In any case, don't think Amsterdammers drift around town in a drug-induced haze. They are too busy zipping around on bikes, in-line skating through Vondelpark, consuming arrays of ethnic dishes, or simply watching the parade of street life from a sidewalk cafe. Small entrepreneurs have revitalized old neighborhoods like the Jordaan, turning distinctive houses into offbeat stores and bustling cafes, hotels, and restaurants. Meantime, the city government and big entrepreneurs—along with some once small ones that are now all grown up—have been redeveloping the old harbor waterfront along the IJ waterway in a shiny, modern style that's a long way from the spirit of Old Amsterdam.

Between dips into Amsterdam's artistic and historical treasures, be sure to take time out to absorb the freewheeling spirit of Europe's most vibrant city.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **By Plane** If you fly into Amsterdam, you arrive at the efficient, single-terminal **Amsterdam Airport Schiphol** (✆ **0900/0141** from inside Holland, or 31-20/794-0800 from outside Holland; www.schiphol.nl), 13km (8 miles) southwest of the center city. You exit from Customs into Schiphol Plaza, a combined arrivals hall and mall, where there are currency-exchange offices, ATMs, bars, restaurants, and stores. You can get questions answered and make last-minute hotel reservations at the **Holland Tourist Information** desk in Arrivals Hall 2, open daily from 7am to 10pm.

From Schiphol Station, a floor below Schiphol Plaza, **trains** connect the airport with Amsterdam's Centraal Station. Frequency ranges from six trains an hour at peak times to one an hour at night. The fare is 3.80€ ($5.50) one-way in second class and 6.40€ ($9.30) in first class, and the trip takes 15 to 20 minutes.

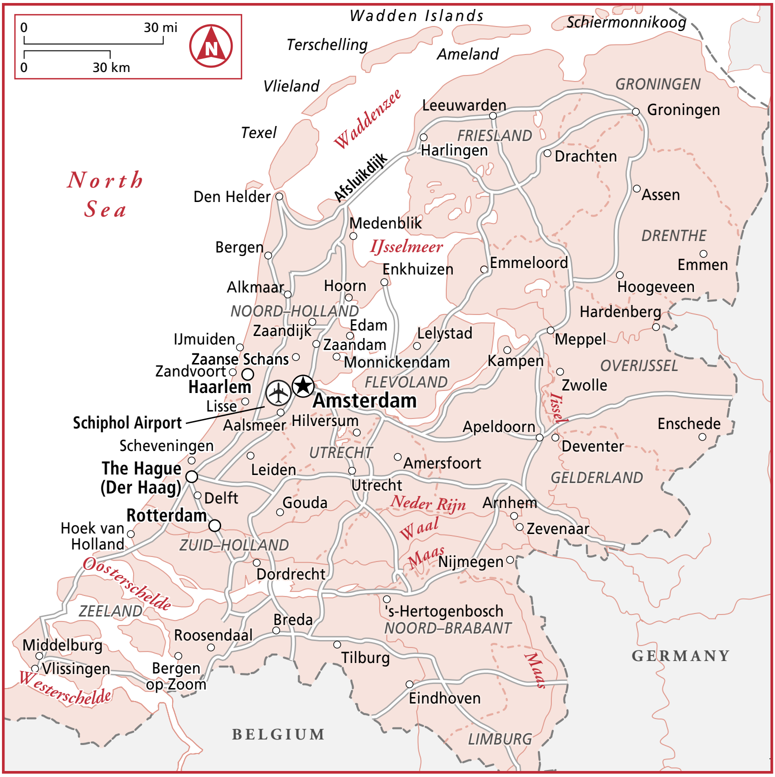
The **Connexxion Schiphol Hotel Shuttle** (✆ **038/339-4741**) runs daily every 10 to 30 minutes from 6am to 9pm, between the airport and around 100 Amsterdam hotels. Buy tickets from the Connexxion desk inside Schiphol Plaza or onboard from the driver. The fare is 12€ ($17) one-way and 19€ ($28) round-trip, 6€ ($8.70) and 8.75€ ($13), respectively, for children ages 4 to 14, and free for children under 4). It takes only 15 minutes to the Hilton from the airport, but almost an hour to the NH Barbizon Palace; going the opposite direction, the times are reversed.

You find **taxi** stands in front of Schiphol Plaza. All taxis from the airport are metered. Expect to pay around 40€ ($58) to the center city.

By Train Whether you arrive by high-speed international train from Brussels, Paris, or Frankfurt, by ordinary international train, or by a train from elsewhere in the Netherlands, you'll likely find yourself deposited at **Centraal Station.** For information on trains (and other public transportation) in the Netherlands, call ✆ **0900/9292** or go to www.9292ov.nl. For international trains, call ✆ **0900/9296.** In addition to two tourist information desks, one inside and one outside (see below), you'll find 24-hour currency exchange, a host of restaurants and stores, and a rail information office where seat reservations can be made.

The station, an 1889 Dutch neo-Renaissance architectural monument, is more or less of a confusing construction site. A new Metro station, to be the hub of the Noord-Zuid (North-South) line, due to enter service in 2011, is being dug out and fitted out at the front; a new main entrance for the rail station and all-around improved passenger facilities are being tackled at the same time; and the waterfront zone at the rear is being completely revamped.

When you emerge at the front of the station, you will find a taxi stand; a bunch of stops for trams (streetcars) and buses; the entrance to the Metro station; and docks for tour boats, the Water Taxi, the Canal Bus, and the Museum Boat. At the rear of the station are docks for the ferryboats that shuttle passengers across the city's fast-developing waterfront.



The Netherlands

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IJsselmeer
Bergen
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Meppel
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Gouda
Rotterdam
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BELGIUM
LIMBURG

By Bus Buses from London, Paris, Brussels, and other cities, operated by **Eurolines** (✆ **020/560-8788;** www.eurolines.com), arrive at the bus station adjoining Amstel rail station (Metro: Amstel) in the south of the city.

By Car European expressways E19, E35, E231, and E22 converge on Amsterdam from France and Belgium to the south and from Germany to the north and east.

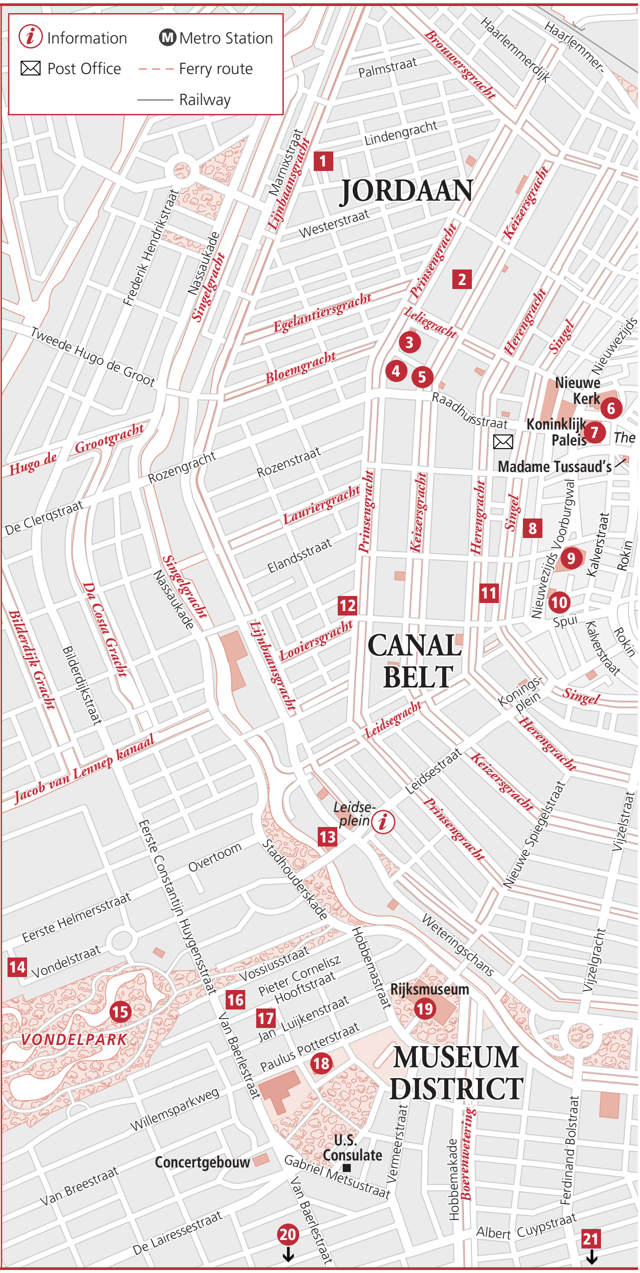
VISITOR INFORMATION **VVV Amsterdam,** on Platform 2B in Centraal Station (✆ **0900/400-4040** Mon–Fri 9am–5pm, or 31-20/201-8800 from outside the Netherlands; fax 020/201-8850; www.amsterdamtourist.nl; tram no. 1, 2, 4, 5, 9, 13, 16, 17, 24, 25, or 26), is open daily from 11am to 7pm. A second office, at Stationsplein 10 just in front of Centraal Station, is open Monday to Saturday from 9am to 6pm, and Sunday from 9am to 5pm. A VVV information center in a kiosk facing Stadhouderskade 1 (tram no. 1, 2, 5, 7, or 10) is open Sunday to Friday from 9:30am to 5:30pm, and Saturday from 9:30am to 6:30pm. All three offices provide maps, brochures, and details about the city, make last-minute hotel reservations, book tours, and sell theater and concert tickets.

Websites In addition to VVV Amsterdam's site (see above), the website of the **Netherlands Board of Tourism & Conventions** (**www.visitholland.com**) has useful advice for upcoming events, bicycling, and culture—and it even lets you know when

Amsterdam

ATTRACTIONS ●	
Amsterdamse Bos	**20**
Amsterdams Historisch Museum	**9**
Anne Frankhuis	**3**
Artis	**38**
Begijnhof	**10**
Homomonument	**5**
Hortus Botanicus	**37**
Joods Historisch Museum	**36**
Koninklijk Paleis	**7**
Museum Amstelkring	**26**
Museum Het Rembrandthuis	**29**
Museum Van Loon	**32**
Museum Willet-Holthuysen	**35**
Nieuwe Kerk	**6**
Oude Kerk	**27**
Rijksmuseum De Meesterwerken	**19**
Stedelijk Museum CS	**24**
Tropenmuseum	**39**
Van Gogh Museum	**18**
Vondelpark	**15**
Westerkerk	**4**

ACCOMMODATIONS ■	
Acacia	**1**
Ambassade	**11**
Amstel Botel	**23**
Amsterdam American	**13**
Amsterdam Wiechmann	**12**
Bilderberg Hotel Jan Luyken	**17**
Bicycle Hotel Amsterdam	**21**
Canal House	**2**
De Filosoof	**14**
Estheréa	**8**
Hotel de l'Europe	**30**
Lloyd Hotel	**25**
NH Schiller	**31**
Piet Hein	**16**
Prinsenhof	**34**
Seven Bridges	**33**
Sint-Nicolaas	**22**
The Grand Amsterdam Sofitel Demeure	**28**



Information
Metro Station
Post Office
Ferry route
Railway
JORDAAN
CANAL BELT
MUSEUM DISTRICT
VONDELPARK
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Haarlemmerdijk
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Palmstraat
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Marnixstraat
Lijnbaansgracht
Westerstraat
Keizersgracht
Prinsengracht
Frederik Hendrikstraat
Nassaukade
Singelgracht
Egelantiersgracht
Leliegracht
Herengracht
Singel
Nieuwezijds
Bloemgracht
Tweede Hugo de Groot
Raadhuisstraat
Nieuwe Kerk
Koninklijk Paleis
The
Madame Tussaud's
Hugo de Grootgracht
Rozengracht
Rozenstraat
De Clerqstraat
Lauriergracht
Elandsstraat
Voorburgwal
Kalverstraat
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Bilderdijk Gracht
Bilderdijkstraat
Looiersgracht
Leidsegracht
Koningsplein
Jacob van Lennep kanaal
Leidsestraat
Leidseplein
Eerste Constantijn Huygensstraat
Overtoom
Stadhouderskade
Nieuwe Spiegelstraat
Vijzelstraat
Eerste Helmersstraat
Vondelstraat
Weteringschans
Vijzelgracht
Hobbemastraat
Vossiusstraat
Pieter Cornelisz Hooftstraat
Jan Luijkenstraat
Rijksmuseum
Van Baerlestraat
Paulus Potterstraat
Willemsparkweg
Concertgebouw
U.S. Consulate
Gabriel Metsustraat
Vermeerstraat
Hobbemakade
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Ferdinand Bolstraat
Van Breestraat
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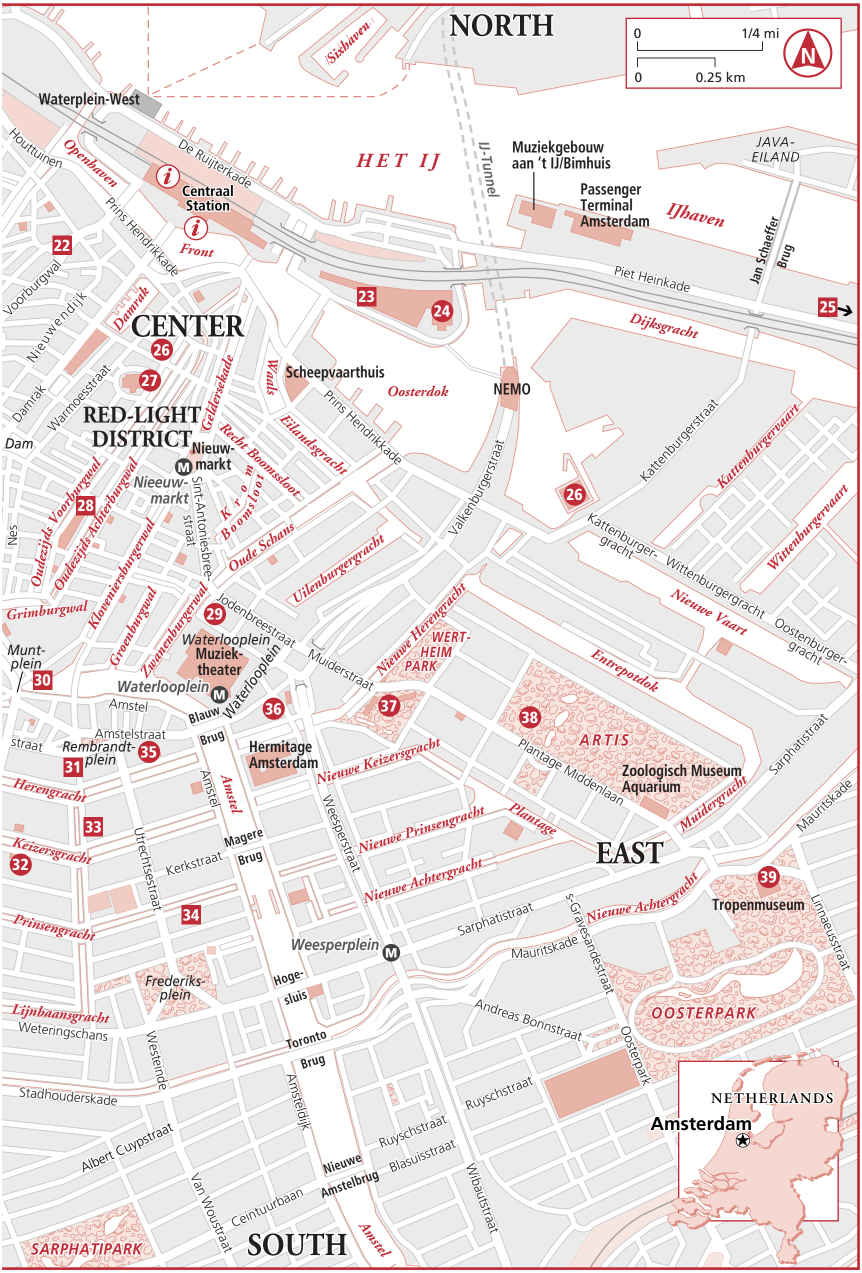
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Passenger Terminal Amsterdam
IJhaven
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Jan Schaeffer Brug
Piet Heinkade
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Prins Hendrikkade
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Voorburgwal
Nieuwendijk
Damrak
CENTER
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Dijksgracht
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Damrak
Warmoesstraat
Waals
Scheepvaarthuis
Oosterdok
NEMO
RED-LIGHT DISTRICT
Geldersekade
Dam
Nieuw-markt
Recht Boomssloot
Eilandsgracht
Prins Hendrikkade
Kattenburgerstraat
Kattenburgervaart
Nieeuw-markt
Kromboomsloot
Sint-Antoniesbree-straat
Valkenburgerstraat
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Wittenburgervaart
Oudezijds Voorburgwal
Oudezijds Achterburgwal
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Oude Schans
Kattenburger-gracht
Wittenburgergracht
Kloveniersburgwal
Uilenburgergracht
Grimburgwal
Nieuwe Vaart
Oostenburger-gracht
Groenburgwal
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Jodenbreestraat
Zwanenburgwal
Nieuwe Herengracht
WERT-HEIM PARK
Munt-plein
Waterlooplein Muziek-theater
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Waterlooplein
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Amstel
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Blauw
ARTIS
Amstelstraat
Brug
Hermitage Amsterdam
Plantage Middenlaan
Sarphatistraat
straat
Rembrandt-plein
35
Nieuwe Keizersgracht
Zoologisch Museum Aquarium
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Amstel
Amstel
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Mauritskade
Herengracht
Muidergracht
Plantage
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Nieuwe Prinsengracht
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Keizersgracht
Brug
Kerkstraat
Utrechtsestraat
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Nieuwe Achtergracht
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Tropenmuseum
's-Gravesandestraat
Nieuwe Achtergracht
34
Sarphatistraat
Prinsengracht
Weesperplein
Mauritskade
Linnaeusstraat
Frederiks-plein
Hoge-sluis
Lijnbaansgracht
Andreas Bonnstraat
OOSTERPARK
Weteringschans
Toronto
Oosterpark
Westeinde
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Stadhouderskade
Amsteldijk
Ruyschstraat
NETHERLANDS
Amsterdam
Ruyschstraat
Albert Cuypstraat
Nieuwe
Blasiusstraat
Amstelbrug
Wibautstraat
Van Woustraat
Ceintuurbaan
Amstel
SARPHATIPARK
SOUTH

Native Behavior

- Look for someplace *gezellig,* and treasure it. *Gezelligheid* (the state of being *gezellig*) underlines everyday Dutch life. It's an imprecise, enigmatic, untranslatable-in-a-single-word concept that defines a mood and an attitude, the special *something* that makes a place comfortable, congenial, cozy, familiar, friendly, intimate, memorable, tolerant, warm, and welcoming. Dutch, in fact. You find it all over—in a "brown" cafe; in a candlelit restaurant with a view of a softly illuminated canal; even onboard a packed-to-bursting tram where everyone sees the funny side of the situation.
- The bicycle might have been invented with Amsterdam in mind, and there are reckoned to be anywhere from 600,000 and up bikes in the city. To get close to the Amsterdam experience, you positively need to get into the saddle and ride. It can take a while to get used to pedaling smoothly and safely through the whirl of trams, cars, buses, trucks, fellow bikers, and pedestrians, particularly if you're on a typically ancient, one-speed, much-battered *stadfiets* (city bike), also known as an *omafiets* (grandmother bike)—the only kind that makes economic sense here, since anything fancier will attract a crowd of people wanting to steal it.
- Not every local government in the Netherlands is as liberal minded as Amsterdam when it comes to smoking pot—and Amsterdam is not so tolerant that you should just light up on the street, in cafes, and on trams and trains (though enough dopey people do).

the tulips bloom. NBTC's Amsterdam's website, **www.visitamsterdam.nl**, lays out the details on sightseeing, walking routes, wining and dining, shopping for antiques, and current events. To book a hotel online, visit **www.go-amsterdam.org**. One of the best virtual tours on the Net is **www.channels.nl**—the images are clear, you can direct your own tour, and you can chat with others about Amsterdam. Visitors provide their impressions of restaurants, hotels, museums, and hash houses. At **www.amsterdam hotspots.nl**, they really do mean "hot." Here are *the* places to fill your nights, from eating and drinking to where to toke, what the top gay bars are, and where to see those famous working girls on display behind picture windows. Good eating-out info is available from **www.dinner-in-amsterdam.nl**.

CITY LAYOUT Although Amsterdam center is small enough that residents think of it as a village, it can be one confusing village until you get the hang of it. A map like the handy Amsterdam City Map, available from VVV tourist offices for 2€ ($2.90), is essential.

When you step out of Centraal Station's main entrance, you're facing south toward the center. From here the **Old City** is laid out along five concentric semicircular canals: **Singel, Herengracht, Keizersgracht, Prinsengracht,** and **Singelgracht** (*gracht* means "canal"). Along this necklace of man-made waterways, wealthy 17th-century merchants built their elegant homes, most of which are still standing. Within these canals are many smaller canals and connecting streets, radiating from the center.

Damrak, a heavily touristed street, leads from Centraal Station to the **Dam,** once the location of the original dam on the Amstel River that gave the city its name and now a large open square on which stands the Royal Palace. To the left is the (in)famous **Red-Light District,** where government-licensed prostitutes sit in their windows, waiting for customers. A block to the right of Damrak is **Nieuwendijk** (which becomes **Kalverstraat** when it crosses the Dam), a pedestrianized shopping street. If you follow Kalverstraat to the end, you'll be at **Muntplein** (*plein* means "square"), identified by the old Mint Tower. Cross Singel and continue in the same direction to reach **Rembrandtplein,** one of the main nightlife areas. Beyond Rembrandtplein is **Waterlooplein,** which hosts the Muziektheater and a great flea market.

At the heart of another important nightlife zone is **Leidseplein,** on Singelgracht. Leidseplein is at the end of Leidsestraat, a pedestrians-only shopping street (but watch out for the trams). **Museumplein,** where you find Amsterdam's three most famous museums—the Rijksmuseum, Van Gogh Museum, and Stedelijk Museum—is a short walk along Singelgracht from Leidseplein (most of the Rijksmuseum is currently closed for refurbishment, and the Stedelijk Museum has been rehoused temporarily near Centraal Station).

The **Jordaan,** an old neighborhood now speckled with inexpensive restaurants, unusual stores, and small galleries, lies between Prinsengracht, Brouwersgracht, Singelgracht, and Rozengracht. Turn right off Damrak at any point between Centraal Station and the Dam, and when you cross Prinsengracht, you're in the Jordaan.

Back at Centraal Station, at the rear and on both sides of the station, Amsterdam's **Waterfront** along the IJ channel has been opening up steadily in recent years and will continue to do so in future. New residential, business, cultural, nightlife, and entertainment assets have been developed, all of them marked either by the latest thing in modern architecture, or by old harbor installations that have been refurbished and put to new uses. Ferries, fast trams, and buses get you around these far-flung districts.

GETTING AROUND In looking at a map of Amsterdam, you might think the city is too large to explore by foot. This isn't true: It's possible to see almost every important sight in the Old City on a 4-hour walk.

By Tram, Bus & Metro Public transportation begins around 6am and the regular service ends around midnight. After that, there are infrequent night buses. Riding the blue-gray **trams** (streetcars) is the most convenient means of getting around; they're fast, cheap, and fun, and provide a great view of the sights. Out of 16 tram routes in the city, 11 begin and end at Centraal Station (and another one passes through). An extensive **bus** network complements the trams and reaches to many points the trams don't cover.

The city's four **Metro** (subway) lines—50, 51, 53, and 54—don't serve most areas you'll likely want to visit. They're used mainly to get people to and from the suburbs, but from Centraal Station you can use Metro trains to reach both Nieuwmarkt and Waterlooplein in the central zone.

Maps showing the city's transit network are posted at most tram/bus shelters and all Metro stations. A free transit map is available from VVV tourist offices and from the **GVB Amsterdam Tickets & Info** office (**✆ 0900/9292**) on Stationsplein in front of Centraal Station. You can buy transit cards from this office, from sales points and automats at Metro and train stations, and from some bus and tram drivers and conductors.

By the start of 2009, all public transportation in the Netherlands should be using an electronic card called the **OV-chipkaart** in place of the old tickets. Three main types of OV-chipkaart are available: a reloadable "personal" card that can be used only by its pictured owner; a reloadable "anonymous" card that can be used by anyone; and nonreloadable "throwaway" cards. The personal and anonymous cards, both valid for 5 years, cost 7.50€ ($11) and can be loaded and reloaded with up to 30€ ($44). Throwaway cards, which are likely to be the card of choice for short-term visitors, cost 2.50€ ($3.65) for one ride, 4.80€ ($6.95) for two rides, and 8€ ($12) for four rides. Reduced-rate cards are available for seniors and children. Electronic readers automatically deduct the correct fare, just hold your card up against the reader at both the start and the end of the ride.

Keep in mind that inspectors, sometimes undercover, may demand to see your card at any time. If you haven't paid the proper fare, you'll be fined 37€ ($54) on the spot plus the fare for the ride.

By Bicycle Follow the Dutch example and pedal. A bike is one of the best ways of getting around in this flat city where too many cars clog the narrow streets. You see children barely old enough to walk, their great-grandparents, and even businesswomen in high heels pedaling through the city in any kind of weather. Sunday, when the city is quiet, is a good day to pedal through the parks and to practice riding on cobblestones and dealing with trams before venturing into a rush-hour fracas.

Warning: Watch out for unpredictable car drivers and tourists who are unused to dealing with bicycles *en masse,* and always lock your bike and its front wheel to something fixed and solid—theft is common.

Rental rates typically begin around 9€ ($13) a day or 30€ ($44) a week, for a basic "city bike," and go up from there for fancier pair of wheels; add 50% for theft insurance; a deposit of 50€ ($73) is generally required. You can rent bikes from Centraal Station when you arrive, and from many rental stores, all of which have similar rates. **MacBike** (✆ **020/620-0985**) rents a range of bikes, including tandems and six-speed touring bikes; it has a branch at Centraal Station (tram no. 1, 2, 4, 5, 9, 13, 16, 17, 24, 25, or 26); Mr. Visserplein 2 (tram no. 4, 9, or 14), close to the Muziektheater; and Weteringschans 2 (tram no. 1, 2, 5, 7, or 10), at Leidseplein. **Damstraat Rent-a-Bike** is at Damstraat 20–22 (✆ **020/625-5029;** tram no. 4, 9, 14, 16, 24, or 25), close to the Dam.

By Taxi Officially, you can't simply hail a cab from the street, but taxis will often stop if you do. You can get a taxi in front of any major hotel and at Centraal Station, the Dam, Leidseplein, Rembrandtplein, and other strategically located taxi stands sprinkled around town. To phone for a cab, call (✆ **020/677-7777**). Taxis are metered. Fares, which include a service charge, begin at 7.50€ ($11) when the meter starts and after the second kilometer run up at 2.20€ ($3.20) a kilometer, or 3.55€ ($5.70) a mile; after 25km at 1.75€ ($2.55) a kilometer, or 2.80€ ($4.05) a mile; and after 50km at 1.45€ ($2.10) a kilometer, or 2.35€ ($3.40) a mile.

By Boat The **City(S)hopper/Museumboot**—*"boot"* is pronounced just like "boat"—(✆ **020/530-1090;** www.lovers.nl) operates canal buses near virtually all Amsterdam's museums and attractions. The boats leave from in front of Centraal Station every 30 to 45 minutes daily from 10am to 5pm. Tickets are available at the Lovers Canal Cruises counter near the dock. A day ticket (valid for 24 hr.) is 17€ ($25) for adults, 13€ ($19) for children ages 4 to 12, and free for children 3 and under. The ticket allows reduced admission to most of the museums and attractions on the route.

The **Canal Bus** (✆ **020/623-9886;** www.canal.nl) boats operate daily from 10am to around 6:30pm on three fixed routes—Green, Red, and Blue—that connect important museums and shopping and entertainment districts, with two buses an hour at peak times. A day pass, valid until noon the next day and including discounted admission to some museums and attractions, is 18€ ($26) for adults and 12€ ($17) for children ages 4 to 12, and free for children 3 and under.

A water taxi for between one and eight passengers, from a dock outside Centraal Station, costs 60€ ($87) per boat per for the first half hour, and 40€ ($58) for each subsequent half hour. Arrangements for up to 44 passengers are available. If you feel like a splurge, call **VIP Watertaxi Amsterdam** (✆ **020/535-6363;** www.water-taxi.nl).

Note: Few if any Amsterdammers use any of these services. They are not designed as water transit for locals, but as a different way for visitors to get around.

By Car Don't drive in Amsterdam. The city is a jumble of one-way streets, narrow bridges, and trams and cyclists darting every which way. Tough measures are in place to make driving as difficult as possible. No-parking zones are rigorously enforced and the limited parking spaces are expensive. Break the parking rules and your car is sure to be clamped or towed, and can only be recovered with the loss of considerable time and money. As if all that isn't bad enough, car break-ins are common.

Outside the city, driving is a different story and you may want to rent a car for an excursion outside Amsterdam. All the top international firms have desks at Schiphol Airport and one or more rental locations in the city: **Avis** (✆ **0800/235-284**); **Budget** (✆ **0900/1576**); **Europcar** (✆ **0900/0540**); and **Hertz** (✆ **0900/2354-2789**). Rates begin at around 50€ ($73) a day for a no-frills, subcompact auto with a stick shift and unlimited mileage. You pay as much as 200€ ($290) a day for a fully equipped luxury car like a BMW.

Remember: You get the best deal if you arrange the rental before leaving home.

FAST FACTS: Amsterdam

American Express The office at Amsteldijk 166 (✆ **020/504-8504;** tram no. 25) is open Monday to Friday from 9am to 6pm.

Business Hours **Banks** are open Monday to Friday from 9am to 4 or 5pm, and some to 7pm on Thursday. Hours for **offices** are Monday to Friday from 9 or 10am to 4 or 5pm. Regular **shopping** hours are Monday from 10 or 11am to 6pm; Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday from 9am to 6pm; Thursday from 9am to 9pm; and Saturday from 9am to 5pm. Some stores are open Sunday from noon to 5pm.

Currency The Netherlands uses the **euro** (€). At press time, 1€ = US$1.45.

Currency Exchange The best options for changing money are the VVV tourist offices, and banks. A fair-dealing *bureau de change* is **GWK Travelex** (✆ **0900/0566**), which has multiple exchanges in the city, including those at Centraal Station; Damrak 1–5 (tram no. 4, 9, 14, 16, 24, 25, or 26); Dam 23–25 (tram no. 4, 9, 14, 16, 24, or 25); and Leidseplein 31A (tram no. 1, 2, 5, 7, or 10).

Some centrally located bank branches with **automated teller machines (ATMs)** are **ABN-AMRO Bank,** Dam 2 (tram no. 4, 9, 14, 16, 24, or 25), and at

Leidsestraat 1 (tram no. 1, 2, or 5); **Rabobank,** Dam 16 (tram no. 4, 9, 14, 16, 24, or 25); and **Fortis Bank,** Singel 548 (tram no. 4, 9, 14, 16, 24, or 25).

Doctors & Dentists Call the **Central Doctors Service** (✆ **020/592-3434**).

Drugstores & Pharmacies For both prescription and nonprescription medicines, go to an *apotheek* (pharmacy). Regular pharmacy hours are Monday to Saturday 9am to 5:30pm. Try **Dam Apotheek,** Damstraat 2 (✆ **020/624-4331;** tram no. 4, 9, 14, 16, 24, or 25). All pharmacies post locations of nearby all-night and Sunday pharmacies on the door.

Embassies & Consulates **U.S. Consulate:** Museumplein 19 (✆ **020/575-5309;** http://netherlands.usembassy.gov; tram no. 3, 5, 12, or 16), open for personal visits Monday to Friday from 8:30 to 11:30am, and for assistance by phone from 1:30 to 4:30pm; **U.K. Consulate:** Koningslaan 44 (✆ **020/676-4343;** www.britain.nl; tram no. 2), open for passport inquiries Monday to Friday from 8:30am to 1:30pm, and for other business by appointment.

Several embassies are in The Hague (Den Haag), including the **U.S.** (Lange Voorhout 102; ✆ **070/310-2209;** http://netherlands.usembassy.gov); **Canada** (Sophialaan 7; ✆ **070/311-1600;** www.canada.nl); **U.K.** (Lange Voorhout 10; ✆ **070/427-0427;** www.britain.nl); **Ireland** (Dr. Kuyperstraat 9; ✆ **070/363-0993;** www.irishembassy.nl); **Australia** (Carnegielaan 4; ✆ **070/310-8200;** www.australian-embassy.nl); and **New Zealand** (Carnegielaan 10; ✆ **070/346-9324;** www.nzembassy.com).

Emergencies For police assistance, an ambulance, or the fire department, call ✆ **112.**

Hospitals Two hospitals with emergency services are the **Onze-Lieve-Vrouwe Gasthuis,** Oosterpark 9 (✆ **020/599-9111;** www.olvg.nl; tram no. 3, 7, or 10), in Amsterdam Oost; and the giant **Academisch Medisch Centrum (AMC),** Meibergdreef 9 (✆ **020/566-9111;** www.amc.uva.nl; Metro: Holendrecht), in Amsterdam Zuidoost.

Internet Access In the center, **easyInternetcafe,** Damrak 33 (www.easyinternetcafe.com; tram no. 4, 9, 14, 16, 24, or 25), is open daily from 9am to 10pm.

Mail Most **TNT Post** offices are open Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm. The office at Singel 256, at the corner of Raadhuisstraat (tram no. 13, 14, or 17), is open Monday to Friday from 7:30am to 6:30pm, and Saturday from 9am to noon.

Police In an emergency, call the *politie* (police) on ✆ **112.** In nonurgent situations, visit a district police office; a centrally located one is at Lijnbaansgracht 219 (✆ **0900/8844;** tram no. 1, 2, 5, 7, or 10), just off Leidseplein.

Safety Random violent crime is not common in Amsterdam, though it does happen. Nonviolent crimes like pickpocketing and theft from cars are common; tourists in particular are targets. Muggings are rarer, but you still need to watch out in some places and circumstances, like strolling through the Red-Light District or along a deserted canal side at night.

Taxes A **value-added tax (BTW)** of 6% is levied on hotel and restaurant bills (19% on beer, wine, and liquor), and 6% or 19% (the amount depends on the product) on purchases. For information on how to recover some of the 19% rate of tax on purchases, see "The Shopping Scene," later in this chapter.

Telephone The **country code** for the Netherlands is **31.** The **city code** for Amsterdam is **20;** use this code when you're calling from outside the Netherlands. If you're within the Netherlands but not in Amsterdam, use **020.** If you're calling within Amsterdam, simply leave off the code and dial only the regular seven-digit phone number.

You can use pay phones in booths all around town with a KPN *telekaart* (phone card), selling for 5€ ($7.25), 10€ ($15), 20€ ($29), and 50€ ($73) from post offices, train ticket counters, and newsstands. Some pay phones take coins of .10€, .20€, .50€, and 1€.

For information inside the Netherlands, call ✆ **0900/8008;** for international information, call ✆ **0900/8418. For operator assistance:** To make an international collect call, dial ✆ **0800/0410.**

To charge a call to your calling card, dial **AT&T** (✆ 0800/022-9111); **MCI** (✆ 0800/022-9122); **Sprint** (✆ 0800/022-9119); **Canada Direct** (✆ 0800/022-9116); **British Telecom** (✆ 0800/022-9944); or **Telecom New Zealand** (✆ 0800/022-4295).

Tipping A 15% service is included in the price of the meals at almost all restaurants (if it isn't, it will generally say so on the menu), so it's not necessary to leave a tip. But waitstaff do appreciate tips, and if the service is good you might want to leave a small one by rounding up in cash, not on a credit card slip, to the nearest euro or the nearest 5€ ($7.25), depending on the price of the meal (in an expensive restaurant you might feel obliged to go up to the nearest 10€/$15). Taxi fares are high and include a service charge; though drivers appreciate a tip, it's not really necessary to give one unless you want to.

WHERE TO STAY

Booking ahead is always advised. If you arrive in Amsterdam without a reservation, consult the **VVV tourist offices** (see "Visitor Information," earlier in this chapter). Or contact the VVV's **Amsterdam Reservation Center** (✆ **0900/400-4040,** or 31-20/201-8800 from outside the Netherlands; fax 020/201-8850; www.amsterdamtourist.nl). In summer, it's imperative you look for a room early in the day—by late afternoon many hotels are already full.

AROUND THE DAM & CENTRAAL STATION

Very Expensive

The Grand Amsterdam Sofitel Demeure ★★ Close to the Red-Light District, in a courtly building that was a convent in the 15th-century, a royal guesthouse in the 16th century, headquarters of the Amsterdam Admiralty in the 17th century, and the Town Hall in the 19th century, the Grand is grand indeed. Beyond its courtyard with fountain, and brass-and-wood revolving door, the black-and-white marble floors are covered with Oriental rugs. The individually styled and furnished rooms reflect the different phases of the building's past and have views on 17th-century canals, the hotel garden, or the courtyard. Dining is innovative at the Art Deco–inspired modern French brasserie **Café Roux.**

Oudezijds Voorburgwal 197 (off Damstraat), 1012 EX Amsterdam. ✆ **800/515-5679** in the U.S. and Canada, or 020/555-3111. Fax 020/555-3222. www.thegrand.nl. 185 units. 490€–550€ ($711–$798) double; from 690€ ($1,001) suite; add 5% city tax. AE, DC, MC, V. Valet parking 35€ ($51). Tram: 4, 9, 14, 16, 24, or 25 to Spui. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; heated indoor pool; health club; Jacuzzi; sauna; concierge; courtesy car; secretarial services; 24-hr. room service; in-room massage; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV w/pay movies, dataport, minibar, coffeemaker, hair dryer, safe.

Expensive

Lloyd Hotel ★ Located at the redeveloped old steamship docks east of Centraal Station, the Lloyd was originally a hotel for emigrants that opened in 1921. It has been thoroughly renovated, and reopened in 2004. Just about every room has a different shape, style, and modern decor. The most expensive rooms are the largest and have a view on the water, or a specially designed interior (or both). Beds are new and mattresses firm, but only a few rooms have king-size doubles.

Oostelijke Handelskade 34, 1019 BN Amsterdam (at IJhaven). ☎ **020/561-3636.** Fax 020/561-3600. www.lloydhotel.com. 117 units, 106 with bathroom. 140€–450€ ($203–$653) double with bathroom; 95€ ($138) double without bathroom. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 20€ ($29). Tram: 10 or 26 to Rietlandpark. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; bike rental; secretarial services; 24-hr. room service; in-room massage; babysitting. *In room:* TV, dataport.

Moderate

Sint-Nicolaas *Kids* Named after Amsterdam's patron saint, this hotel is conveniently situated near the Centraal Station, in a prominent corner house with a dark facade. It's a typical family hotel with an easygoing atmosphere, and children are welcome. Originally the building was occupied by a factory that manufactured ropes and carpets from sisal imported from the Dutch colonies. It was converted into a hotel in 1980. The once rather basic room furnishings, beds, and decor have all been tastefully upgraded in recent years.

Spuistraat 1A (at Nieuwendijk), 1012 SP Amsterdam. ☎ **020/626-1384.** Fax 020/623-0979. www.hotelnicolaas.nl. 27 units. 95€–120€ ($138–$174) double. Rates include continental breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Limited street parking. Tram: 1, 2, 5, 13, 17 to Martelaarsgracht. **Amenities:** Bar. *In room:* TV, safe.

Inexpensive

Amstel Botel *Kids* Where better to experience a city built on water than on a moored boat-hotel? Children are sure to think so. The floating hotel is popular, largely because of its location, seemingly adventurous nature, and rates. The rooms, on four decks connected by an elevator, are furnished in a no-nonsense but comfortable modern style; the showers are small. To get here, leave the station and turn left, passing the bike rental—the white-painted Botel is directly in front of you. Be sure to ask for a room with a view on the water side, not on the uninspiring quay side.

Oosterdokskade 2–4 (at Centraal Station), 1011 AE Amsterdam. ☎ **020/626-4247.** Fax 020/639-1952. www.amstelbotel.com. 175 units. 78€–92€ ($113–$133) double. AE, DC, MC, V. Limited parking on quay. Tram: 1, 2, 4, 5, 9, 13, 16, 17, 24, 25, or 26 to Centraal Station. **Amenities:** Bar; concierge; dry cleaning. *In room:* TV, safe.

ALONG THE CANAL BELT

Expensive

Ambassade ★★ Perhaps more than any other hotel in Amsterdam, this one, in 10 17th- and 18th-century canal houses on the Herengracht and Singel canals, re-creates the feeling of living in an elegant canal house. The pastel-toned rooms are individually styled, their size and shape varying according to the character of the individual houses. Anyone who lodges at the Ambassade is sure to enjoy the view each morning over breakfast in the bi-level, chandeliered breakfast room, or each evening in the adjoining parlor, with its Persian rugs and a stately grandfather clock ticking away.

Herengracht 341 (near Spui), 1016 AZ Amsterdam. ☎ **020/555-0222.** Fax 020/555-0277. www.ambassade-hotel.nl. 59 units. 195€–275€ ($283–$399) double; 275€–375€ ($399–$544) suite; add 5% city tax. AE, DC, MC, V. Limited

Tips A Canal-House Warning

Be prepared to climb hard-to-navigate stairways if you want to save money on lodging in Amsterdam by staying in a canal house. Narrow and as steep as ladders, these stairways were designed to conserve space in the narrow houses along the canals. If you have difficulty climbing stairs, ask for a room on a lower floor.

street parking. Tram: 1, 2, or 5 to Spui. **Amenities:** Lounge; bike rental; 24-hr. room service; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service. *In room:* TV, dataport, hair dryer, safe.

Estheréa ★★ If you like to stay at elegant, not-too-big hotels, you'll be pleased by the Estheréa. It's been owned by the same family since its beginnings and, like so many hotels in Amsterdam, was built anew within the walls of a group of neighboring 17th-century canal houses. The family touch shows in careful attention to detail and a breezy yet professional approach. While the hotel may look dated to some, the wood bedsteads and dresser-desks in fact lend warmth to renovated and upgraded rooms. The room sizes vary considerably according to their location in the canal houses.

Singel 305 (near Spui), 1012 WJ Amsterdam. ☎ **800/223-9868** in the U.S. and Canada, or 020/624-5146. Fax 020/623-9001. www.estherea.nl. 71 units. 182€–299€ ($264–$434) double; add 5% city tax. AE, DC, MC, V. Limited street parking. Tram: 1, 2, or 5 to Spui. **Amenities:** Bar; lounge; bike rental; concierge; limited room service; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV w/pay movies, dataport, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Moderate

Amsterdam Wiechmann ★ It takes only a moment to feel at home in the antiques-adorned Wiechmann, a classic, comfortable, casual kind of place. Besides, the location is one of the best you'll find in this or any price range. Most of the rooms are standard, with good-size twin or double beds, and some have big bay windows. Furnishings are elegant. The higher-priced doubles, with a view on the canal, have antique furnishings. There's no elevator.

Prinsengracht 328–332 (at Looiersgracht), 1016 HX Amsterdam. ☎ **020/626-3321.** Fax 020/626-8962. www.hotelwiechmann.nl. 38 units. 140€–160€ ($203–$232) double; 260€ ($377) suite. Rates include continental breakfast. MC, V. Limited street parking. Tram: 1, 2, or 5 to Prinsengracht. **Amenities:** Bar. *In room:* TV, dataport, safe.

Canal House ★★ A contemporary approach to reestablishing the elegant canal-house atmosphere has been taken by the proprietor of this hotel in three adjoining houses from 1630 close to Westermarkt. These were rebuilt to provide private bathrooms and filled with antiques, quilts, and Chinese rugs. The beds, some with drapes, have new and comfortable mattresses on antique frames. Room no. 26 has a panoramic view of the canal. Overlooking the back garden, the magnificent breakfast room seems to have been untouched since the 17th century. On the parlor floor is a cozy Victorian-style salon.

Keizersgracht 148 (near Leliegracht), 1015 CX Amsterdam. ☎ **020/622-5182.** Fax 020/624-1317. www.canalhouse.nl. 26 units. 140€–190€ ($203–$276) double. Rates include continental breakfast. DC, MC, V. Limited street parking. Tram: 13, 14, or 17 to Westermarkt. **Amenities:** Lounge; limited room service. *In room:* Hair dryer.

Inexpensive

Prinsenhof A modernized canal house near the Amstel River, this hotel offers rooms with beamed ceilings and basic yet reasonably comfortable beds. Front rooms look out onto the Prinsengracht, where colorful houseboats are moored. Breakfast is served in an attractive blue-and-white decorated dining room. The proprietors, Rik and André van Houten, take pride in their hotel and will make you feel welcome. There's no elevator, but a pulley hauls your luggage up and down the stairs.

Prinsengracht 810 (at Utrechtsestraat), 1017 JL Amsterdam. ✆ **020/623-1772.** Fax 020/638-3368. www.hotelprinsenhof.com. 11 units, 4 with bathroom. 85€ ($123) double with bathroom; 65€ ($95) double without bathroom. Rates include continental breakfast. AE, MC, V. Limited street parking. Tram: 4 to Prinsengracht.

IN THE JORDAAN

Inexpensive

Acacia ★ Not on one of the major canals, but in the Jordaan, facing a small canal just a block away from Prinsengracht, the Acacia is run by a friendly couple who are justifiably proud of their welcoming and well-kept hotel. Simple, clean, and comfortable, the rooms all have canal views (and some of them are shaped like pie slices). Two houseboats for guests on nearby Lijnbaansgracht add an authentic local touch. There's no elevator.

Lindengracht 251 (at Lijnbaansgracht), 1015 KH Amsterdam. ✆ **020/622-1460.** Fax 020/638-0748. www.hotelacacia.nl. 18 units, 2 houseboats. 80€ ($116) double; 95€–110€ ($138–$160) houseboat double. Rates include continental breakfast. MC, V (5% charge). Limited street parking. Tram: 3 or 10 to Marnixplein. *In room:* TV.

AROUND LEIDSEPLEIN

Expensive

Amsterdam-American ★★★ A fanciful, castlelike mix of Venetian Gothic and Art Nouveau, the American has been both a prominent landmark and a popular meeting place for Amsterdammers since 1900. While the exterior (restored in 2008) must always remain a protected architectural treasure of turrets, arches, and balconies, the interior (except that of the cafe, which is also protected) is modern and chic, though at times a bit gaudy. Rooms are subdued, refined, and superbly furnished, and while some have a view of the Singelgracht, others overlook kaleidoscopic Leidseplein.

Leidsekade 97 (at Leidseplein), 1017 PN Amsterdam. ✆ **020/556-3000.** Fax 020/556-3001. www.amsterdamamerican.com. 175 units. 120€–280€ ($174–$406) double; from 395€ ($573) suite; add 5% city tax. AE, DC, MC, V. No parking. Tram: 1, 2, 5, 7, or 10 to Leidseplein. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; exercise room; sauna; electric scooter rental; concierge; salon; 24-hr. room service; in-room massage; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, dataport, minibar, coffeemaker, hair dryer, iron, safe.

AROUND REMBRANDTPLEIN

Very Expensive

Hotel de l'Europe ★★★ On a stretch of prime riverside real estate in the center city, this elegant old establishment's red-and-white facade, standing at the point where the Amstel River flows into the canal network, is an iconic city view. Built in 1896, the de l'Europe has a grand style and a sense of ease, a smooth combination of aged dignity and modern comforts. Guest rooms and bathrooms are spacious and bright, furnished with classic good taste. Some rooms have small balconies overlooking the river, and all boast marble bathrooms.

Nieuwe Doelenstraat 2–8 (facing Muntplein), 1012 CP Amsterdam. ✆ **800/223-6800** in the U.S. and Canada, or 020/531-1777. Fax 020/531-1778. www.leurope.nl. 100 units. 420€–510€ ($609–$740) double; from 560€ ($812) suite; add 5% city tax. AE, DC, MC, V. Valet and self-parking 50€ ($73). Tram: 4, 9, 14, 16, 24, or 25 to De Munt. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; 2 bars; heated indoor pool; health club; sauna; concierge; 24-hr. room service; massage; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, dataport, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Moderate

NH Schiller Hotel ★ An Amsterdam gem from 1912, fully restored, this hotel boasts a blend of Art Nouveau and Art Deco in its public spaces, a theme that is reflected in the tasteful furnishings in the rooms. Its sculpted facade, wrought-iron balconies, and stained-glass windows stand out on the often brash Rembrandtplein. **Brasserie Schiller** is a gracious, oak-paneled dining room, and **Café Schiller** is one of Amsterdam's few permanent sidewalk cafes.

Rembrandtplein 26–36, 1017 CV Amsterdam. ☎ **020/554-0700.** Fax 020/624-0098. www.nh-hotels.com. 92 units. 110€–135€ ($160–$198) double; from 161€ ($233) suite; add 5% city tax. AE, DC, MC, V. Limited street parking. Tram: 4, 9, or 14 to Rembrandtplein. **Amenities:** Restaurant, 2 bars; limited room service; in-room massage; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service. *In room:* TV, dataport, minibar, coffeemaker, hair dryer, safe.

Seven Bridges ★★ One of Amsterdam's canal-house gems, not far from Rembrandtplein, gets its name from its view of seven arched bridges. There are antique furnishings, handmade Italian drapes, hand-painted tiles and wood-tiled floors, and Impressionist art posters on the walls. The biggest room, on the first landing, can accommodate up to four and has a huge bathroom with marble floor and double sinks. Attic rooms have sloped ceilings and exposed wood beams, and there are big, bright basement rooms done almost entirely in white. There's no elevator.

Reguliersgracht 31 (at Keizersgracht), 1017 LK Amsterdam. ☎ **020/623-1329.** Fax 020/624-7652. www.sevenbridgeshotel.nl. 11 units. 100€–260€ ($145–$377) double. Rates include full breakfast (served in room in 8 rooms). AE, MC, V. Limited street parking. Tram: 4 to Keizersgracht. *In room:* TV, dataport, hair dryer.

AROUND MUSEUMPLEIN

Moderate

Bilderberg Hotel Jan Luyken ★ Close to the Rijksmuseum, this is a small hotel with some of the amenities and facilities of a large one—though without the large rooms. Everything here is done to maintain a balance between a sophisticated lineup of facilities and an intimate and personalized approach appropriate to a 19th-century residential neighborhood. That feel extends to the guest rooms, which look more like those in a well-designed home than a standard hotel room.

Jan Luijkenstraat 58 (near the Rijksmuseum), 1071 CS Amsterdam. ☎ **020/573-0730.** Fax 020/676-3841. www.janluyken.nl. 62 units. 99€–139€ ($144–$202) double; from 500€ ($725) suite; add 5% city tax. AE, DC, MC, V. Limited street parking. Tram: 2 or 5 to Hobbemastraat. **Amenities:** Wine bar; small spa; concierge; 24-hr. room service; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, dataport, minibar, hair dryer, iron, safe.

De Filosoof ★ On a quiet street of brick houses near Vondelpark, this extraordinary, elegant hotel might be the very place if you fancy yourself as something of a philosopher. Each room is dedicated to a mental maestro or important cultural figure—Aristotle, Plato, Goethe, Wittgenstein, Nietzsche, Marx, and Einstein are among those who get a look-in—or it is based on motifs like Eros, the Renaissance, and astrology. You can even consult your private bookshelf of philosophical works or join in a weekly philosophy debate. The rooms in an annex across the street are larger; some open onto a terrace.

Anna van den Vondelstraat 6 (off Overtoom, at Vondelpark), 1054 GZ Amsterdam. ☎ **020/683-3013.** Fax 020/685-3750. www.hotelfilosoof.nl. 38 units. 105€–155€ ($218–$225) double. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, MC, V. Limited street parking. Tram: 1 to Jan Pieter Heijestraat. **Amenities:** Lounge. *In room:* TV, hair dryer, safe.

Inexpensive

Piet Hein Occupying a villa close to the city's most important museums, the Piet Hein is named after a Dutch folk hero, a 17th-century admiral who captured a Spanish silver shipment. Rooms are spacious and well furnished, and the staff friendly and professional. Half the rooms overlook the park; two second-floor doubles have semicircular balconies; and a honeymoon suite has a water bed. Lower-priced rooms are in an annex.

Vossiusstraat 53 (off Van Baerlestraat), 1071 AK Amsterdam. ✆ **020/662-7205.** Fax 020/662-1526. www.hotelpiethein.com. 65 units. 120€–170€ ($174–$247) double. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Limited street parking. Tram: 3, 5, or 12 to Van Baerlestraat. **Amenities:** Bar; concierge; limited room service; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV, dataport, safe.

IN AMSTERDAM SOUTH

Inexpensive

Bicycle Hotel Amsterdam ★ The proprietors of this establishment have hit on an interesting idea: They cater to visitors who wish to explore Amsterdam on bikes and can help guests plan biking routes through and around the city. You can rent bikes for 7.50€ ($11) daily, no deposit, and stable your trusty steed indoors. The rooms have plain but comfortable modern furnishings; some have kitchenettes and small balconies, and there are large rooms for families. There's no elevator.

Van Ostadestraat 123 (off Ferdinand Bolstraat), Amsterdam 1072 SV. ✆ **020/679-3452.** Fax 020/671-5213. www.bicyclehotel.com. 16 units, 8 with bathroom. 80€–115€ ($116–$167) double with bathroom; 50€–80€ ($73–$116) double without bathroom. Rates include continental breakfast. AE, MC, V. Parking 20€ ($29). Tram: 3, 12, or 25 to Ceintuurbaan-Ferdinand Bolstraat. **Amenities:** Lounge; bike rental. *In room:* TV.

WHERE TO DINE

As a trading and gateway city that positively revels in its status as a melting pot, Amsterdam has absorbed culinary influences from far and wide. You find dozens of ethnic eateries serving everything from Algerian to Vietnamese food—still waiting for W, X, Y, and Z! Indonesian food is extremely popular, notably the *rijsttafel* (see "Spice of Life," below). Many of these ethnic places serve hearty and delicious meals at very reasonable prices. And you'll find plenty of traditional Dutch restaurants.

AROUND THE DAM & CENTRAAL STATION

Very Expensive

Excelsior ★★★ FRENCH/CONTINENTAL Located within the tony Hotel de l'Europe, one of Amsterdam's finest restaurants derives its reputation from French chef Jean-Jacques Menanteau's Michelin-star cuisine. It's more than a little formal—more than a lot by Amsterdam standards. Crystal chandeliers, elaborate moldings, crisp linens, fresh bouquets of flowers, and picture windows with great views on the Amstel River, typify this classically grand establishment. A meal here is an exercise in refinement, aided by a diligent and discreet waitstaff. Respectable attire (jackets for men) is required.

Moments Spice of Life

You haven't really eaten in Amsterdam until you've had an **Indonesian *rijsttafel.*** This traditional "rice table" banquet consists of as many as 20 succulent and spicy foods served in tiny bowls. Pick and choose from among the bowls and add your choice to the pile of rice on your plate. It's almost impossible to eat all the food set on your table, but give it a shot—it's delicious and a true taste of multicultural Amsterdam. For an abbreviated version served on one plate, try *nasi rames.* At lunch, the standard Indonesian fare is *nasi goreng* (fried rice with meat and vegetables) or *bami goreng* (fried noodles prepared in the same way).

In the Hotel de l'Europe, Nieuwe Doelenstraat 2–8 (facing Muntplein). ✆ **020/531-1777.** Reservations recommended on weekends. Main courses 34€–44€ ($49–$64); fixed-price menus 49€–95€ ($71–$138). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri 7–11am, 12:30–2:30pm, 7–10:30pm; Sat–Sun 7–11am, 7–10:30pm. Tram: 4, 9, 14, 16, 24, or 25 to Muntplein.

Moderate

In de Waag ★ CONTINENTAL The castlelike 14th-century Sint-Antoniespoort Gate in the city walls, later a public weigh house, holds one of Amsterdam's most stylish cafe-restaurants, in an area that's becoming hipper by the day. It's indelibly romantic, with its long banquet-style tables lit by hundreds of candles in the evening. You can mix easily with other diners. The breast of Barbary duck with sesame-cracker and sherry dressing is pretty good, as is the vegetarian Kashmir bread with braised vegetables and coriander-yogurt sauce.

Nieuwmarkt 4. ✆ **020/422-7772.** Main courses 19€–26€ ($28–$38). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 10am–1am. Metro: Nieuwmarkt.

Wilhelmina-Dok ★ CONTINENTAL Across the IJ waterway from Centraal Station, this great waterfront eatery more than justifies a short, free ferryboat ride followed by a 5-minute walk. Plain wood, candlelit tables, wood floors, and oak cabinets give the interior an old-fashioned maritime look, and large windows serve up views across the narrow, boat-speckled channel. The menu favors plain cooking and organic products. Tables on the outdoor terrace are sheltered from the wind in a glass-walled enclosure.

Nordwal 1 (at IJplein). ✆ **020/632-3701.** Reservations recommended on weekends. Main courses 17€–22€ ($25–$32). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 11am–midnight. Ferry: IJveer from Waterplein-West behind Centraal Station to the dock at IJplein; then walk east along the dike-top path.

ALONG THE CANAL BELT

Expensive

Dylan ★ FRENCH If you dress up in black to celebrate, and I don't mean a tux, then head for this ultrahip, hyperpricey, Zen-like restaurant of the ultrachic designer hotel of the same name. The converted bakery of an 18th-century almshouse is where neo-millionaires, jet-setters, and media tycoons go to check out each other's black duds in a setting that shares some of the mother ship's black-and-white themes. French-inspired dishes predominate on a menu that eludes easy classification.

In the Dylan Hotel, Keizersgracht 384 (at Runstraat). ✆ **020/530-2010.** Main courses 29€–39€ ($42–$57); fixed-price menu 48€ ($70). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri noon–2pm, and 7–10:30pm; Sat 7–10:30pm. Tram: 13, 14, or 17 to Westermarkt.

Moderate

Bolhoed ★ VEGETARIAN Forget the dull, tofu-and-brown-rice image of vegetarian dining—Bolhoed adds a touch of spice to its health food formula with its Latin style, world music background, candlelight in the evenings, and fine views of the canal. Service is zestful and friendly. Try such veggie delights as the *ragoût croissant* (pastry filled with leeks, tofu, seaweed, and curry sauce) or *zarzuela* (tomato-based fish stew). If you want to go the whole-hog, so to speak, and eat vegan, most dishes can be so prepared on request, and in any case most are made with organically grown produce. For outdoors dining in summer, there are a few canal-side tables.

Prinsengracht 60–62 (near Noordermarkt). ✆ **020/626-1803.** Main courses 13€–17€ ($19–$25); 3-course menu 21€ ($30). No credit cards. Sun–Fri noon–11pm; Sat 11am–11pm. Tram: 13, 14, or 17 to Westermarkt.

De Belhamel ★★ *Finds* CONTINENTAL Classical music complements Art Nouveau in a graceful setting overlooking the Herengracht and Brouwersgracht canals. The menu changes seasonally, and game is a specialty. You can expect such menu dishes as puffed pastries layered with salmon, shellfish, crayfish tails, and chervil beurre-blanc to start; and beef tenderloin in Madeira sauce with zucchini rösti and puffed garlic for a main course. Vegetarian dishes are available.

Brouwersgracht 60 (at Herengracht). ✆ **020/622-1095.** Main courses 13€–20€ ($19–$29); fixed-price menu 32€ ($46). AE, MC, V. Daily 5am–10pm. Tram: 1, 2, 5, 13, or 17 to Martelaarsgracht.

Tempo Doeloe ★★ INDONESIAN For authentic Indonesian cuisine, from Java, Sumatra, and Bali—which doesn't leave out much—this place is hard to beat. Though its local reputation goes up and down with the tide, it's invariably busy. You dine in a batik ambience that's Indonesian but restrained, and a long way short of being kitsch. The attractive decor and the fine china are unexpected pluses. Try the many little meat, fish, and vegetable dishes of the three different rijsttafel (rice table) options, from the 15-plate vegetarian rijsttafel *sayoeran* and the 15-plate rijsttafel *stimoelan* to the sumptuous 25-plate rijsttafel *istemewa*.

Utrechtsestraat 75 (between Prinsengracht and Keizersgracht). ✆ **020/625-6718.** Reservations required. Main courses 14€–25€ ($20–$36); rijsttafel 27€–35€ ($39–$51); fixed-price menu 27€–43€ ($39–$62). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat 6–11:30pm. Tram: 4 to Keizersgracht.

Inexpensive

De Prins ★★ *Value* MODERN DUTCH/CONTINENTAL In a 17th-century canal house, this companionable brown cafe/restaurant opposite the Anne Frankhuis serves the kind of food you'd expect from a much more expensive place. The clientele is loyal, so the relatively few tables fill up quickly. It's a quiet neighborhood restaurant—nothing fancy or trendy, but quite appealing, with the bar on a slightly lower level than the restaurant and a sidewalk terrace for drinks in summer.

Prinsengracht 124 (at Egelantiersgracht). ✆ **020/624-9382.** Main courses 10€–15€ ($15–$22); lunch menu 12€ ($17). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 10am–1 or 2am (kitchen to 10pm). Tram: 13, 14, or 17 to Westermarkt.

AROUND SPUI

Expensive

D'Vijff Vlieghen ★ MODERN DUTCH Touristy? Yes, but the "Five Flies" is one of Amsterdam's most famous restaurants, and the food is authentic stick-to-the-ribs Dutch fare. The chef is passionate about an updated form of Dutch cuisine he calls "the new Dutch kitchen." If you're feeling adventurous, try the wild boar with sweet chestnuts and a sauce made with *jenever* (liquor flavored with juniper berries). The restaurant is a kind of Dutch theme park, within five canal houses decorated with artifacts from Holland's golden age. Don't miss the four original Rembrandt etchings in the Rembrandt Room and the collection of handmade glass in the Glass Room.

Spuistraat 294–302 (at Spui; entrance at Vliegendesteeg 1). ✆ **020/530-4060.** Reservations recommended on weekends. Main courses 20€–28€ ($29–$41); seasonal menu 33€–39€ ($48–$57). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 5:30–10pm. Tram: 1, 2, or 5 to Spui.

Moderate

Haesje Claes TRADITIONAL DUTCH If you're yearning for a cozy Old Dutch environment and hearty Dutch food at moderate prices, this is the place to go. It's inviting and intimate, with lots of nooks and crannies and with brocaded benches and traditional Dutch hanging lamps. The menu covers a lot of ground, ranging from canapés to caviar, but you'll likely be happiest with such Dutch stalwarts as tournedos, *hutspot* (stew), *stampot* (mashed potatoes and cabbage), or various fish stews, including those with IJsselmeer *paling* (eel).

Spuistraat 273–275 (at Spui). ✆ **020/624-9998.** Main courses 15€–30€ ($22–$44); fixed-price menu 29€ ($42). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily noon–10pm. Tram: 1, 2, or 5 to Spui.

Kantjil & de Tijger ★ INDONESIAN Unlike Indonesian restaurants that wear their ethnic origins on their sleeve, the "Antelope and the Tiger" is modern and cool. Two bestsellers here are *nasi goreng Kantjil* (fried rice with pork kabobs, stewed beef, pickled cucumbers, and mixed vegetables) and the 20-item rijsttafel (rice with meat, seafood, and vegetables) for two. Other choices are stewed chicken in soy sauce, tofu omelet, shrimp with coconut dressing, Indonesian pumpkin, and mixed steamed vegetables with peanut-butter sauce. Finish with the cinnamon layer cake or the coffee with ginger liqueur and whipped cream.

Spuistraat 291–293 (beside Spui). ✆ **020/620-0994.** Reservations recommended on weekends. Main courses 13€–16€ ($19–$23); rijsttafel 43€–55€ ($62–$80) for 2. AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 4:30–11pm. Tram: 1, 2, or 5 to Spui.

Inexpensive

Café Luxembourg ★ INTERNATIONAL "One of the world's great cafes," wrote the *New York Times* about this stylish, grand cafe. Unlike other cafes in Amsterdam, which often draw a distinctive clientele, the Luxembourg attracts all kinds of people with its amazingly large portions of food at reasonable prices. Soups, sandwiches, and such dishes as meatloaf are available. A special attraction: You may find such exotica as Chinese dim sum and *satay ajam* (Indonesian grilled chicken in a peanut sauce) on the menu.

Spui 24 (at Spui). ✆ **020/620-6264.** Salads and specials 8€–11€ ($12–$16); lunch 5€–9€ ($7.25–$13); main courses 8€–16€ ($12–$23). AE, DC, MC, V. Sun–Thurs 9am–1am; Fri–Sat 9am–2am. Tram: 1, 2, or 5 to Spui.

AROUND LEIDSEPLEIN

Moderate

Café Americain ★ INTERNATIONAL This is a national monument of Dutch Jugendstil and Art Deco. Mata Hari held her wedding reception here in her pre-espionage days, and since its 1900 opening, this has been a haven for Dutch and international artists, writers, dancers, and actors. Leaded windows, newspaper-littered reading tables, bargello-patterned velvet upholstery, frosted-glass chandeliers from the 1920s, and tall, carved columns are all part of the dusky sit-and-chat setting. Menu dishes include monkfish, perch, rack of Irish lamb, and rosé breast of duck with creamed potatoes. Jazz lovers can dine to good music at a Sunday jazz brunch.

In the Amsterdam-American Hotel, Leidsekade 97 (at Leidseplein). ✆ **020/556-3232.** Main courses 16€–22€ ($23–$32). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri 6:30am–11:30pm, Sat 7am–11:30pm. Tram: 1, 2, 5, 7, or 10 to Leidseplein.

AROUND REMBRANDTPLEIN

Inexpensive

Golden Temple ★ VEGETARIAN In its fourth decade of tickling meat-shunning palates, this temple of taste is still one of the best vegetarian (and vegan) options in town. If anything, it's a tad too hallowed, an effect enhanced by a Zen-like absence of decorative flourishes. The menu livens things up, however, with an unlikely roster of Indian, Middle Eastern, and Mexican dishes, and the multiple-choice platters are a good way to go.

Utrechtsestraat 126 (close to Frederiksplein). ✆ **020/626-8560.** Main courses 11€–14€ ($16–$20); mixed platter 14€ ($20). MC, V. Daily 5–10pm. Tram: 4 to Prinsengracht.

Tips **Sweet Talk**

If you have a sweet tooth, be sure to try some traditional Dutch desserts, such as *poffertjes* (miniature pancakes), *oliebollen* (like powdered sugar–covered doughnut holes), or pancakes. All these come with various fillings or toppings, many of which contain a liqueur of some sort. Traditional poffertje snack bars are garish affairs that look as though they're part of a circus. There's a good one on Weteringcircuit, west of Leidseplein.

IN THE JORDAAN

Expensive

Bordewijk ★★ FRENCH/FUSION This pleasantly located restaurant is often regarded as one of the best in the city. The decor is tasteful, with potted plants offsetting the severity of the white walls and metallic black tables. Service is relaxed yet attentive, and on mild summer evenings you can't beat dining alfresco on the canalside terrace. But the real treat is the food. An innovative chef accents French standards with Mediterranean and Asian flourishes to create an elegant fusion of flavors.

Noordermarkt 7 (at Prinsengracht). ✆ **020/624-3899.** Reservations recommended on weekends. Main courses 20€–29€ ($29–$42); fixed-price menu 39€–54€ ($57–$78). AE, MC, V. Tues–Sun 6:30–10.30pm. Tram: 1, 2, 5, 13, or 17 to Martelaarsgracht.

IN AMSTERDAM WEST

Moderate

Amsterdam ★★ **Finds** CONTINENTAL Think of it as *Amsterdam: The Restaurant,* because it's quite a performance. Based in a century-old water-pumping station, complete with diesel-powered engine, this cafe-restaurant has taken this monument of Victorian industrial good taste and made of it a model of contemporary good eats. Service is friendly, and the food is good and moderately priced. If you're feeling flush, spring for a double starter of half a lobster with six Zeeland oysters. The Amsterdam is a little bit out from the center city, but is easily worth the tram ride.

Watertorenplein 6 (off Haarlemmerweg). ✆ **020/682-2666.** Reservations recommended on weekends. Main courses 10€–18€ ($15–$26). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 11am–midnight. Tram: 10 to Van Hallstraat.

IN AMSTERDAM EAST

Moderate

Gare de l'Est ★ **Value** TRADITIONAL FRENCH/MEDITERRANEAN The detached, distinctive house, with a conservatory and a large sidewalk terrace, was built in 1901 as a coffeehouse for workers at the Eastern Dock. Service is both relaxed and knowledgeable, and the fixed-price menu is an excellent value; so any surprises appear on your plate rather than on the check. The five-course formula (starter, salad, main course of meat or fish, cheese, and dessert) leaves no room for choice—except for the main course. How does this sound—*pulpo stofado* with *risotto nero* (inkfish stew with black risotto) as a starter, and roast lamb with gazpacho sauce and farfalle pasta as a main course?

Cruquiusweg 9 (at the East Harbor). ✆ **020/463-0620.** Reservations recommended on weekends. Fixed-price menu 30€ ($44). No credit cards. Daily 6–11pm. Tram: 7 or 10 to Zeeburgerdijk.

IN AMSTERDAM SOUTH

Moderate

De Kas ★★ CONTINENTAL A converted 1926 greenhouse with a smokestack on open ground is the setting for this bright, spacious new place to see and be seen, with an atmosphere that's maybe a tad too precious. You get just a couple of variations on a three-course, daily-changing, fixed menu, with cheese board extra. Mediterranean-style greens and herbs come fresh from an adjacent working hothouse and the restaurant's own farm, and meat is sourced daily from nearby animal-friendly ecoproducers. Service is attentive enough that the waitstaff seems to be acquainted personally with every item on your plate.

Kamerlingh Onneslaan 3 (close to Amstel Station). ✆ **020/462-4562.** Reservations recommended on weekends. Fixed-price lunch 35€ ($51); fixed-price dinner 48€ ($70); chef's table menu 125€ ($181). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri noon–2pm and 6:30–10pm; Sat 6:30–10pm. Tram: 9 to Hogeweg.

SEEING THE SIGHTS

Amsterdam has an almost bewildering embarrassment of riches. There are 160 canals to cruise, with a combined length of 76km (47 miles), spanned by 1,281 bridges; hundreds of narrow streets to wander; almost 8,000 historic buildings to see in the center city; more than 40 museums of all types to visit; diamond cutters and craftspeople to watch as they practice generations-old skills . . . the list is as long as every visitor's individual interests—and then some.

SIGHTSEEING SUGGESTIONS FOR FIRST-TIME VISITORS

If You Have 1 Day For the perfect introduction to the city, take a **canal cruise** and admire the many gabled merchants' houses and more than 1,200 bridges. In the afternoon, stroll through **Vondelpark** and return to the center through lively **Leidseplein.** In the evening, dine at a traditional restaurant or opt for an Indonesian rijsttafel, and end your day by dropping into a **brown cafe** (a traditional Amsterdam bar).

If You Have 2 Days Begin by going early to the **Anne Frank House.** Then, stroll along the central canals until lunchtime. In the afternoon, continue exploring the historic center on foot, visiting the **Dam** and the **Royal Palace** and ending up at bustling **Rembrandtplein.** In the evening, attend a concert at the nearby **Concertgebouw,** or opera or dance at the **Muziektheater.**

If You Have 3 Days Visit the **Van Gogh Museum** in the morning. Relax over coffee at the **Café Americain** on Leidseplein, with its stunning Art Nouveau interior. Look into some **street markets,** either the Albert Cuyp market, the floating Flower Market, or the Waterlooplein flea market. In the evening, take a walk in the **Red-Light District** (if this isn't your idea of an edifying experience, consider instead the alternative dining option from day 1).

If You Have 4 or 5 Days Broaden your experience by mixing a focused perusal of interesting areas of Amsterdam with short out-of-town trips. For example, one morning you can tour **De Wallen,** the oldest part of the city, which includes the Red-Light District (a far different kind of place during the daylight hours), before going by bus to **Volendam** and **Marken** on the IJsselmeer lake. On the other day, tour the **Jordaan** district in the morning (taking in a street market if you go on Mon or Sat), and take a breath of sea air at **Zandvoort** in the afternoon.

THREE KEY MUSEUMS

Anne Frankhuis ★★ A teenage Jewish girl, Anne Frank wrote her famous diary here while she and seven other Jewish refugees hid from the Nazis in a secret annex at the back of this large canal house. Anne, the youngest Frank daughter, had been given a diary for her 13th birthday in 1942. With the eyes of a child and the writing skills of a girl who hoped one day to be a writer, she chronicled the almost silent life in hiding of the *onderduikers* (divers or hiders), the continued persecution of Jews by Hitler, the progress of the war, and her personal growth as a young woman. Anne achieved her dream of being a famous writer: Today more than 25 million copies of *The Diary of Anne Frank* have been sold in 50 languages.

The cramped, gloomy hiding place, where they were forced to maintain nearly total silence, kept them safe for more than 2 years until they were betrayed and pro-German Dutch police raided their refuge on August 4, 1944. Anne died of typhus in March 1945 at Bergen-Belsen, tragically close to the war's end; six of the others also died in concentration camps. Although the rooms contain no furniture and are as bare as they were when Anne's father, Otto, the only survivor, returned, the exhibits, including a year-by-year chronology of Anne's life, fill in the missing details. This lack of distraction allows you to project yourself into Anne's claustrophobic, fear-filled world.

Note: Lines here can be very long, especially in summer—try going on a weekday morning. An alternative strategy if you're in town from mid March to mid September, when the museum is open to 9 or 10pm, is to go in the evening. Once you're inside, an hour should do it, though many people linger.

Prinsengracht 263 (at Westermarkt). ✆ **020/556-7105.** www.annefrank.org. Admission 7.50€ ($11) adults, 3.50€ ($5.10) children 10–17, children under 10 free. Mid Mar to June and 1st 2 weeks Sept Sun–Fri 9am–9pm, Sat 9am–10pm; July–Aug daily 9am–10pm; mid-Sept to mid-Mar daily 9am–7pm; Jan 1 noon–7pm; May 4 9am–7pm; Dec 21 and 31 9am–5pm, Dec 25 noon–5pm. Closed Yom Kippur. Tram: 13, 14, or 17 to Westermarkt.

Rijksmuseum De Meesterwerken ★★★ Most of Holland's premier museum, at Museumplein, is closed for renovations until mid-2009, which means that the majority of the museum's complete collection will be "invisible" to visitors until then. During this period, however, key paintings and other stellar works from the magnificent 17th-century Dutch golden age collection can be viewed in the museum's Philips Wing, under the head *The Masterpieces*. Other elements of the collection likely will be on view at other venues in the city. The three-star rating given here is an indicator of the Rijksmuseum's importance when it is fully open.

The Rijksmuseum contains the world's largest collection of paintings by the Dutch masters, including the most famous of all, a single work that all but defines the golden age. The painting is *The Shooting Company of Captain Frans Banning Cocq and Lieutenant Willem van Ruytenburch,* 1642, better known as *The Night Watch,* by Rembrandt. The scene it so dramatically depicts is surely alien to most of the people who flock to see it: gaily uniformed militiamen checking their weapons and accouterments before moving out on patrol. Van Ruisdael, van Heemskerck, Frans Hals, Paulus Potter, Jan Steen, Vermeer, de Hooch, Terborch, and Gerard Dou are also represented. The range is impressive—individual portraits, guild paintings, landscapes, seascapes, domestic scenes, medieval religious subjects, allegories, and the incredible (and nearly photographic) Dutch still lifes.

Philips Wing, Jan Luijkenstraat 1 (at Museumplein). ✆ **020/647-7000.** www.rijksmuseum.nl. Admission 10€ ($15) adults, children under 19 free. Sat–Thurs 9am–6pm, Fri 9am–8:30pm,. Closed Jan 1. Tram: 2 or 5 to Hobbemastraat.

Value Passport to Amsterdam

One of the best discounts in town is the **I amsterdam Card,** available at VVV tourist offices for 33€ ($48) for 1 day, 43€ ($62) for 2 days, and 53€ ($77) for 3 days. It provides up to 50€ ($73) a day in savings, offering free or discounted admission to around 40 museums and attractions (including the Rijksmuseum, Rembrandthuis, and Oude Kerk), a free canal cruise, and discounts on selected restaurants and stores. A free 1-, 2-, or 3-day transport card is included.

Van Gogh Museum ★★★ Anyone who has ever responded to van Gogh's vibrant colors and vivid landscapes should find walking through the rooms of this rather stark contemporary building a moving experience. The museum displays, in chronological order, more than 200 van Gogh paintings. As you move through the rooms, the canvases reflect the artist's changing environment and much of his inner life, so that gradually van Gogh himself becomes almost a tangible presence standing at your elbow. By the time you reach the vaguely threatening painting of a flock of black crows rising from a waving cornfield, you can almost feel the artist's mounting inner pain.

In addition to the paintings, nearly 600 drawings by van Gogh are on display in the museum's new wing, a free-standing, multistory, half-oval structure designed by the Japanese architect Kisho Kurokawa. It's constructed in a bold combination of titanium and gray-brown stone, and is connected to the main building by a subterranean walkway. ***Note:*** Lines at the museum can be very long, especially in summer—try going on a weekday morning. Allow 2 to 4 hours to get around once you're inside.

Paulus Potterstraat 7 (at Museumplein). ✆ **020/570-5200.** www.vangoghmuseum.nl. Admission 13€ ($18) adults, 2.50€ ($3.65) children 13–17, children under 13 free. Sat–Thurs 10am–6pm; Fri 10am–10pm. Closed Jan 1. Tram: 2, 3, 5, or 12 to Van Baerlestraat.

MORE TOP MUSEUMS & GALLERIES

Amsterdams Historisch Museum ★★ In a huge 17th-century former orphanage, now housing exhibits covering nearly 700 years of the city's history, this fascinating museum gives you a better understanding of everything you see as you explore the city. Gallery by gallery, century by century, you learn how a fishing village became a major world trading center. The main focus is on the city's 17th-century golden age, a period when Amsterdam was the richest city in the world, and some of the most interesting exhibits are of the trades that made it rich. You can also view many famous paintings by Dutch masters. Next to the museum is the **Schuttersgalerij (Civic Guard Gallery),** a narrow chamber bedecked with 17th-century group portraits of militiamen. The hours are the same as for the museum, and admission is free.

Kalverstraat 92, Nieuwezijds Voorburgwal 357, and Sint-Luciënsteeg 27 (next to the Begijnhof). ✆ **020/523-1822.** www.ahm.nl. Admission 7€ ($10) adults, 5.25€ ($7.60) seniors, 3.50€ ($5.10) children 6–18, children under 6 free. Mon–Fri 10am–5pm; Sat–Sun and holidays 11am–5pm. Closed Jan 1, Apr 30, and Dec 25. Tram: 1, 2, 4, 5, 9, 14, 16, 24, or 25 to Spui.

Joods Historisch Museum ★ Housed in the four restored 17th- and 18th-century synagogues of the beautiful Ashkenazi Synagogue complex, and extended in 2006, the Jewish Historical Museum tells the intertwining stories of Jewish identity, religion, culture, and history of the Jewish Dutch community. Inside are objects, photographs, artworks, and interactive displays. Jewish religious artifacts are a major focus. An exhibit covers the persecution of Jews in the Netherlands and throughout Europe under Hitler. The synagogues stand at the heart of a neighborhood that was the Jewish quarter for 300 years until the Nazi occupation during World War II emptied the city of its Jewish population. The oldest of the four, built in 1670, is the oldest public synagogue in western Europe; the newest dates from 1752.

Nieuwe Amstelstraat 1 (at Waterlooplein). ✆ **020/531-0310.** www.jhm.nl. Admission 7.50€ ($11) adults, 4.50€ ($6.50) seniors and students, 3€ ($4.35) children 13–17, children under 13 free. Fri–Wed 11am–5pm; Thurs 11am–9pm (Jan 1 noon–5pm). Closed Jewish New Year (2 days) and Yom Kippur. Metro: Waterlooplein. Tram: 9 or 14 to Waterlooplein.

Museum Amstelkring Although Amsterdam has been known as a tolerant city for many centuries, just after the Protestant Reformation, Roman Catholics fell into disfavor. Forced to worship in secret, they devised ingenious ways of gathering for Sunday services. In an otherwise ordinary-looking 17th-century canal house in the middle of the Red-Light District is the most amazing of these clandestine churches, known to the general public as "Our Lord in the Attic." Built in the 1660s by a wealthy Catholic merchant, the three houses making up this museum were designed specifically to house a church. Today they're furnished much as they would have been in the mid–18th century. Nothing prepares you for the mini-cathedral you come upon when you climb the last flight of stairs into the attic. A large baroque altar, religious statuary, pews to seat 150, and 18th-century organ complete this miniature church.

Oudezijds Voorburgwal 40 (near the Oude Kerk). ✆ **020/624-6604.** www.museumamstelkring.nl. Admission 7€ ($10) adults, 5€ ($7.25) students, 1€ ($1.45) children 5–18, children under 5 free. Mon–Sat 10am–5pm; Sun and holidays 1–5pm. Closed Jan 1 and Apr 30. Tram: 1, 2, 4, 5, 9, 13, 16, 17, 24, 25, or 26 to Centraal Station.

Museum Het Rembrandthuis ★ When Rembrandt van Rijn moved into this three-story house in 1639, he was already a well-established wealthy artist. However, the cost of buying and furnishing the house led to his financial downfall in 1656. The museum houses a nearly complete collection of Rembrandt's etchings, and the artist's printing press. Of the 300 prints he made, 250 are here, with around half hanging on the walls at any one time. Rembrandt's prints show amazing detail, and you can see his use of shadow and light for dramatic effect. Wizened patriarchs, emaciated beggars, children at play, Rembrandt himself in numerous self-portraits, and Dutch landscapes are the subjects you'll long remember after a visit here. Temporary exhibits are mounted in an adjacent house that belonged to Rembrandt's wife, Saskia.

Jodenbreestraat 4 (at Waterlooplein). ✆ **020/520-0400.** www.rembrandthuis.nl. Admission 8€ ($12) adults, 5.50€ ($8) students, 1.50€ ($2.20) children 6–15, children under 6 free. Daily 10am–5pm. Closed Jan 1. Metro: Waterlooplein. Tram: 9 or 14 to Waterlooplein.

Museum Van Loon This magnificent patrician house from 1672 was owned by the van Loon family from 1884 to 1945. On its walls hang more than 80 family portraits, including those of Willem van Loon, one of the founders of the Dutch United East India Company; Nicolaes Ruychaver, who liberated Amsterdam from the Spanish in 1578; and another Willem van Loon, who became mayor in 1686. A marble staircase with an ornately curlicued brass balustrade leads up through the house, connecting restored period rooms that are filled with richly decorated paneling, stucco work, mirrors, fireplaces, furnishings, porcelain, chandeliers, rugs, and more. In the garden are carefully tended hedges and a coach house modeled on a Greek temple.

Keizersgracht 672 (near Vijzelstraat). ✆ **020/624-5255.** www.museumvanloon.nl. Admission 6€ ($8.70) adults, 4€ ($5.80) students and children 6–18, children under 6 free. Wed–Mon 11am–5pm. Tram: 16, 24, or 25 to Keizersgracht.

Museum Willet-Holthuysen For a glimpse of what life was like for Amsterdam's wealthy merchants during the 18th and 19th centuries, pay a visit to this elegant canal-house museum. Each room is furnished much as it would have been 200 years ago. In addition, there's an extensive collection of ceramics, china, glass, and silver. Of particular interest are the large old kitchen and the formal garden in back.

Herengracht 605 (at the Amstel). ☎ **020/523-1822.** www.willetholthuysen.nl. Admission 5€ ($7.25) adults, 3.75 ($5.45) seniors, 2.50€ ($3.65) children 6–18, children under 6 free. Mon–Fri 10am–5pm; Sat–Sun and holidays 11am–5pm. Closed Jan 1, Apr 30, and Dec 25. Tram: 4, 9, or 14 to Rembrandtplein.

Stedelijk Museum CS ★ ***Note:*** The Stedelijk Museum's premises on Paulus Potterstraat at Museumplein are closed until the end of 2009, or later, for renovation and expansion. The collection has been moved to temporary quarters in the old TPG Post building east of Centraal Station (hence the "CS" in the name). The city's modern art museum is the place to see works by such Dutch painters as Karel Appel, Willem de Kooning, and Piet Mondrian, alongside works by the French artists Chagall, Cézanne, Picasso, Renoir, Monet, and Manet and by the Americans Calder, Oldenburg, Rosenquist, and Warhol. The Stedelijk centers its collection around the De Stijl, Cobra, post-Cobra, Nouveau Réalisme, pop art, color-field painting, zero, minimalist, and conceptual schools of modern art.

Oosterdokskade 5 (2nd and 3rd floor). ☎ **020/573-2911.** www.stedelijk.nl. Admission 9€ ($13) adults; 4.50€ ($6.55) seniors, students, and children 7–16; children under 7 free. Daily 10am–6pm. Closed Jan 1. Tram: 1, 2, 4, 5, 9, 13, 16, 17, 24, 25, or 26 to Centraal Station.

Tropenmuseum (Tropical Museum) ★ *Kids* Although founded in the 19th century by the Royal Tropical Institute as a monument to the nation's colonial empire, in particular the Dutch East Indies, today's Indonesia, the museum now focuses on contemporary culture and problems in tropical areas. On the three floors surrounding the spacious main hall are numerous life-size tableaux depicting life in tropical countries. There are displays of beautiful handcrafts and antiquities from these regions, but the main focus is the life of the people today. There are hovels from the ghettos of Calcutta and Bombay, and mud-walled houses from the villages of rural India. Bamboo huts from Indonesia and crowded little stores no bigger than closets show you how people live in such areas as Southeast Asia, Latin America, and Africa. Sound effects play over hidden speakers.

Linnaeusstraat 2 (at Mauritskade). ☎ **020/568-8200.** www.tropenmuseum.nl. Admission 7.50€ ($11) adults, 6€ ($8.70) seniors and students, 4€ ($5.80) children 6–17, children under 6 free. Daily 10am–5pm (3pm Dec 5, 24, and 31). Closed Jan 1, Apr 30, May 5, and Dec 25. Tram: 7, 9, 10, or 14 to Mauritskade.

HISTORIC BUILDINGS & MONUMENTS

Only steps from busy shopping streets, the **Begijnhof** ★, at Spui (tram: 1, 2, or 5), is the city's most tranquil spot. Hidden behind a plain facade is a 14th-century courtyard with a central garden ringed with restored almshouses formerly occupied by *begijns,* pious laywomen of the order of the Beguines. Most of the tiny 17th- and 18th-century buildings house elderly widows, and you should respect their privacy. In the southwest corner of the cloister, at no. 34, stands **Het Houten Huys,** one of Amsterdam's pair of surviving timber houses, built around 1425. The complex includes a clandestine Roman Catholic church and the former Beguine church from 1419, donated by the city's Protestant rulers to Scottish Presbyterian exiles in 1607, and now misnamed slightly as the Engelse Kerk (English Church). You're welcome to visit the Begijnhod daily from 8am to 1pm.

Finds Gay Remembrance

The ***Homomonument,*** Westermarkt (tram no. 13, 14, or 17), a sculpture group of three pink granite triangles near the Anne Frankhuis, is dedicated to the memory of gays and lesbians killed during World War II, or as a result of oppression and persecution because of their sexuality. People also visit to remember those who have died of AIDS.

Koninklijk Paleis (Royal Palace) The 17th-century neoclassical Royal Palace, built on top of 13,659 wooden pilings to prevent it from sinking into the soft Amsterdam soil, was Amsterdam's town hall for 153 years. It was first used as a palace during Napoleon's rule in the early 19th century, when from 1806 to 1810 the French emperor's brother Louis Bonaparte was king of the Netherlands. You can visit its high-ceilinged Citizens' Hall, Burgomasters' Chambers, and Council Room, as well as the Vierschaar—a marble tribunal where in the 17th century death sentences were pronounced. Although this is the monarch's official palace, Queen Beatrix rarely uses it for more than occasional receptions or official ceremonies. ***Note:*** The palace is closed for renovations until 2009; until then you can only view the exterior.

Dam. ✆ **020/620-4060.** www.koninklijkhuis.nl. Tram: 1, 2, 4, 5, 9, 13, 14, 16, 17, 24, or 25 to the Dam.

HISTORIC CHURCHES

Nieuwe Kerk This church across from the Royal Palace is the "New Church" in name only. Construction on this late-Gothic structure began about 1400, but much of the interior, including the organ, dates from the 17th century. Since 1815, all Dutch kings and queens have been crowned here. Today the church is used primarily as a cultural center where special art exhibits are held. Regular performances on the church's huge organ are held in summer.

Dam (next to the Royal Palace). ✆ **020/638-6909.** www.nieuwekerk.nl. Admission varies with different events; free when there's no exhibit. Daily 10am–6pm (Thurs to 10pm during exhibits). Tram: 1, 2, 4, 5, 9, 13, 14, 16, 17, 24, or 25 to the Dam.

Oude Kerk ★ The Gothic Old Church from the 13th century is the city's oldest. It stands in the middle of the Red-Light District, surrounded by old almshouses turned into prostitutes' rooms. Inside (the church, that is) are monumental tombs, including that of Rembrandt's wife, Saskia van Uylenburg, and handsome stained-glass windows. The organ, built in 1724, is played regularly in summer; many connoisseurs believe it has the best tone of any organ in the world. You can climb the 70m (230-ft.) tower for an excellent view of old Amsterdam.

Just outside the Oude Kerk is what's claimed to be the world's first monument to prostitution. The bronze sculpture *Belle,* unveiled in 2007, depicts a hooker standing in a doorway and bears an inscription calling for "respect for sexworkers [sic] all over the world."

Oudekerksplein 23 (at Oudezijds Voorburgwal). ✆ **020/625-8284.** www.oudekerk.nl. Church: admission 7€ ($10) adults; 5€ ($7.25) seniors, students, children 5–12; children under 5 free. Mon–Sat 11am–5pm; Sun 1–5pm. Tower: admission 6€ ($8.70). Sat–Sun 1–5pm; tours every 30 min. Metro: Nieuwmarkt.

Westerkerk ★ Built between 1620 and 1630, this church is a masterpiece of Dutch Renaissance style. At the top of the 84m (276-ft.) tower, the highest, most beautiful tower in Amsterdam, is a giant replica of the imperial crown of Maximilian of Austria. Somewhere in this church (no one knows where) is Rembrandt's grave. During summer, regular organ concerts are played on a 300-year-old instrument. You can climb the tower or go by elevator to the top for a great view.

Westermarkt. ☎ **020/624-7766.** www.westerkerk.nl. Church: free admission. Apr–Sept daily 11am–3pm Tower: admission 6€ ($8.70). Apr–Oct Mon–Sat 10am–5:30pm; tours every 30 min. Tram: 13, 14, or 17 to Westermarkt.

OTHER SIGHTS & ATTRACTIONS

Artis ★★ *Kids* If you're at a loss for what to do with the kids, Artis is a safe bet—1.2 million visitors a year agree. Established in 1838, the oldest zoo in the Netherlands houses 6,000 animals from 1,400 species. Of course, you'll find the usual tigers, lions, giraffes, wolves, leopards, elephants, camels, monkeys, penguins, and peacocks no self-respecting zoo can do without. Yet Artis has much more, for no extra charge, like the excellent Planetarium (closed Mon morning), and a Geological and Zoological Museum. The refurbished Aquarium, built in 1882, is superbly presented, particularly the sections on the Amazon River, coral reefs, and Amsterdam's own canals with their fish populations and burden of wrecked cars, rusted bikes, and other urban detritus. In the children's farm kids can stroke and help tend to the needs of resident Dutch species. You can rest for a while and have a snack or lunch at **Artis Restaurant.**

Plantage Kerklaan 38–40 (at Plantage Middenlaan). ☎ **020/523-3400.** www.artis.nl. Admission 18€ ($26) adults, 17€ ($24) seniors, 15€ ($21) children 3–9, children under 3 free. May–Oct daily 9am–6pm (Sat to sunset); Nov–Apr daily 9am–5pm. Tram: 9 or 14 to Plantage Kerklaan.

Checking Out the Red-Light District

You might want to study the quaint gabled architecture along the narrow canals of De Wallen (The Walls), the oldest part of the city. And, oh yes, you might also notice certain ladies watching the world go by through their red-fringed windows.

A warren of streets east of the Dam, around Oudezijds Achterburgwal and Oudezijds Voorburgwal, is the Rosse Buurt (Red-Light District), one of the most famous features of Amsterdam sightseeing (Metro: Nieuwmarkt). It's extraordinary to see women of all nationalities dressed in exotic underwear and perched in windows waiting for customers. With iPod buds in their ears, they knit, brush their hair, or just slink enticingly in their seats.

The Red-Light District has now become a major attraction, not only for customers of storefront sex but also for sightseers. If you do choose to look around, you need to exercise some caution. Watch out for pickpockets. In a neighborhood where anything seems permissible, the one no-no is taking pictures. Violate this rule and your camera could be removed from you and broken.

In 2007, as part of a continuing effort to clean up the "unsavory" side of Amsterdam, the mayor forced the closure of a third of the red-light windows and bought up properties to be rented as fashion boutiques and other upscale small businesses. Some of the more raucous sex clubs may also be shuttered.

Hortus Botanicus ★ Established in 1682, Amsterdam's Botanical Garden is a medley of color and scent, containing 250,000 flowers and 115,000 plants and trees from 8,000 different varieties. It owes its origins to the treasure trove of tropical plants the Dutch found in their colonies—Indonesia, Surinam, and the Antilles—and its popularity to the Dutch love affair with flowers. Among highlights are the **Semicircle,** which reconstructs part of the original design from 1682; the **Mexico-California Desert House; Palm House,** with one of the world's oldest palm trees; and the **Tri-Climate House,** which displays tropical, subtropical, and desert plants.

Plantage Middenlaan 2A (close to Artis Zoo). ✆ **020/625-9021.** www.dehortus.nl. Admission 7€ ($10) adults, 3.50€ ($5.10) seniors and children 5–14, children under 5 free. Feb–June and Sept–Nov Mon–Fri 9am–5pm, Sat–Sun 10am–5pm; July–Aug Mon–Fri 9am–7pm, Sat–Sun 10am–7pm; Dec–Jan Mon–Fri 9am–4pm, Sat–Sun 10am–4pm. Closed Jan 1 and Dec 25. Tram: 9 or 14 to Plantage Middenlaan.

PARKS

When the sun shines in Amsterdam, people head for the parks. The most popular and conveniently located of Amsterdam's 30 parks is the 49-hectare (121-acre) **Vondelpark** ★★ (tram no. 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 10, or 12), home to skateboarding, Frisbee flipping, in-line skating, model-boat sailing, soccer, softball, basketball, open-air concerts and theater, smooching in the undergrowth, parties, picnics, crafts stalls, topless sunbathing—you name it. Its lakes, ponds, and streams are surrounded by meadows, trees, and colorful flowers. Vondelpark lies generally southwest of Leidseplein and has entrances all around; the most popular is adjacent to Leidseplein, on Stadhouderskade. Beware the tasty-looking "gâteau" sold here, or you might find yourself floating above the trees: Drug-laced "space cake" is an acquired taste. This park, open daily from 8am to sunset, is extremely popular in summer with young people from all over the world; admission is free.

To enjoy scenery and fresh air, head out to the giant **Amsterdamse Bos** (bus no. 170 or 172 from outside Centraal Station to the main entrance on Amstelveenseweg), in the Amstelveen southern suburb. Nature on the city's doorstep, the park was laid out during the Depression years as a public works project. By now the trees, birds, insects, and small animals are firmly established. At the entrance on Amstelveenseweg, stop by the **Bezoekerscentrum (Visitor Center),** Bosbaanweg 5 (✆ **020/545-6100;** www.amsterdamsebos.nl), where you can trace the park's history, learn about its wildlife, and pick up a plan of the park. The center is open daily (except Dec 25–26) from noon to 5pm, and admission is free. Across the way is a bicycle rental shop (✆ **020/644-5473**), where bikes are available for from 8€ ($12) a day. Then, follow the path to a long stretch of water called the **Bosbaan,** a 2km (1¼-mile) competition-rowing course. Beyond the course's western end is a big pond, the **Grote Vijver,** where you can rent boats, and the **Openluchttheater (Open-Air Theater),** which often has performances on summer evenings. The Amsterdamse Bos is open 24 hours; admission is free.

ORGANIZED TOURS

Although you could see most of Amsterdam's important sights in one long walking tour, it's best to break the city into shorter walks. Luckily, the **VVV Amsterdam** tourist office has done that. For 2€ ($2.90), you can buy a brochure outlining one of four walking tours: *Voyage of Discovery Through Amsterdam, A Walk Through Jewish Amsterdam, A Walk Through the Jordaan,* and *A Walk Through Maritime Amsterdam.*

A **canal-boat cruise** ★★ is the best way to view the old houses and warehouses. If you have to choose among a walking tour, a bus tour, and a boat tour, definitely take

Finds Ferry Tale

Free ferries across the IJ waterway connect the center city with Amsterdam-Noord (North). The short crossings for foot passengers and bikes make ideal minicruises for the cash-strapped and provide a good view of the harbor. Ferries depart from the Waterplein-West dock behind Centraal Station on De Ruyterkade every 10 to 15 minutes from 6:30am to 6pm.

a boat. This is a city built on the shipping trade, so it's only fitting you should see it from the water, just as the golden age merchants saw their city. There are several canal-boat jetties, all of which have signs stating the time of the next tour. The greatest concentration of canal-boat operators is along Damrak and Rokin from Centraal Station; another cluster is on Singelgracht, near Leidseplein. Most tours last 1 hour and are around 9€ ($13) for adults, 6€ ($8.70) for children ages 4 to 12, and free for children under 4 (prices vary a bit from company to company). Since the tours are all basically the same, simply pick the one that's most convenient for you. Some cruises include snacks and drinks, with floating candlelit dinners extra.

You can take a self-guided, self-powered tour on a **water bike.** These small pedal boats (also know as *pedalos*) for two to four are available from three docks of **Canal Bike** (✆ **020/626-5574;** www.canal.nl) at Leidseplein near the Rijksmuseum (tram no. 1, 2, 5, 7, or 10), at Westerkerk (tram no. 13, 14, or 17), and on Keizersgracht near Leidsestraat (tram no. 1, 2, or 5). Canal bikes can be rented daily from 10am to 4pm in spring and autumn (to 10pm in summer). The hourly rate is 8€ ($12) a head for one or two people and 7€ ($10) a head for three or four. There's a 50€ ($73) refundable deposit. You can pick one up at one dock and drop it off at another.

A 2½-hour **bus tour** of the city is around 25€ ($41). Children 4 to 13 are usually charged half price, and children under 4 ride for free. Tour companies include **The Best of Holland,** Damrak 34 (✆ **020/623-1539**); **Holland International Excursions,** Prins Hendrikkade 33A (✆ **020/625-3035**); **Holland Keytours,** Dam 19 (✆ **020/624-7304**); and **Lindbergh Excursions,** Damrak 26 (✆ **020/622-2766**).

THE SHOPPING SCENE

Strolling Amsterdam's streets, you could get the impression the city is one giant outdoor mall. Everywhere you look are stores ranging in price and variety from the Jordaan's used-clothing stores and bookstores to Pieter Cornelisz Hooftstraat's designer boutiques. Alas, most stores have little in the way of bargains. However, many typically Dutch souvenirs and gift items might appeal to you and can be real bargains if you shop around.

Best buys in Amsterdam include special items produced by the Dutch to perfection, or produced to perfection in the past and that now retail as antiques—delftware, pewter, crystal, and old-fashioned clocks—or commodities in which they have significantly cornered a market, such as diamonds. If cost is an important consideration, remember the Dutch also produce inexpensive specialties such as cheese, flower bulbs, and chocolate.

For jewelry, trendy clothing, and athletic gear, try the department stores and specialized stores around the Dam. On the long, pedestrianized Nieuwendijk-Kalverstraat shopping street and on Leidsestraat, you find inexpensive clothing stores and

Tips Tax Saver

Watch for the TAX-FREE SHOPPING sign in some store windows. These stores provide **value-added tax (BTW)** refunds to non-E.U. residents. This refund amounts to 13.75% of the total cost of purchases of more than 50€ ($73) per day in participating stores. When you're leaving by air, present the refund check to Customs, along with your purchases and receipts; they will stamp it and you can get an immediate refund from the ABN-AMRO bank at Schiphol Airport.

souvenir stores. For designer boutiques and upscale fashion and accessories, shop on Pieter Cornelisz Hooftstraat and Van Baerlestraat. Pricey antiques and art dealers congregate on Nieuwe Spiegelstraat. For fashion boutiques and funky little specialty stores, or a good browse through a flea market or secondhand store, roam the streets of the Jordaan. The Red-Light District specializes in stores selling erotic clothing, sex aids and accessories, and pornographic books and magazines.

STORES WORTH A VISIT

The city's top department store, with the best selection of goods and a great cafe, is **De Bijenkorf,** Dam 1 (✆ **020/621-8080;** tram no. 4, 9, 14, 16, 24, or 25). You can find almost everything there is to buy in Amsterdam at **Magna Plaza** (tram no. 1, 2, 5, 13, 14, or 17), a splendid three-story mall in the old main post office building, behind the Dam at the corner of Nieuwezijds Voorburgwal and Raadhuisstraat.

Unless you simply must have brand-name articles, you can save considerably on hand-painted pottery at **Jorrit Heinen,** Prinsengracht 440, off Leidsestraat (✆ **020/627-8299;** tram no. 1, 2, or 5), and even watch the product being made. Also recommendable is **Delftware,** Nieuwendijk 24 (✆ **020/627-3974;** tram no. 1, 2, 4, 5, 9, 13, 16, 17, 24, or 25).

Diamond showrooms offering free individual and small-group tours of their diamond-cutting and -polishing facilities include **Amsterdam Diamond Center,** Rokin 1 (✆ **020/624-5787;** tram no. 4, 9, 14, 16, 24, or 25), just off the Dam; **Coster Diamonds,** Paulus Potterstraat 2–6 (✆ **020/305-5555;** tram no. 2 or 5), near the Rijksmuseum; and **Van Moppes Diamonds,** Albert Cuypstraat 2–6 (✆ **020/676-1242;** tram no. 4), at the street market.

MARKETS

Buying flowers at the **Bloemenmarkt (Flower Market)** ★★, on a row of barges permanently moored along Singel between Muntplein and Leidsestraat (tram no. 1, 2, 4, 5, 9, 14, 16, 24, or 25), is an Amsterdam ritual. The market is open Monday to Saturday 9am to 5:30pm, and Sunday from 11am to 5:30pm.

You can still find a few antiques and near-antiques at the **Waterlooplein flea market** (tram no. 9 or 14), on the square around the Muziektheater, but most of what's for sale these days is used and cheap clothing. It's open Monday to Saturday from 10am to 5pm. The open-air **Albert Cuyp market,** Albert Cuypstraat (tram no. 4, 16, 24, or 25), open Monday to Saturday 9am to 5pm, has more cheap clothing, plus fresh fish and flowers, Asian vegetables, textiles, electronics, cosmetics, and more. There's also a **flea market** on Noordermarkt in the Jordaan (tram no. 1, 2, 5, 13, or 17) on Monday morning 8am until midday, and a market for **organic food** on Saturday 10am to 4pm.

Spread through several old warehouses along the Jordaan canals, **Kunst & Antiekcentrum de Looier,** Elandsgracht 109 (✆ **020/624-9038;** tram no. 7, 10, or 17), is a big art and antiques market. Individual dealers rent booths and corners to show their best wares in antique jewelry, prints, and engravings.

AMSTERDAM AFTER DARK

Nightlife in the city centers on Leidseplein and Rembrandtplein, and you'll find dozens of bars, nightclubs, cafes, dance clubs, and movie theaters around these two squares. More cultured evening entertainment can be found in other parts of the city.

For listings of performances, consult the monthly English-language magazine ***Amsterdam Day by Day,*** available for 1.95€ ($2.85) from VVV Amsterdam tourist offices (see "Visitor Information," earlier in this chapter) and many other outlets around the city. To reserve and purchase tickets for almost every venue in the city, stop by or contact the **Amsterdams Uitburo-AUB Ticketshop,** Leidseplein 26, on the corner of Marnixstraat (✆ **0900/0191;** www.aub.nl; tram no. 1, 2, 5, 7, or 10), open Monday to Saturday from 10am to 7:30pm, and Sunday from noon to 7:30pm. Their free monthly magazine in Dutch, ***De Uitkrant,*** has a thorough listing of events (which should not be too hard for English speakers to follow) and is available from this office and from VVV offices, performance venues, and clubs. VVV offices also can reserve tickets, for a 2.50€ ($3.65) fee.

THE PERFORMING ARTS

CLASSICAL MUSIC The renowned **Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra** is based at the **Concertgebouw** ★★, Concertgebouwplein 2–6 (✆ **020/671-8345;** www.concertgebouw.nl; tram no. 3, 5, 12, or 16), which has an ornate Greek Revival facade and some of the best acoustics of any hall in the world. Performances, by this and other orchestras, are held almost every night in the building's two halls. There are free half-hour rehearsal concerts on Wednesdays at 12:30pm. The box office is open daily from 10am to 7pm (to 8:15pm for same-day tickets), with tickets from 13€ to 75€ ($18–$109).

The **Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra** (the "NedPho") and the **Netherlands Chamber Orchestra** both perform at the impressive **Beurs van Berlage,** Damrak 213 (✆ **020/521-7520;** www.berlage.com; tram no. 4, 9, 14, 16, 24, or 25), which was once the Amsterdam stock exchange and now houses two concert halls for symphonies and chamber music. The box office is open Tuesday to Friday from 12:30 to 6pm and Saturday from noon to 5pm; tickets are 8€ to 33€ ($12–$48).

CONTEMPORARY MUSIC A spectacular piece of modern architecture, the **Muziekgebouw aan 't IJ,** Piet Heinkade 1 (✆ **020/788-2000;** www.muziekgebouw.nl; tram no. 26 to Muziekgebouw), on the IJ waterfront just east of Centraal Station, is the city's home for avant-garde and experimental music. You can look for concerts of modern, old, jazz, electronic, and non-Western music, along with small-scale musical theater, opera, and dance. The box office is open Monday to Saturday from noon to 7pm; tickets are 10€ to 54€ ($15–$78).

A kind of annex to the Muzeiekgebouw is the equally new home of the **Bimhuis** jazz and improvised music club (see below).

OPERA & DANCE The **Netherlands Opera** and the **National Ballet** both perform regularly at the modern **Muziektheater,** Waterlooplein (✆ **020/625-5455;** www.muziektheater.nl; tram no. 9 or 14); the innovative **Netherlands Dance Theater** company from The Hague is a frequent visitor. The box office is open Monday to

Saturday from 10am to 8pm, and Sunday and holidays from 11:30am to 6pm, with tickets from 22€ to 110€ ($32–$160). Music and dance performances are occasionally held at the **Stadsschouwburg** (see "Theater," below).

THEATER The **Koninklijk Theater Carré,** Amstel 115–125 (✆ **020/622-5225;** www.theatercarre.nl; Metro: Weesperplein), a huge old domed former circus-theater on the Amstel River near the Magere Brug (Skinny Bridge), occasionally presents touring shows from New York's Broadway or London's West End. The box office is open Monday to Saturday from 10am to 7pm and Sunday from 1 to 7pm, and tickets go for 12€ to 125€ ($17–$181). At the Dutch Renaissance **Stadsschouwburg,** Leidseplein 26 (✆ **020/624-2311;** www.stadsschouwburgamsterdam.nl; tram no. 1, 2, 5, 7, or 10), from 1894, performances include plays in Dutch and, occasionally, English, plus music and dance performances by international companies. The box office is open daily 10am to 6pm, with tickets at 15€ to 105€ ($22–$152).

Compared by *Time* magazine to Chicago's famous Second City troupe, **Boom Chicago Theater,** Leidsepleintheater, Leidseplein 12 (✆ **020/423-0101;** www.boomchicago.nl; tram no. 1, 2, 5, 7, or 10), puts on great improvisational comedy, and Dutch audiences have no problem with the English sketches. You can have dinner and a drink while enjoying the show at a candlelit table. It's open daily in summer, closed Sunday in winter. Dinner/theater packages vary from show to show, but begin from around 50€ ($73) per person.

THE LIVE-MUSIC SCENE

Amsterdam's biggest and most popular clubs book up-and-coming acts and always charge admission. Plenty of smaller clubs in cafes showcase local bands and charge no admission.

Since 2005, a shiny metal box with windows that's an extension of the new Muziekgebouw aan 't IJ (see above), on the waterfront east of Centraal Station, has been home to the **Bimhuis,** Piet Heinkade 3 (✆ **020/788-2188;** www.bimhuis.nl; tram no. 26 to Muziekgebouw), the city's premier jazz, blues, and improvisational club. This is a big change over its previous tatty premises amid the old warehouses of the Oude Schans canal, but the "Bim," as locals affectionately call the club, seems to be wearing the mutation well. Top local and international musicians are regularly featured.

A regular crowd frequents the small, intimate **Alto Jazz Café,** Korte Leidsedwarsstraat 115 (✆ **020/626-3249**), for nightly performances by both regular and guest combos. Check out also the funky **Bourbon Street,** Leidsekruisstraat 6–8 (✆ **020/623-3440**), for late-night blues and rock. Both bars are near Leidseplein, reached by tram no. 1, 2, 5, 7, or 10.

THE BAR SCENE

There are countless bars—or cafes, as they're called here—in the city, many around **Leidseplein** and **Rembrandtplein.** Many of them don't start to get busy until at least 8pm, but they usually open at noon and stay open all day. The most popular drink is draft Pilsener served in small glasses with two fingers of head on top. Also popular is *jenever* (Dutch gin) available in *jonge* (young) and *oude* (old) varieties—oude is stronger, more refined in taste, and higher in alcoholic content.

BROWN CAFES Particularly old and traditional bars often earn the appellation of ***bruine kroeg*** (brown cafe), a name said to have been derived as much from the preponderance of wood furnishings as from the browning of the walls from years of dense tobacco smoke. Some have been around since Rembrandt's time. At these warm and friendly cafes you can sit and sip a glass of beer or a mixed drink; at some you can even get a cheap meal.

Papeneiland, Prinsengracht 2, at the corner of Brouwersgracht (✆ **020/624-1989;** tram no. 1, 2, 5, 13, or 17), is Amsterdam's oldest cafe: Since 1600 or thereabouts, folks have been dropping by for shots of jenever and glasses of beer. Originally a tasting house where people could try liqueurs distilled and aged on the premises, **De Drie Fleschjes,** Gravenstraat 18, between the Nieuwe Kerk and Nieuwendijk (✆ **020/624-8443;** tram no. 1, 2, 4, 5, 9, 13, 14, 16, 17, 24, or 25), has been in business for more than 300 years. It's popular with businesspeople and journalists, who stop by to sample the wide variety of jenevers.

The dark walls, low ceilings, and old wooden furniture at **Hoppe,** Spui 18–20 (✆ **020/420-4420;** tram no. 1, 2, or 5), one of Amsterdam's oldest and most popular brown cafes, have literally remained unchanged since the cafe opened in 1670. It has become a tourist attraction, but locals love it too, often stopping for a drink on their way home. There's usually standing room only and the crowds overflow onto the sidewalk.

Said to be where the builders of the Westerkerk were paid, **Café Chris,** Bloemstraat 42 (✆ **020/624-5942;** tram no. 13, 14, or 17), opened in 1624 and has some curious old features, including a toilet that flushes from outside the bathroom door. In a medieval alley, wood-paneled **In de Wildeman,** Kolksteeg 3 (✆ **020/638-2348;** tram no. 1, 2, 5, 13, or 17), serves more than 200 kinds of beer. The tile floor and rows of bottles and jars behind the counters are remnants from its early days as a distillery's retail store.

MODERN CAFES Flea-market tables, armchairs left over from the 1970s, and rotating exhibits of rather puzzling artwork have made **Café Schuim,** Spuistraat 189 (✆ **020/638-9357;** tram no. 1, 2, or 5), the cafe of the moment in the Dam area. The rumpled surroundings attract an assortment of creative types who debate and discuss during the week and try to avoid being crushed by mobs on weekends.

Other notable hangouts are **Café Dante,** Spuistraat 320 (✆ **020/638-8839;** tram no. 1, 2, or 5), where a different modern-art exhibit is mounted every month; and **Café Schiller,** Rembrandtplein 26 (✆ **020/624-9846;** tram no. 4, 9, or 14), which has a bright, glassed-in terrace on the square and a finely carved Art Deco interior; it's popular with artists and writers.

The concept of the Grand Cafe—combining drinks and food in elegant surroundings—has taken Amsterdam by storm. One of the best is **Café Luxembourg,** Spuistraat 24 (✆ **020/620-6264;** tram no. 1, 2, or 5), a chic rendezvous that takes some of its menu dishes from top eateries around town. Whether you're in jeans or theater attire, you'll feel comfortable at **Royal Café De Kroon,** Rembrandtplein 15 (✆ **020/625-2011;** tram no. 4, 9, or 14), with fine views on the square through the big picture windows upstairs, amid a decor that's rigorously modern.

On summer evenings, trendies head to the terrace of **Café Vertigo,** Vondelpark 3 (✆ **020/612-3021;** tram no. 2 or 5), in Vondelpark, for one of the liveliest scenes in town. The low, arched ceilings, subtle lighting, and unobtrusive music set a mood of casual sophistication.

DANCE CLUBS

You find dozens of large and small clubs around **Leidseplein** and **Rembrandtplein.** They tend to rise and fall in popularity, so ask someone in a cafe what the current favorites are. Drinks can be expensive—a beer or Coke averages 5€ ($7.25), and a whiskey or cocktail 8€ ($12). Most dance clubs are open Thursday to Sunday 9 or 10pm to 2 or 3am.

Popular clubs include **Tonight,** at the Hotel Arena, Gravesandestraat 51 (✆ **020/850-2451;** www.arena.nl; tram no. 7 or 10); **Escape,** Rembrandtplein 11 (✆ **020/622-1111;** www.escape.nl; tram no. 4, 9, or 14); **Pacific Parc,** Haarlemmerweg 8–10 (✆ **020/597-4498;** www.pacificparc.nl; tram no. 10); **Odeon,** Singel 460 (✆ **020/521-8555;** www.odeontheater.nl; tram no. 1, 2, or 5); **Paradiso,** Weteringschans 6–8 (✆ **020/626-4521;** www.paradiso.nl; tram no. 1, 2, 5, 7, or 10); **Akhnaton,** Nieuwezijds Kolk 25 (✆ **020/624-3396;** www.akhnaton.nl; tram no. 1, 2, 5, 13, or 17); and **Melkweg** ★, Lijnbaansgracht 234A (✆ **020/531-8181;** www.melkweg.nl; tram no. 1, 2, 5, 7, or 10). Cover and music varies.

THE GAY & LESBIAN SCENE

Amsterdam bills itself as the gay capital of Europe, proud of its open and tolerant attitude toward homosexuality. To find out more about the gay and lesbian scenes, stop by **COC,** Rozenstraat 14 (✆ **020/623-4079;** tram no. 13, 14, or 17), 2 blocks off Westerkerk. It houses a cafe open Monday to Saturday from 11pm to 4am as well as a dance club. The dance club is primarily for men on Fridays and primarily for women on Saturdays. Sundays attract a mixed crowd. You can also call the **Gay and Lesbian Switchboard** at ✆ **020/623-6565,** open daily from 10am to 10pm.

Gay News, a monthly newspaper in English, is available free in gay establishments throughout Amsterdam. Of course, you find the best coverage of the Gay Capital of Europe in ***Frommer's Gay & Lesbian Europe.***

Some of the more popular spots for men are **April,** Reguliersdwarsstraat 37 (✆ **020/625-9572;** tram no. 1, 2, or 5), a sleek modern bar that will feel familiar to any American barfly; **Exit,** Reguliersdwarsstraat 42 (✆ **020/624-7778;** tram no. 1, 2, or 5), a dance club that attracts a younger crowd; **iT,** Amstelstraat 24 (✆ **020/625-0111;** tram no. 4, 9, or 14), Amsterdam's most famous and flamboyant dance club with a mixed gay and straight crowd; **Cockring,** Warmoesstraat 96 (✆ **020/623-9604;** tram no. 4, 9, 14, 16, 24, or 25), a popular dance club; **Argos,** Warmoesstraat 95 (✆ **020/622-6572;** tram no. 4, 9, 14, 16, 24, or 25), Europe's oldest leather bar; and **Cosmo,** Kerkstraat 42 (✆ **020/624-7778;** tram no. 1, 2, or 5), a late-night bar.

The city has plenty of bars and dance clubs for gay men, but far fewer for lesbians. Generally you find the trendier places around **Rembrandtplein** and on **Reguliersdwarsstraat** (immediately off Leidsestraat, a block south of Singel), a more casual atmosphere on **Kerkstraat** near Leidseplein, and leather bars on **Warmoesstraat. Vive la Vie,** Amstelstraat 7 (✆ **020/624-0114;** tram no. 4, 9, or 14), on the edge of Rembrandtplein, is the city's only lesbian bar; this convivial little corner spot on Rembrandtplein hosts periodic parties. **Saarein,** Elandsstraat 119 (✆ **020/623-4901;** tram no. 7, 10, or 17), near Leidseplein, is a mixed-gender bar/cafe that has a large lesbian following.

"COFFEE SHOPS"

Amsterdam is a mecca for the marijuana smoker and seems likely to remain that way. Visitors often get confused about "smoking" coffee shops and how they differ from "nonsmoking" ones. Well, to begin with, "smoking" and "nonsmoking" don't refer to cigarettes—they refer to cannabis. "Smoking" coffee shops not only sell cannabis, most commonly in the form of hashish, but also provide somewhere patrons can sit

Tips Toker Talk

Don't buy on the street. You stand a fair chance of being ripped off, the quality is doubtful, and there may be unpleasant additives.

and smoke it all day if they so choose. Generally, these smoking coffee shops are the only places in Amsterdam called "coffee shops"—regular cafes are called *cafes* or *eetcafes.*

You are allowed to buy only 5 grams (⅕ oz.) of soft drugs at a time for personal use, but you're allowed to be in possession of 30 grams (1 oz.) for personal use.

Coffee shops are not allowed to sell alcohol, so they sell coffee, tea, and fruit juices. You won't be able to get any food (except maybe drug-laced "space cake"), so don't expect to grab a quick bite. You're even allowed to smoke your own stuff in the coffee shop, as long as you buy a drink.

Some of the most popular smoking coffee shops are **The Rookies,** Korte Leidsedwarsstraat 145–147 (☎ **020/694-2353;** tram no. 1, 2, 5, 7, or 10); **Borderline,** Amstelstraat 37 (☎ **020/622-0540;** tram no. 9 or 14); and, with tourists, the shops of the **Bulldog** chain, which has branches around the city. The **Bulldog Palace** is at Leidseplein 15 (☎ **020/627-1908;** tram no. 1, 2, 5, 7, or 10).

2 Environs of Amsterdam

If Amsterdam is your only stop in the Netherlands, try to make at least one excursion into the countryside. Dikes, windmills, and some of Holland's quaintest villages await you just beyond the city limits. And you don't need to travel much farther to reach one of the many historic art towns.

HAARLEM ★★

Just 18km (11 miles) west of Amsterdam, Haarlem is a graceful town of winding canals and medieval neighborhoods that also holds several fine museums. The best time to visit is Saturday, for the market on the Grote Markt, or in tulip season (Mar to mid-May), when the city explodes with flowers.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE Haarlem is 15 minutes from Amsterdam by **train,** and two or three depart every hour from Centraal Station. A round-trip ticket is 10.90€ ($16) in first class, and 6.40€ ($9.30) in second class. The historic center is a 5- to 10-minute walk from Haarlem's graceful 1908 Art Nouveau train station, which is decorated with painted tiles and has a fine station restaurant.

There are frequent **buses** from outside Amsterdam Centraal Station. By **car,** take N5 and then A5 west.

VISITOR INFORMATION **VVV Haarlem,** Stationsplein 1, 2011 LR Haarlem (☎ **0900/616-1600;** fax 023/534-0537; www.vvvzk.nl), is just outside the rail station. The office is open October to March, Monday to Friday from 9:30am to 5:30pm and Saturday from 10am to 2pm; April to September, Monday to Friday from 9:30am to 5:30pm and Saturday from 10am to 4pm.

SEEING THE SIGHTS

Haarlem is where Frans Hals, Jacob van Ruysdael, and Pieter Saenredam were living and painting their famous portraits, landscapes, and church interiors while Rembrandt was living and working in Amsterdam.

Handel and Mozart made special visits just to play the magnificent organ of **Sint-Bavokerk (St. Bavo's Church),** also known as the **Grote Kerk** ★, Oude Groenmarkt 23 (✆ **023/532-4399;** www.bavo.nl). Look for the tombstone of painter Frans Hals (ca. 1580–1666) and for a cannonball that has been embedded in the church's wall ever since it came flying through a window during the 1572-to-1573 siege of Haarlem. And, of course, don't miss seeing the famous **Christian Müller Organ,** built in 1738. You can hear it at one of the free concerts given on Tuesday and Thursday from April to October. It has 5,068 pipes and is nearly 30m (98 ft.) tall. The woodwork was done by Jan van Logteren. Mozart played the organ in 1766 when he was just 10 years old. St. Bavo's is open Monday to Saturday from 10am to 4pm. Admission is 2€ ($2.90) for adults, 1.25€ ($1.80) for children ages 12 to 16, and free for children under 12.

From St. Bavo's, it's a short walk to the **Frans Halsmuseum** ★★, Groot Heiligland 62 (✆ **023/511-5775;** www.franshalsmuseum.com), where the galleries are the halls and furnished chambers of a former pensioners' home, and famous paintings by the masters of the Haarlem school hang in settings that look like the 17th-century homes they were intended to adorn. The museum is open Tuesday to Saturday from 11am to 5pm, Sunday and holidays from noon to 5pm; closed January 1 and December 25. Admission is 7.50€ ($11) for adults, 3.75€ ($5.45) for those ages 19 to 24, and free for visitors under 19.

The oldest and perhaps the most unusual museum in the Netherlands, the **Teylers Museum,** Spaarne 16 (✆ **023/531-9010;** www.teylersmuseum.nl), contains a curious collection. There are drawings by Michelangelo, Raphael, and Rembrandt; fossils, minerals, and skeletons; instruments of physics; and an odd assortment of inventions, including a 19th-century radarscope. The museum is open Tuesday to Saturday from 10am to 5pm, and Sunday and holidays from noon to 5pm; closed January 1 and December 25. Admission is 6€ ($8.70) for adults, 3€ ($4.35) for children ages 6 to 17, and free for children under 6.

An ideal way to tour the city is by **canalboat cruise,** operated by **Woltheus Cruises** (✆ **023/535-7723;** www.woltheuscruises.nl), from their Spaarne River dock at Gravenstenenbrug. Cruises run from April to October at 10:30am, noon, 1:30, 3, and 4:30pm (during some months the first and last tours are on request only), and are 9.50€ ($14) for adults, 4.50€ ($6.55) for children ages 3 to 11, and free for children under 3.

WHERE TO DINE

De Lift DUTCH/INTERNATIONAL You get reasonably priced meals at this brown cafe, where the decor is Art Nouveau and the music leans toward classic jazz. The kitchen turns out a respectable chicken satay and other soul-food staples.

Grote Markt 29. ✆ **023/532-9742.** Main courses 7€–11€ ($10–$16). No credit cards. Sun–Thurs 9am–2am; Fri–Sat 9am–3am.

ZANDVOORT

Should you feel like getting a breath of sea air, do what Amsterdammers do: Head for **Zandvoort,** 26km (16 miles) west of Amsterdam, on the North Sea coast. Zandvoort is 30 minutes from Amsterdam by **train,** and one leaves Amsterdam Centraal Station every hour. Usually you need to transfer at Haarlem, but during summertime extra trains go direct. Journey time is 30 minutes and a round-trip ticket is 15€ ($21) in first class, and 8.70€ ($13) in second class. There are also frequent **buses** from outside Amsterdam Centraal Station. You can go by **car** via Haarlem on N5, and then on A5, but the summer often brings long traffic lines.

There's not much more to Zandvoort than its **beach** ★, but what a beach. Seemingly endless sands are lined in summertime with beach cafes and discos, and the conditions are good for windsurfing. Down from the mainstream beaches are gay and nudist beaches.

You'll find tranquillity in the **Kennemer Duinen** and **Amsterdamse Waterleiding Duinen,** protected zones of sand dune and vegetation that play an important role in sea defense. Stroll along paths through woods on the eastern side and across dunes leading west toward the sea.

Holland Casino Zandvoort, Badhuisplein 7 (✆ **023/574-0574**), has roulette, blackjack, and more. Dress code is "correct" (collar and tie for men), the minimum age is 18, and you need your passport. It's open daily (except May 4 and Dec 31) from 12:30pm to 3am. Admission is 3.50€ ($5.10).

The town offers plenty of eating and drinking possibilities.

VOLENDAM & MARKEN

Volendam and Marken have long been combined on bus-tour itineraries from Amsterdam as a kind of "packaged Holland and costumes to go." Nonetheless, it's possible to have a delightful day in the bracing air of these two communities on the IJsselmeer lake, where a few residents (fewer with each passing year) may be seen going about their daily business in traditional dress.

There are separate, hourly **buses** to Volendam and Marken from outside Amsterdam's Centraal Station. The fare is 4.50€ ($6.55) round-trip; the ride takes 35 minutes to Volendam and 45 minutes to Marken.

Geared to tourism, **Volendam,** 18km (11 miles) northeast of Amsterdam, has souvenir stores, boutiques, and restaurants. Its boat-filled harbor, tiny streets, and traditional houses have an undeniable charm. If you want a snapshot of yourself surrounded by fishermen wearing little caps and balloon-legged pants, Volendammers will gladly pose. They understand that the traditional costume is worth preserving, as is the economy of a small town that lost most of its fishing industry when the Zuiderzee enclosure dam cut it off from the North Sea. You can visit attractions like the fish auction, a diamond cutter, a clog maker, and a house with a room entirely wallpapered in cigar bands.

A causeway now connects the one-time island of **Marken** ★, 16km (10 miles) northeast of Amsterdam, with the mainland, but it remains as insular as ever. Quieter than Volendam, with a village of green-painted houses on stilts around a tiny harbor, it is also more rural. Clusters of farmhouses dot the *polders* (the reclaimed land from the sea that makes up two-thirds of the Netherlands), and a candy-striped lighthouse stands on the IJsselmeer shore.

Marken does not gush over tourists, but it will feed and water them, and let them wander around its pretty streets. Villagers wear traditional costume, as much to preserve the custom as to appease the tourists who pour in daily. The **Marker Museum,** Kerkbuurt 44–47 (✆ **0299/601-904;** www.markermuseum.nl), is a typical house open as a museum Monday to Saturday from 10am to 5pm (closed at 4pm in Oct)

The IJsselmeer

Only in the Netherlands could you say, "This used to be a sea." The IJsselmeer (pronounced "*Eye*-sselmeer"), a large freshwater lake on Amsterdam's doorstep, actually was once a sea, the Zuiderzee, until the Dutch decided they didn't want a sea any longer, because it was always threatening to flood Amsterdam (and Amsterdammers don't like water in their jenever).

So in the 1930s, workers blocked off the mouth of the Zuiderzee with a massive dike, the Afsluitdijk (Enclosing Dike), from Noord-Holland to Friesland, and that was that. The IJsselmeer is (usually) well behaved, and a tour of its long shoreline, called the "Golden Circle," makes a scenic excursion.

and Sunday from noon to 4pm. Admission is 2.50€ ($3.65) for adults, 1.25€ ($1.80) for children ages 5 to 12, and free for children under 5.

3 Delft ★

Yes, Delft, 54km (34 miles) southwest of Amsterdam, is the town of the famous blue-and-white porcelain. And, yes, you can visit the factory of Koninklijke Porceleyne Fles. But don't let delftware be your only reason to visit. Not only is this one of the prettiest small cities in the Netherlands, but Delft is also important as a cradle of the Dutch Republic and the traditional burial place of the royal family. Plus, it was the birthplace, and inspiration, of the 17th-century master of light and subtle emotion, painter Jan Vermeer. Delft remains a quiet little town, with flowers in its flower boxes and linden trees bending over its gracious canals.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE There are several **trains** an hour from Amsterdam's Centraal Station to Delft Station, which is southwest of the center. The ride takes about 1 hour and is 35€ ($51) round-trip in first class, and 21€ ($30) in second. If you go by **car,** take A4/E19 and then A13/E19 past Den Haag (The Hague) and watch for the Delft exit coming up.

VISITOR INFORMATION **Tourist Information Delft,** Hippolytusbuurt 4, 2611 HN Delft (✆ **0900/515-1555,** or 31-15/215-4051 from outside the Netherlands; www.delft.nl), is in the center of town. The office is open April to September, Sunday and Monday from 10am to 6pm, Tuesday to Friday from 9am to 6pm, and Saturday from 10am to 5pm; October to March, Sunday from 11am to 4pm, and Tuesday to Saturday from 10am to 4pm.

SEEING THE SIGHTS

Vermeer's house is long gone from Delft, as are his paintings. Instead, you can visit the **Oude Kerk** ★, Roland Holstlaan 753 (✆ **015/212-3015;** www.oudekerk-delft.nl), where he's buried. You might want to visit also the **Nieuwe Kerk** ★★, the Markt (✆ **015/212-3025;** www.nieuwekerk-delft.nl), where Prince William of Orange and other members of the House of Orange–Nassau are buried, and to climb its tower, which is 109m (358 ft.) high. Both churches are open mid-March to October, Monday to Saturday from 9am to 6pm; November to March, Monday to Friday from 11am to 4pm, and Saturday from 10am to 5pm. Combined admission is 3.30€

($4.80) for adults, 2.70€ ($3.90) for seniors, 1.60€ ($2.30) for children ages 5 to 14, and free for children under 5; separate admission to the Nieuwe Kerk tower is 2.70€ ($3.90) for adults, 2.20€ ($3.20) for seniors, 1.10€ ($1.60) for children ages 5 to 14, and free for children under 5.

The **Stedelijk Museum Het Prinsenhof** ★, Sint-Agathaplein 1 (✆ **015/260-2358;** www.prinsenhof-delft.nl), on the nearby Oude Delft canal, is where William I of Orange (William the Silent) lived and had his headquarters in the years during which he helped found the Dutch Republic. It's where he was assassinated in 1584, and you can still see the musket-ball holes in the stairwell. Today the Prinsenhof is a museum of paintings, tapestries, silverware, and pottery. It's open Tuesday to Saturday from 10am to 5pm, and Sunday and holidays from 1 to 5pm; closed January 1 and December 25. Admission is 6€ ($8.70) for adults, 5€ ($7.25) for children ages 12 to 16, and free for children under 12.

In the same neighborhood you can see a fine collection of old Delft tiles displayed in the wood-paneled setting of a 19th-century mansion museum, **Lambert van Meerten,** Oude Delft 199 (✆ **015/260-2358;** www.lambertvanmeerten-delft.nl). It's open Tuesday to Saturday from 10am to 5pm, and Sunday from 1 to 5pm; closed January 1 and December 25. Admission is 6€ ($8.70) for adults, 5€ ($7.25) for children ages 12 to 16, and free for children under 12.

To watch a demonstration of the traditional art of making and hand-painting delftware, visit the factory and showroom of **Koninklijke Porceleyne Fles** ★, Rotterdamseweg 196 (✆ **015/251-2030;** www.royaldelft.com; bus no. 63, 121, or 129 to Jaffalaan), founded in 1653. It's open mid March to October, daily from 9am to 5pm; November to mid March, Monday to Saturday from 9am to 5pm; closed December 25 to January 1. Admission is 4€ ($5.80), and free for children under 13.

WHERE TO DINE

Spijshuis de Dis ★ DUTCH Fine Dutch cooking that's traditional at heart but given a modern accent is served up at this atmospheric old restaurant. Among the top dishes are *bakke pot*—a stew made from beef, chicken, and rabbit; V.O.C. mussels (named after the Dutch initials for the East India Company), prepared with garlic, ginger, and curry; and asparagus in season (May–June). The steaks and the pork and lamb filet dishes are great. Don't miss the homemade mushroom soup.

Beestenmarkt 36 (off the Markt). ✆ **015/213-1782.** www.spijshuisdedis.com. Main courses 14€–22€ ($20–$32); fixed-price menu 30€ ($44). AE, DC, MC, V. Thurs–Tues 5–10:30pm.

Stadsherberg De Mol TRADITIONAL DUTCH Food is served here in the medieval manner—in wooden bowls from which you eat with your hands. Set menus include a starter (such as pâté in puff pastry), soup, a variety of meats (such as chicken, lamb, ham, and rabbit), salad, and baked potato. Prices are moderate and quantities copious, and there is fun, too, with live music and dancing.

Molslaan 104 (off Beestenmarkt). ✆ **015/212-1343.** www.stadsherbergdemol.nl. Main courses 9€–13€ ($13–$19); fixed-price menu 19–29€ ($28–$42). MC, V. Tues–Sun 6–11pm.

4 Leiden ★

Students of U.S. history may know that the Pilgrim Fathers lived in this town, 36km (22 miles) southwest of Amsterdam, for 11 years before sailing for North America on the *Mayflower.* Leiden's proudest moment came in 1574, when it was the only Dutch town to withstand a full-blown siege by the Spanish invaders. This was the birthplace of the Dutch tulip trade, and of the painters Rembrandt and Jan Steen, and it is the home of the oldest university in the Netherlands. Finally, with 14 museums, covering subjects ranging from antiquities, natural history, and anatomy to clay pipes and coins, Leiden seems perfectly justified in calling itself *Museum Stad* (Museum City).

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE There are several trains an hour from Amsterdam Centraal Station to Leiden Station, which is northwest of the town center (about a 10-min. walk). The ride takes around 35 minutes and is 24€ ($35) round-trip in first class, 14€ ($21) in second. If you go by car, take A4/E19 in the direction of The Hague and watch for the Leiden exit.

VISITOR INFORMATION **VVV Leiden,** Stationsweg 2D, 2312 AV, Leiden (✆ **0900/222-2333;** fax 071/516-1227; www.leiden.nl), is situated outside the rail station. The office is open Monday from 11am to 5:30pm, Tuesday to Friday from 9:30am to 5:30pm, Saturday from 10am to 4:30pm, and (Apr–Aug) Sunday from 11am to 3pm.

SEEING THE SIGHTS

Among the spectacular antiquities housed at the **Rijksmuseum van Oudheden** ★★, Rapenburg 28 (✆ **071/516-3163;** www.rmo.nl), is the 1st-century-A.D. Temple of Taffeh, presented by the Egyptian government as a gift to the Dutch nation for its assistance in saving monuments prior to the construction of the Aswan High Dam. The museum is open Tuesday to Friday from 10am to 5pm, and weekends and holidays from noon to 5pm; closed January 1, October 3, and December 25. Admission is 8.50€ ($12) for adults, 7.50€ ($11) for seniors, 5.50€ ($8) for children ages 4 to 17, and free for children under 4.

Also noteworthy is the university's **Hortus Botanicus (Botanical Gardens),** Rapenburg 73 (✆ **071/527-7249;** www.hortus.leidenuniv.nl), from 1587. In 1592, botanist Carolus Clusius brought the first-ever tulip bulbs to Holland and planted them here, but he never got to see them flower because they were stolen by rivals. The gardens are open April to October, daily from 10am to 6pm; November to February, Sunday to Friday from 10am to 4pm; and March daily 10am–4pm; closed December 24 to January 1. Admission is 5€ ($7.25) for adults, 3€ ($4.35) for seniors, 2.50€ ($3.65) for children ages 4 to 12, and free for children under 4.

Visit the **Stedelijk Museum de Lakenhal** ★, Oude Singel 28–32 (✆ **071/516-5360;** www.lakenhal.nl), to view works by local heroes Rembrandt and Jan Steen, and others, plus period rooms from the 17th to the 19th centuries. Also on parade is Leiden's pride and joy: a copper stew pot said to have been retrieved by a small boy who crawled through a chink in the city wall just minutes after the lifting of the Spanish siege. He found this very pot full of boiling stew in the enemy's camp and brought it back to feed the starving inhabitants. Ever since, stew has been a national dish and is still traditionally prepared for the Leiden city holiday, October 3, which is the anniversary of its liberation. The museum is open Tuesday to Friday from 10am to 5pm, and weekends and holidays from noon to 5pm; closed January 1 and December 25. Admission is 4€ ($5.80) for adults, 2.50€ ($3.65) for seniors, and free for children under 19.

LEIDEN & THE PILGRIM FATHERS

To touch base with those courageous but humble Pilgrim Fathers, pick up the VVV tourist office's brochure ***A Pilgrimage Through Leiden: A Walk in the Footsteps of the Pilgrim Fathers.*** The walk starts at the **Lodewijkskerk,** which was used as a meeting place by the cloth guild. William Bradford, who later became governor of New Plymouth, was a member of this guild. The walk takes you past the house on William Brewstersteeg (formerly Herensteeg) where William Brewster's Pilgrim Press published the religious views that angered the Church of England. Plaques at **Sint-Pieterskerk** (in a small square off Kloksteeg) memorialize the Pilgrims, in particular Rev. Jon Robinson, who was forced to stay behind because of illness and is buried in this church.

At the **Leiden American Pilgrim Museum** ★, Beschuitsteeg 9 (✆ **071/512-2413;** www.pilgrimhall.org/leidenmuseum.htm), you can hear a recorded commentary on the Pilgrims and see photocopies of documents relating to their 11-year residence in Leiden. The museum is open Wednesday to Saturday from 1 to 5pm. Admission is 2€ ($2.90), and free for children under 6.

WHERE TO DINE

Annie's Verjaardag DUTCH/CONTINENTAL This lively, water-level restaurant has vaulted cellars that are a favorite eating spot for both students and locals, who spill out onto the canal-side terrace in fine weather. When the canals are frozen, the view is enchanting, as skaters practice their turns. The dinner menu is simple but wholesome, and during the day you can snack on sandwiches and tapas.

Oude Rijn 1A. ✆ **071/512-6358.** www.anniesverjaardag.nl. Main courses 11€–16€ ($16–$23). No credit cards. Sun–Thurs 10am–1am; Fri–Sat 10am–2am.

Stadscafé van der Werff ★ FRENCH/BELGIAN This relaxed cafe-restaurant in a grand 1930s villa on the edge of the old town is popular with the town's students and ordinary citizens alike. Diners enjoy dishes like a basic Indonesian satay or their surf-and-turf *kalfsbiefstukje met gebakken gambas en een kreeftensaus* (beefsteak with fried prawns in a lobster sauce).

Steenstraat 2. ✆ **071/513-0335.** www.stadscafevanderwerff.nl. Main courses 13€–20€ ($19–$29); fixed-price menu 21€ ($31). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 9am–10pm (cafe to 1am).

14

Norway

by Darwin Porter & Danforth Prince

Norway is a land of tradition, as exemplified by its rustic stave churches—look for these mysterious, dark structures with steep gables surmounted by dragons' heads and pointed steeples—and folk dances stepped to the airs of a fiddler. But Norway is also modern, a technologically advanced nation that's rich in petroleum and hydroelectric energy. One of the world's last great natural frontiers, Norway is a land of astonishing beauty; its steep and jagged fjords, salmon-rich rivers, glaciers, mountains, and meadows invite exploration. In winter, the shimmering northern lights beckon; in summer, the midnight sun shines late and warm.

Long a poor cousin of Sweden, Norway today is one of the richest countries in the world, with prices to match. "When I was young, Swedes had whiter teeth, clearer skin, Abba, and Bjorn Borg. We had lots of fish," said Thomas Eriksen, a professor at the University of Oslo. "Today Swedes have been cut down to size, and are often in Norway working at menial jobs."

1 Oslo

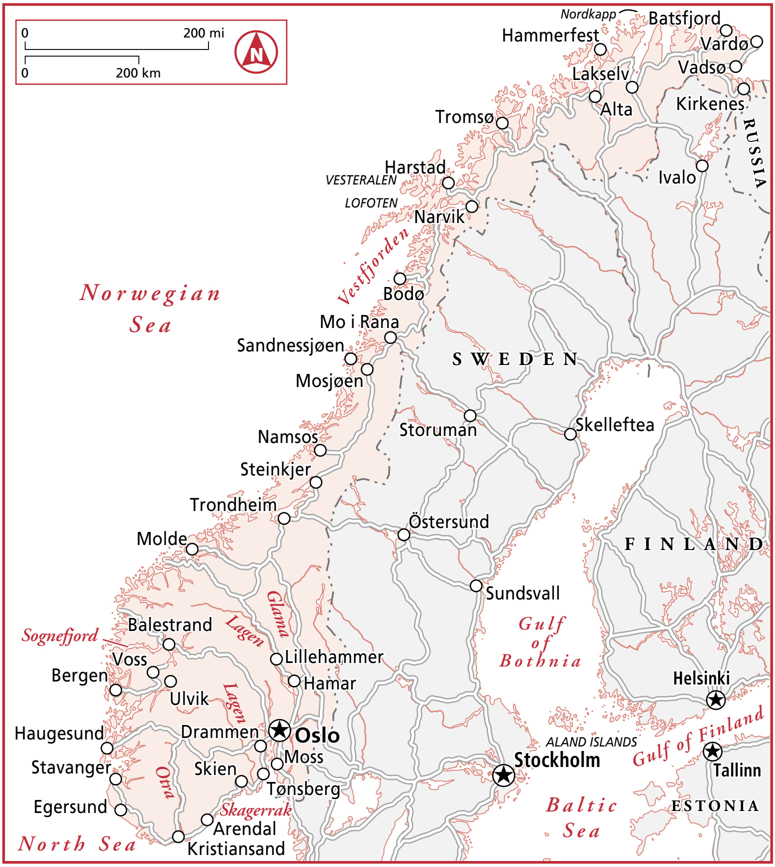
After World War II, Oslo grew to 450 sq. km (174 sq. miles), making it one of the 10 largest capitals in the world in sheer area, if not in urban buildup. The city is one of the most heavily forested on earth, and fewer than half a million Norwegians live and work here.

One of the oldest Scandinavian capital cities, founded in the mid–11th century, Oslo has never been a mainstream tourist site. But the city is culturally rich with many diversions—enough to fill at least 3 or 4 busy days. It's also the center for many easy excursions along the Oslofjord or to towns and villages in its environs, both north and south.

In recent years Oslo has grown from what even the Scandinavians viewed as a Nordic backwater to one of Europe's happening cities. Restaurants, nightclubs, cafes, shopping complexes, and other venues keep on opening. A kind of Nordic *joie de vivre* permeates the city; the only drawback is that all this fun is going to cost you—Oslo ranks as one of Europe's most expensive cities.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **By Plane** Flights from abroad arrived at **Oslo International Airport** (✆ **91-50-64-00;** www.osl.no) lying 50km (31 miles) east of the center of Oslo, about a 45-minute ride. All domestic and international flights coming into Oslo arrive through this much-upgraded airport, including aircraft belonging to SAS, British Airways, Continental, and Icelandair.



Norway

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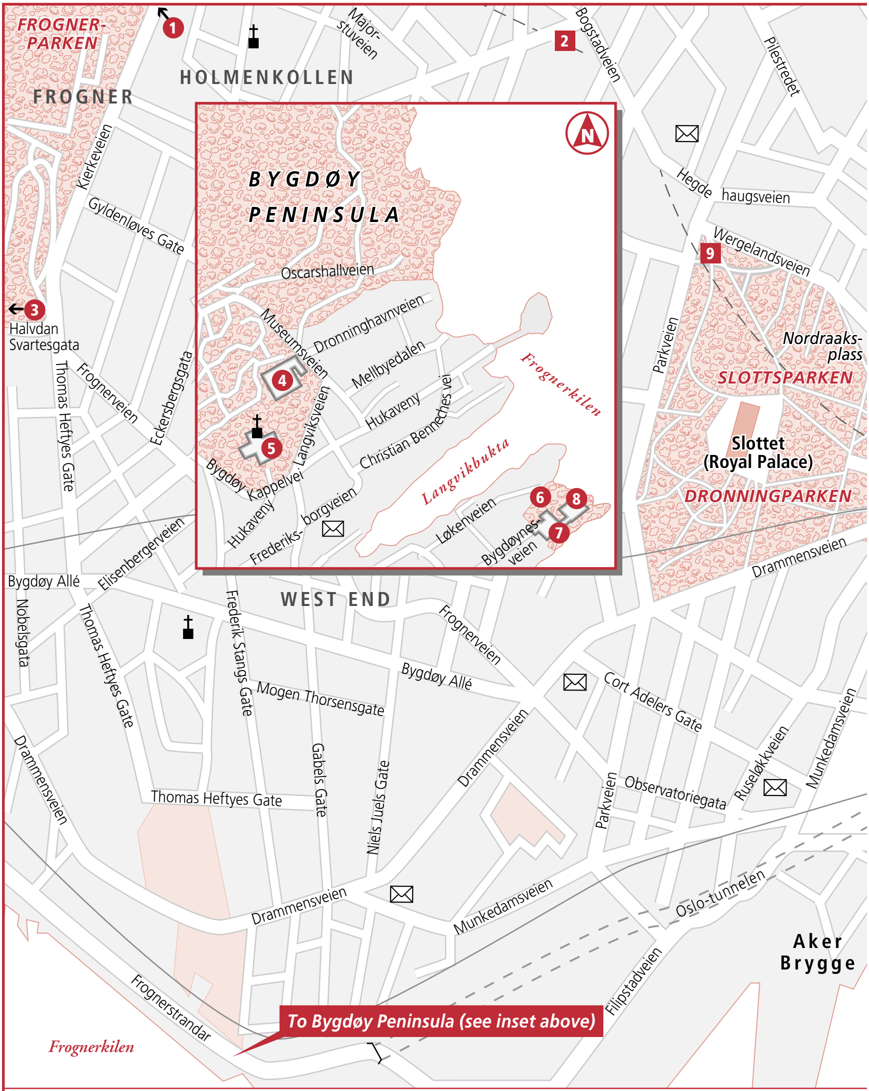
VESTERALEN
LOFOTEN
Narvik
Vestfjorden
Norwegian Sea
Bodø
Mo i Rana
Sandnessjøen
Mosjøen
SWEDEN
Storuman
Skelleftea
Namsos
Steinkjer
Trondheim
Östersund
Molde
FINLAND
Sundsvall
Glama
Lagen
Gulf of Bothnia
Sognefjord
Balestrand
Lillehammer
Voss
Bergen
Ulvik
Hamar
Helsinki
Lagen
Haugesund
Drammen
Oslo
ALAND ISLANDS
Gulf of Finland
Moss
Stockholm
Tallinn
Stavanger
Skien
Otra
Tønsberg
Skagerrak
Egersund
Arendal
Baltic Sea
ESTONIA
North Sea
Kristiansand

There's frequent bus service, departing every 20 minutes throughout the day, into the center of Oslo. It's maintained by both SAS (whose buses deliver passengers to the Central Railway station and to most of the SAS hotels within Oslo) and the **Norwegian Bus Express** (✆ **81-54-44-44**), whose buses head for the main railway station. Both companies charge 135NOK to 205NOK ($24–$37/£12–£19) per person, each way. There's also 20-minute high-speed railway service between Gardermoen and Oslo's main railway station, priced at 200NOK ($36/£18) per person each way. If you want to take a taxi, be prepared for sticker shock: the trip will cost around 600NOK to 1,060NOK ($108–$191/£54–£96) for up to four passengers plus their luggage. If you need a "maxi-taxi," a minivan that's suitable for between 5 and 15 passengers, plus their luggage, you'll pay from 800NOK ($144/£72).

By Train The first high-speed train between Oslo and Stockholm has reduced travel time to 4 hours and 50 minutes between these two once remotely linked Scandinavian capitals. There are two to three trains daily in each direction. Trains from the Continent, Sweden, and Denmark arrive at **Oslo Sentralstasjon (Central Station),**

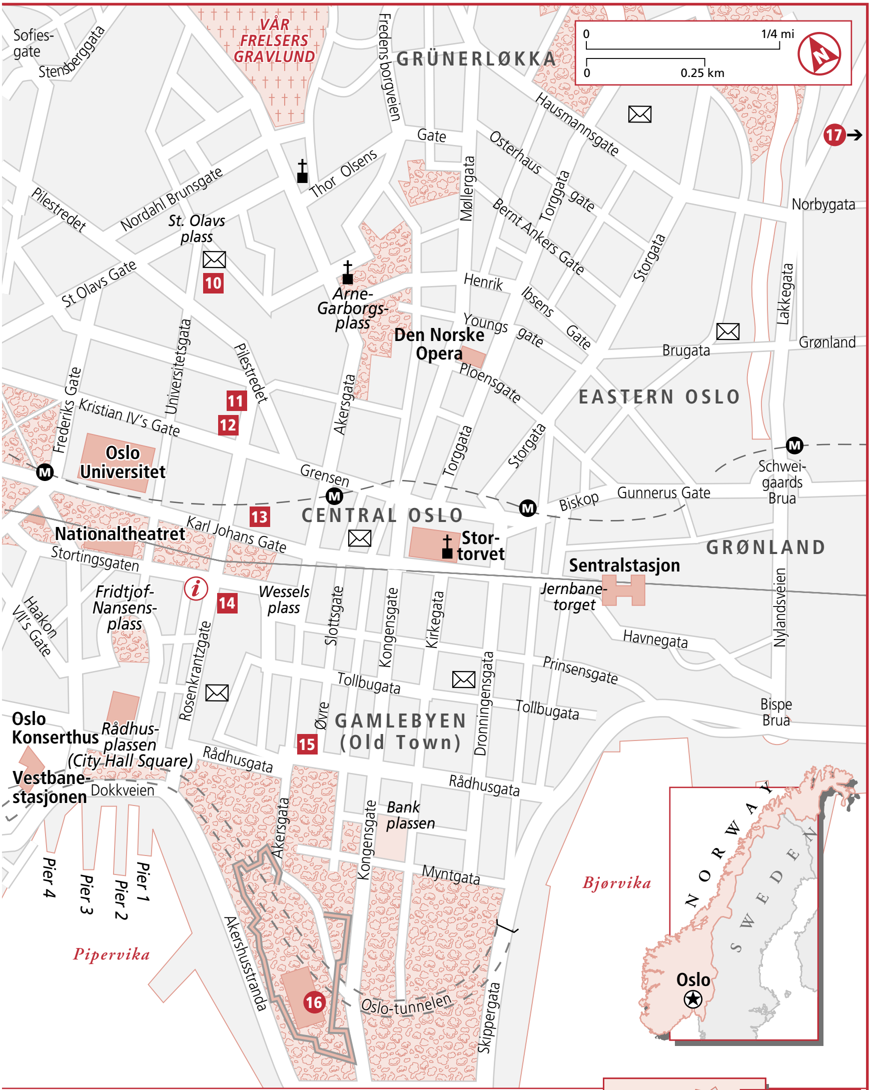
Oslo


FROGNER-PARKEN
1
HOLMENKOLLEN
Major-stuveien
2
Bogstadveien
Pilestredet
FROGNER
Kierkeveien
Gyldenløves Gate
3
Halvdan Svartesgata
Thomas Heftyes Gate
Frognerveien
Eckersbergsgata
N
BYGDØY PENINSULA
Oscarshallveien
Museumsveien
Dronninghavnveien
Mellbyedalen
4
Langviksveien
Hukaveny
Christian Benneches vei
5
Bygdøy Kappelvei
Hukaveny
Frederiks-borgveien
Langvikbukta
Frognerkilen
6
8
7
Løkenveien
Bygdøynes-veien
Hegdehaugsveien
Wergelandsveien
9
Parkveien
Nordraaks-plass
SLOTTSPARKEN
Slottet (Royal Palace)
DRONNINGPARKEN
Drammensveien
Bygdøy Allé
Elisenbergerveien
Nobelsgata
WEST END
Frederik Stangs Gate
Thomas Heftyes Gate
Frognerveien
Bygdøy Allé
Mogen Thorsensgate
Cort Adelers Gate
Drammensveien
Gabels Gate
Niels Juels Gate
Thomas Heftyes Gate
Drammensveien
Parkveien
Observatoriegata
Ruseløkkveien
Munkedamsveien
Drammensveien
Munkedamsveien
Oslo-tunnelen
Aker Brygge
Filipstadveien
Frognerstrandar
To Bygdøy Peninsula (see inset above)
Frognerkilen

✝ Church
ⓘ Information
✉ Post Office
— — Ⓜ Metro
—— Railway

ACCOMMODATIONS 🟥

Cochs Pensjonat	**9**
First Hotel Millennium	**15**
Grand Hotel	**13**
Hotel Bristol	**12**
Thon Hotel Munch	**10**
Thon Hotel Stefan	**11**
Thon Hotel Cecil	**14**
Thon Hotel Gyldenløve	**2**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Fredensborgveien
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Gate
Thor Olsens
Osterhaus gate
Møllergata
Torggata
17
Norbygata
Pilestredet
Nordahl Brunsgate
St. Olavs plass
Bernt Ankers Gate
Storgata
10
St Olavs Gate
Arne-Garborgs-plass
Henrik Ibsens Gate
Youngs gate
Den Norske Opera
Lakkegata
Brugata
Grønland
Universitetsgata
Pilestredet
Ploensgate
EASTERN OSLO
Frederiks Gate
Kristian IV's Gate
11
12
Akersgata
Torggata
Storgata
Oslo Universitet
M
Grensen
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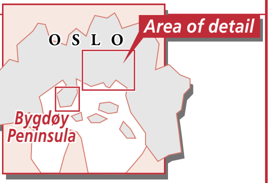
Schwei-gaards Brua
Biskop Gunnerus Gate
13
CENTRAL OSLO
Nationaltheatret
Karl Johans Gate
Stor-torvet
GRØNLAND
Stortingsgaten
Sentralstasjon
Jernbane-torget
Fridtjof-Nansens-plass
i
14
Wessels plass
Slottsgate
Kongensgate
Kirkegata
Nylandsveien
Haakon VII's Gate
Havnegata
Rosenkrantzgate
Prinsensgate
Tollbugata
Dronningensgata
Tollbugata
Bispe Brua
Oslo Konserthus
Rådhus-plassen (City Hall Square)
Øvre
GAMLEBYEN (Old Town)
15
Rådhusgata
Rådhusgata
Vestbane-stasjonen
Dokkveien
Akersgata
Bank plassen
Kongensgate
NORWAY
SWEDEN
Pier 4
Pier 3
Pier 2
Pier 1
Myntgata
Bjørvika
Piperviika
Akershusstranda
16
Oslo-tunnelen
Skippergata
Oslo


OSLO
Area of detail
Bygdøy Peninsula

ATTRACTIONS ●

Akershus Castle	**16**
Frammuseet (Polar Ship Fram)	**8**
Kon-Tiki Museum	**6**
Munch Museum	**17**
Norsk Folkemuseum	**4**
Norsk Sjøfartsmuseum	**7**
Tryvannstårnet (Lookout Tower)	**1**
Vigelandsparken	**3**
Vikingskiphuset	**5**

Jernbanetorget 1 (✆ **81-50-08-88** for train information). It's at the beginning of Karl Johans Gate, in the center of the city. The station is open daily 6am to 11:15pm. From the Central Station, trains leave for Bergen, Stavanger, Trondheim, Bodø, and all other rail links in Norway. You can also take trams to all major parts of Oslo.

By Car If you're driving from mainland Europe, the fastest way to reach Oslo is to take the car-ferry from Frederikshavn, Denmark (see below). You can also take a car-ferry from Copenhagen (see below) or drive from Copenhagen by crossing over to Helsingborg, Sweden, from Helsingør, Denmark. Once at Helsingborg, take E-6 north all the way to Stockholm. If you're driving from Stockholm to Oslo, follow E-18 west all the way (trip time: 7 hr.). Once you near the outskirts of Oslo from any direction, follow the signs into the SENTRUM, or city center.

By Ferry Ferries from Europe arrive at the Oslo port, a 15-minute walk (or a short taxi ride) from the city center. From Denmark, Scandinavia's link with the Continent, ferries depart for Oslo from Copenhagen, Hirtshals, and Frederikshavn.

From Strømstad, Sweden, in the summer, the daily crossing to Sandefjord, Norway, takes 2½ hours; from Sandefjord, it's an easy drive or train ride north to Oslo.

VISITOR INFORMATION Assistance and information for visitors are available at the **Tourist Information Office,** Fridtjof Nanseus Plass 5, entrance on Roald Amundsen Street, Oslo (✆ **81-53-05-55;** bus no. 27). Free maps, brochures, sightseeing tickets, and guide services are available. The office is open January to March, Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm; April to May, Monday to Saturday 9am to 5pm; June to August, daily 9am to 7pm; September, Monday to Saturday 9am to 5pm; October to December, Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm.

There's also an Oslo-only **information office** at the Oslo Sentralstasjon (Central Station), Jernbanetorget 1, at the beginning of Karl Johans Gate (✆ **81-53-05-55**), open Monday to Friday 7am to 8pm, Saturday and Sunday 8am to 6pm. From May to September, weekend hours are extended to 8pm.

For information online, try the Norwegian Tourist Board (**www.visitnorway.com**) or Virtual Oslo (**www.oslorightnow.com**).

CITY LAYOUT Oslo is at the mouth of the 95km (59-mile) Oslofjord. Opening onto the harbor is **Rådhusplassen (City Hall Square),** dominated by the modern City Hall, a major attraction. Guided bus tours leave from this square, and the launches that cruise the fjords depart from the pier facing the municipal building. (You can catch ferries to the Bygdøy Peninsula from the quay at Rådhusplassen.)

Out on a promontory to the east is the **Akershus Castle.** At **Bygdøy,** the much larger peninsula that juts out to the west, are four of Oslo's major attractions: the Viking ships, the Polar Ship *Fram* Museum, the *Kon-Tiki* Museum, and the Folk Museum.

Karl Johans Gate, Oslo's main street (especially for shopping and strolling), is north of City Hall Square. This boulevard begins at Oslo **Sentralstasjon (Central Station)** and stretches all the way to the 19th-century **Royal Palace** at the western end. A short walk from the palace is the famed **Student's Grove** (the University of Oslo is nearby), where everybody gathers on summer days to socialize. Dominating this area is the **National Theater.** South of the theater and near the harbor is **Stortingsgaten,** another shopping street.

The main city square is **Stortorvet,** although it's no longer the center of city life, which has now shifted to Karl Johans Gate.

At a subway stop near the National Theater you can catch an electric train to **Tryvannstårnet,** the loftiest lookout in Scandinavia, and to the **Holmenkollen Ski Jump.**

GETTING AROUND The **Oslo Pass** can help you become acquainted with the city at a fraction of the usual price. It allows free travel on public transportation, free admission to museums and other top sights, discounts on sightseeing buses and boats, a rebate on your car rental, and special treats in restaurants. You can buy the card at hotels, fine stores, and tourist offices; from travel agents; and in the branches of Sparebanken Oslo Akershus. Adults pay 220NOK ($40/£20) for a 1-day card, 320NOK ($58/£29) for 2 days, and 410NOK ($74/£37) for 3 days. Children's cards cost 95NOK ($17/£9), 115NOK ($21/£11), and 150NOK ($27/£14).

By Bus, Tram & Subway **Jernbanetorget,** in front of the Central Station, is the major bus and tram terminal in Oslo. Most buses and trams passing through the heart of town stop at Wessels Plass, next to the Stortinget (Parliament), or at Stortorvet, the main marketplace. Many also stop at the National Theater or University Square on Karl Johans Gate.

The **T-banen** (subway) has five main lines running to the east of Oslo and four lines running to the west. The most heavily traveled routes by tourists are the eastern lines. The western lines take in Holmenkollen and residential and recreational areas west and north of the city.

For schedule and fare information, call **Trafikanten** (✆ **81-50-01-76**). Drivers sell single-trip tickets for 22NOK to 30NOK ($4/£2); children travel for half fare. Automated machines cancel tickets. An eight-coupon Maxi card costs 160NOK ($29/£15), half price for children. Maxi cards can be used for unlimited transfers for 1 hour from the time the ticket was stamped.

By Car Driving is not a practical way to get around Oslo because parking is limited. The efficient network of public transportation makes a private car unnecessary. You can reach even the most isolated areas by public transportation.

By Taxi If you need a taxi, call ✆ **23-23-23-23,** 24 hours a day. Reserve at least an hour in advance. The approximate fare from Oslo International Airport to the center of Oslo is 600NOK to 1,060NOK ($108–$191/£54–£96). All taxis have meters, and Norwegian cabdrivers are generally honest. When a cab is available, a roof light goes on. Taxis can be hailed on the street, provided they're more than 90m (300 ft.) from a taxi stand. The worst times to hail a taxi are Monday through Friday from 8:30 to 10am and 3 to 5pm, and Saturday from 8:30 to 10am.

By Ferry Beginning in mid-April, ferries depart for Bygdøy from Pier 3 in front of the Oslo Rådhuset. For schedules, call **Båtservice** (✆ **23-35-68-90**). The ferry or bus to Bygdøy is a good choice, because parking there is limited. Other ferries leave for various parts of the Oslofjord. Inquire at the **Tourist Information Office,** Roald Amundsen Street (✆ **81-53-05-55**).

By Bicycle City bikes (Oslo Bysykkel) are available from a large number of bike stations around Oslo. You need an electronic card, costing 70NOK ($13/£6.50) to use the bikes, and these cards can be purchased at the Tourist Information office at Oslo Central Station or behind City Hall. Call ✆ **22-02-34-43** for more information; bikes are rented April to November daily 6am to midnight.

FAST FACTS: Oslo

American Express **American Express Reisebyrå,** Mariboes gate (✆ **22-98-35-00**), is open Monday to Friday 8am to 4:30pm.

Business Hours Most **banks** are open Monday to Friday 8:30am to 3:30pm (Thurs to 5pm). Most **businesses** are open Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm. **Stores** are generally open Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm (many stay open later on Thurs to 6 or 7pm) and Saturday 9am to 1 or 2pm. Sunday closings are observed.

Currency You'll pay your way in Norway with Norwegian kroner or crowns, which are universally abbreviated NOK. There are 100 øre in 1 krone. The exchange rate used in this chapter is $1 = 5.5NOK (or 1NOK = approximately 18¢). At press time, £1 = approximately 10.9NOK (or 1NOK = 9.2 pence). Note that Norway is not a member of the E.U.

Currency Exchange **Banks** will exchange most foreign currencies or cash traveler's checks. Bring your passport for identification. If banks are closed, try automated machines at the Oslo Sentralstasjon to exchange currency. You can also exchange currency at the **Bureau de Change** at the main Oslo post office, Dronningensgaden 15 (✆ **23-14-90-00**).

Dentists & Doctors For a dental emergency, contact the **Volvat Medisinke,** Borgen veien 2A, Majorstuen (✆ **22-95-75-00;** T-banen: Groønen), open daily Monday to Friday 8am to 10pm, Saturday and Sunday 10am to 10pm. For private dentists, look under *Tannleger* ("tooth doctors") in volume 1B of the telephone directory; there's rarely a language barrier.

Some larger hotels have arrangements with doctors in case a guest becomes ill. You can also try the 24-hour **Oslo Kommunale Legevakten,** Storgata 40 (✆ **22-93-22-93**). A privately funded alternative is **Oslo Akutten,** Nedre Vollgate 8 (✆ **22-00-81-60**). For more routine medical assistance, you can contact the biggest hospital in Oslo, **Ullaval,** Kirkeveien 166 (✆ **22-11-80-80**). To consult a private doctor (nearly all of whom speak English), check the telephone directory or ask at your hotel for a recommendation.

Drugstores A 24-hour pharmacy is **Jernbanetorvets Apotek,** Jernbanetorget 4B (✆ **23-35-81-00;** T-banen: Jernbanetorget).

Embassies & Consulates The embassy of the **United States** is at Henrik Ibsens gate 48, N-0244 Oslo (✆ **22-44-85-50;** T-banen: Sentrum). The embassy may move to new and better quarters, with greater security, during the life of this edition. Check before heading here. The embassy of the **United Kingdom** is at Thomas Heftyes Gate 8, N-0264 Oslo 2 (✆ **23-13-27-00;** T-banen: Nationaltheatret). The embassy of **Canada** is at Wergelandseien 7, N-0244 Oslo (✆ **22-99-53-00;** T-banen: Nationaltheatret). Visitors from Ireland and New Zealand should contact the British embassy. Australians should contact the Canadian embassy. Call for hours.

Emergencies Dial the Oslo **police** at ✆ **112;** report a **fire** at ✆ **110;** call an **ambulance** at ✆ **113.**

Internet Access You can tap in free at the **Deichmanske Bibliotek (Oslo Public Library),** arne Garborgs Plass (✆ **23-43-29-00;** T-Banen: Jernbang-Torget). Hours are May to September, Monday to Friday 10am to 7pm and Saturday 10am to 4pm; October to April, Monday to Friday 10am to 6pm and Saturday 11am to 2pm.

Post Office The **Oslo General Post Office** is at Dronningensgatan 15 (✆ **23-14-90-00** for information). Enter at the corner of Prinsensgate. It's open Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm, Saturday 9am to 2pm; closed Sunday and public holidays. You can arrange for mail to be sent to the main post office c/o General Delivery. The address is Poste Restante, P.O. Box 1181-Sentrum, Dronningensgatan 15, N-0101 Oslo, Norway. You must show your passport to collect mail.

Safety Of the four Scandinavian capitals, Oslo is widely considered the safest. However, don't be lulled into a false sense of security. Oslovians no longer leave their doors unlocked. Be careful, and don't carry your wallet visibly exposed or sling your purse over your shoulder.

Taxes Oslo has no special city taxes. Norway imposes a 19.35% value-added tax (VAT) on most goods and services, which is figured into your final bill. If you buy goods in any store bearing the tax-free sign, you're entitled to a cash refund of up to 18.5% on purchases costing over 310NOK ($56/£28). Ask the shop assistant for a tax-free shopping check, and show your passport to indicate that you're not a resident of Scandinavia. You may not use the articles purchased before leaving Norway, and they must be taken out of the country within 3 months of purchase. Complete the information requested on the back of the check you're given at the store; at your point of departure, report to an area marked by the tax-free sign, not at Customs. Your refund check will be exchanged there in *kroner* for the amount due you. Refunds are available at airports, ferry and cruise-ship terminals, borders, and train stations.

Telephone The country code for Norway is **47,** and the city code for Oslo is **22** (in some rare cases, **23**). For operator assistance in English, dial ✆ **115.**

To charge a call to your calling card, dial **AT&T** (✆ 800/190-11); **MCI** (✆ 800/199-12); **Sprint** (✆ 800/19-877); **Canada Direct** (✆ 800/19-111); **British Telecom** (✆ 800/19-944); or **Telecom New Zealand** (✆ 800/199-64).

Tipping Hotels add a 10% to 15% service charge to your bill, which is sufficient unless someone has performed a special service. Most bellhops get at least 10NOK ($1.80/90p) per suitcase. Nearly all restaurants add a service charge of up to 15% to your bill. Barbers and hairdressers usually aren't tipped, but toilet attendants and hatcheck people expect at least 3NOK (55¢/30p). Don't tip theater ushers. Taxi drivers don't expect tips unless they handle heavy luggage.

WHERE TO STAY

VERY EXPENSIVE

Grand Hotel ★★★ Norway's leading hostelry is on the wide boulevard that leads to the Royal Palace. The stone-walled hotel with its mansard gables and copper tower has been an integral part of Oslo life since 1874. Famous guests have included Arctic explorer Roald Amundsen, Edvard Munch, Gen. Dwight Eisenhower, Charlie Chaplin, Henry Ford, and Henrik Ibsen. Frankly, although it's still the grande dame of Norway hotels, we feel the Grand's stuffiness has cost it its cutting edge. The guest rooms are in the 19th-century core or in one of the modern additions. Newer rooms contain plush facilities and electronic extras, but many guests prefer the old-fashioned accommodations in the older section, which have also been modernized. A special feature of the hotel is a series of 13 designer-created bedrooms especially for women, a whole floor set aside for them and dedicated to the country's most talented women.

Karl Johans Gate 31, N-0159 Oslo. ☎ **800/223-5652** in the U.S., or 23-21-20-00. Fax 23-21-21-00. www.grand.no. 290 units. Summer 1,545NOK ($278/£139) double, from 3,350NOK ($603/£302) suite; fall, winter, and spring 1,780NOK ($320/£160) double, from 3,225NOK ($581/£291) suite. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 295NOK ($53/£27). T-banen: Stortinget. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; 3 bars; nightclub; indoor unheated pool; health club; sauna; room service; massage; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, trouser press.

EXPENSIVE

Hotel Bristol ★★★ Loaded with character, and the source of many entertaining anecdotes, this 1920s-era hotel competes aggressively and gracefully with other historic hotel "dragons" of Oslo, including the Grand (see above) and the Continental. Of the three, the Bristol consistently emerges as the most liberal, the hippest, and the most accessible. Set in the commercial core of Oslo, a block north of Karl Johans Gate, it's warm, inviting, rich with tradition, and comfortable. It's becoming the preferred hotel of the media, arts, and show-biz communities, with a sense of playfulness that's unmatched by either of its more formal rivals. Guest rooms are comfortable, tasteful, and dignified. Lavish public areas evoke the Moorish-inspired Art Deco style in which they were built.

Kristian IV's Gate 7, N-0164 Oslo 1. ☎ **22-82-60-00.** Fax 22-82-60-01. www.bristol.no. 251 units. Mon–Fri 2,075NOK ($374/£187) double; Sat–Sun year-round and late June to early Aug 1,550NOK ($279/£140) double; from 6,000NOK ($1,080/£540) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 250NOK ($45/£23). T-banen: Nationaltheater. Tram: 10, 11, 17, or 18. **Amenities:** Restaurant; 2 bars; nightclub/dance bar; small-scale exercise room and health club; room service; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer, trouser press, safe.

MODERATE

First Hotel Millennium ★ *Finds* One of Oslo's large-scale hotels is housed in what was originally a 12-floor 1930s Art Deco office building. This is one of the "personality" hotels of Oslo, known for its atmosphere and character, and noted for a stylish kind of functional minimalism. It's within walking distance of virtually everything in central Oslo. Rooms are among the most spacious in town, with many Art Deco touches. The top floor offers a dozen rooms with their own large balconies. **Primo Ciaou-Ciaou** is one of Oslo's best restaurants.

Tollbugaten 25, N-0157 Oslo. ☎ **21-02-28-00.** Fax 21-02-28-30. www.firsthotels.com. 112 units. 1,195NOK–1,395NOK ($215–$251/£108–£126) double. AE, DC, MC, V. Nearby parking 200NOK ($36/£18). Metro: Stortingeg. Tram: 12, 15, or 19. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; room service; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms; 1 room for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* TV, minibar, coffeemaker, hair dryer.

Thon Hotel Cecil ★ *Value* This contemporary hotel enjoys a central location, with many restaurants, sights, and shops within a short walk of the main entrance of the hotel. Dating from 1989, it was constructed on the site of a previous hotel destroyed by fire. As if inspired by a much grander Hyatt, most of its rooms are built to open onto a central atrium. Only four rooms on each of the eight floors overlook the street (the sometimes rowdy—at least, at night—Rosenkrantzgate). The well-maintained rooms are cozy and contain neatly kept bathrooms with tub/showers. Expect relatively simple styling with none of the trappings of more expensive nearby competitors—there's no health club, sauna, or full-fledged room service.

Stortingsgate 8 (entrance on Rosenkrantzgate), N-0130 Oslo. ✆ **23-31-48-00.** Fax 23-31-48-50. www.thonhotels.no. 111 units. 1,595NOK–1,795NOK ($287–$323/£144–£162) double; 3,595NOK ($647/£324) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 195NOK ($35/£18). T-banen: Stortinget. **Amenities:** Laundry service; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, coffeemaker, hair dryer, Wi-Fi.

Thon Hotel Gyldenløve *Value* "The Golden Lion" (its English name) was once a dowdy *hospits* (an inexpensive hotel, but better than a youth hostel). Lying only a 10-minute walk from the Royal Palace, it stands on a tree-lined street in the West End, a highly desirable neighborhood. In its latest reincarnation as part of the ever-growing Thon chain, it has become one of the city's most desirable addresses. Midsize bedrooms are in a modernistic Nordic design, combining a light, airy feeling, with Scandinavian pastels.

Bogstadveien 20, N-0355 Oslo. ✆ **23-33-23-00.** Fax 23-33-23-03. www.thonhotels.com. 164 units. 1,150NOK–2,345NOK ($207–$422/£104–£211) double. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Tram: 11, 13, or 19. **Amenities:** Breakfast room; room service; laundry service; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV, minibar, Wi-Fi.

Thon Hotel Munch This hotel is somewhat like a bed-and-breakfast, and it's just 5 minutes north of Karl Johans Gate. Built in 1983, the solid, nine-floor hotel offers comfortably furnished, well-maintained guest rooms, decorated with reproductions of Edvard Munch's paintings. Although not overly large, the rooms are cozy and comfortable. If you don't plan to spend a lot of time in your room, this is an adequate choice, charging a fair price for what it offers.

Munchsgaten 5, N-0130 Oslo. ✆ **23-21-96-00.** Fax 23-21-96-01. www.thonhotels.no/munch. 180 units. 895NOK ($161/£81) double. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 170NOK ($31/£16). T-banen: Stortinget. Tram: 8, 10, 11, or 17. Bus: 37. **Amenities:** Lounge; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Thon Hotel Stefan In an excellent location in the center of the city, this hotel is comfortable and unpretentious. Built in 1952, it has been modernized and much improved. Rooms are traditional in style and well furnished and maintained. From May to September 1, weekend rates are granted only to those who make reservations less than 48 hours before arrival. The restaurant is known for its Norwegian buffets for lunch.

Rosenkrantzgate 1, N-0159 Oslo 1. ✆ **23-31-55-00.** Fax 23-31-55-55. www.thonhotels.no/stefan. 150 units. 1,595NOK ($287/£144) double. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 200NOK ($36/£18). Tram: 10, 11, 17, or 18. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; room service; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

INEXPENSIVE

Cochs Pensjonat *Value* Built more than a century ago, with an ornate facade that curves around a bend in a boulevard that flanks the northern edge of the Royal Palace, this clean, well-conceived, inexpensive hotel represents excellent value. Major renovations added a postmodern gloss to many of the guest rooms. The result is a comfortable but simple lodging whose newer rooms have high ceilings and birch furniture, and a spartan but pleasant appearance. Expect very few, if any, amenities and services at this hotel—none of the rooms has a telephone, and no meals are served; but because of the in-room kitchens and a nearby restaurant that offers hotel guests a 25% discount on meals, no one really seems to mind.

Parkveien 25, N-0350 Oslo. ✆ **23-33-24-00.** Fax 23-33-24-10. www.cochspensjonat.no. 88 units, 78 with bathroom and kitchenette. Rooms with bathroom and kitchenette 680NOK–740NOK ($122–$133/£61–£67) double, 855NOK–915NOK ($154–$165/£77–£83) triple, 1,020NOK ($184/£92) quad. Rooms without kitchenette and without private bathroom 580NOK ($104/£52) double, 735NOK ($132/£66) triple, 900NOK ($162/£81) quad. AE, DC, MC, V. No parking. Tram: 11 or 18. *In room:* TV, kitchenette (in some), no phone.

WHERE TO DINE

Norwegians are as fond of smørbrød (smorgasbord) as the Danes (you'll see it offered everywhere for lunch). Basically, this is an open-faced sandwich that can be stacked with virtually anything, including ham with a peach slice resting on top or perhaps a mound of dill-flavored shrimp.

VERY EXPENSIVE

Restaurant Julius Fritzner ★★★ NORWEGIAN/CONTINENTAL This is one of the best and most impressive restaurants in Oslo. It opened in 1995 to rave reviews, and the accolades keep coming. It's one floor above street level in Norway's most prestigious hotel. The venue is appropriately conservative, with a battalion of impeccably trained waiters who maintain their humor and personal touch despite the sophisticated setting. The dishes, all made with the finest Scandinavian ingredients, change with the season and the chef's inspiration. Examples include pan-fried turbot, lobster and caviar sauce, crispy fried cod with sautéed vegetables, poached halibut with vermouth sauce, filet of veal with crispy fried sweetbreads, and roast saddle of lamb with rosemary.

In the Grand Hotel, Karl Johans Gate 31. ✆ **23-21-20-00.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 290NOK–495NOK ($52–$89/£26–£45); 3-course fixed-price menu 595NOK ($107/£54); 4-course fixed-price menu 795NOK ($143/£72); 6-course fixed-price menu 925NOK ($167/£84). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat 5–10:30pm. Closed July–Aug 5. T-banen: Stortinget.

EXPENSIVE

Babette's Gjestehus ★ *Finds* SCANDINAVIAN/FRENCH Named for the heroine of the film *Babette's Feast*—which almost every Scandinavian has seen at least once—this restaurant is decorated in the style of a turn-of-the-20th-century Norwegian home. Walls are blue, antiques are genuine, curtains are lace, and there's a scattering of old paintings. Menu items are authentic as well, with such time-tested favorites as filet of reindeer with lingonberries, breast of pheasant with mushroom sauce, and pan-fried breast of duck with creamed cabbage. The masterful chefs use seasonal products to produce reliable, good-tasting food all year.

Rådhuspassasjen, Roald Amundsensgate 6. ✆ **22-41-64-64.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 270NOK–345NOK ($49–$62/£25–£31). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat 4–10:30pm. T-banen: Centrum.

MODERATE

Grand Café ★★ NORWEGIAN This traditional cafe is an Oslo legend. A large mural on one wall depicts Ibsen (a fan of whale steaks), Edvard Munch, and many other patrons. A postcard sold at the reception desk identifies the mural's subjects. You can order everything from a napoleon with coffee to a full meal with reindeer steaks. Sandwiches are available for 90NOK ($16/£8) and up. The atmosphere and tradition here are sometimes more compelling than the cuisine. The menu, nonetheless, relies on Norwegian country traditions. (How many places still serve elk stew?) If you like solid, honest flavors, this is the place to visit.

In the Grand Hotel, Karl Johans Gate 31. ✆ **24-14-53-00.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 255NOK–370NOK ($46–$67/£23–£34). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 1:30–4pm and 5–11pm. T-banen: Stortinget.

A Touch of France ★ FRENCH This is one of Oslo's best French bistros. In summer tables spill out onto the sidewalk. The decor is that of a typical French brasserie, the kind you find alongside the road in Alsace. A Touch of France is known for serving the freshest oysters in town. On our most recent visit, we opted for the traditional salt-baked leg of duck served in a beautifully made garlic sauce. On other occasions we've enjoyed classic calves' liver with mushrooms, spinach, and bacon. Bouillabaisse is a specialty but that grand dish loses something in translation this far north. The dessert cart is loaded with such temptations as crème brûlée or a chocolate and almond cake.

Øvre Slottsgate 16. ✆ **23-10-01-60.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 190NOK–250NOK ($34–$45/£17–£23). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat 3pm–midnight. Bus: 27, 29, 30, 41, or 61.

INEXPENSIVE

Brødre MEXICAN "Three Brothers" is named after the glove manufacturers who once occupied this building. The Mexican food here may have lost a bit of its punch traveling so far to the icy north, but this is a longtime favorite with locals. The fare is zesty and well prepared, and you'll get hearty portions at reasonable prices. Here you can pig out on all those fajitas you've been hungering for, including one version made with prawns; or say to hell with your waistline as you dig into double-cheese enchiladas and burritos. The entire street level houses the bustling bar, while a piano bar resides upstairs. Lighter meals such as snacks and sandwiches are available on the outside dining terrace in the summer.

Øvre Slottsgate 14. ✆ **23-10-06-70.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 150NOK–250NOK ($27–$45/£14–£23). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat 11am–1am. Bus: 27, 29, or 30.

Engebret Café NORWEGIAN A favorite since 1857, this restaurant is directly north of Akershus Castle in two landmark buildings. It has an old-fashioned atmosphere—it was formerly a bohemian literati haunt—and good food. During lunch, a tempting selection of open-faced sandwiches is available. The evening menu is more elaborate; you might begin with a terrine of game with blackberry port-wine sauce, or Engebret's fish soup. Main dishes include red wild boar with whortleberry sauce, Norwegian reindeer, salmon Christiania, or Engebret's big fish pot. For dessert, try the cloudberry parfait.

Bankplassen 1. ✆ **22-33-66-94.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 275NOK–415NOK ($50–$75/£25–£38). AE, MC, V. Mon–Fri 11am–11pm; Sat noon–11pm. Bus: 27, 29, or 30.

Mamma Rosa Kids ITALIAN Established by two Tuscan brothers, this trattoria enjoys a popularity that's a good indication of Norwegians' changing tastes. The second-floor dining room is decorated in "reproduction rococo." You can order 15 kinds of pizza, fried scampi and squid, rigatoni, pasta Mamma Rosa (three kinds of pasta with three sauces), grilled steaks, and gelato. Frankly, some of the dishes have lost a bit of flavor on the trip this far north, but Mamma Rosa is nonetheless a marvelous change of taste and texture.

Øvre Slottsgate 12. ✆ **22-42-01-30.** Main courses 75NOK–288NOK ($14–$52/£7–£26); pizzas from 98NOK ($18/£9). DC, MC, V. Sun–Fri 2–10pm; Sat 2–11pm. T-banen: Stortinget.

SEEING THE SIGHTS

IN THE BYGDØY PENINSULA

Frammuseet (Polar Ship *Fram*) A long walk from the Viking ships, the Frammuseet contains the sturdy polar exploration ship *Fram,* which Fridtjof Nansen sailed across the Arctic (1893–96). The vessel was later used by Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen, the first man to reach the South Pole (1911).

Bygdøynesveien 36. ✆ **23-28-29-50.** Admission 50NOK ($9/£4.50) adults, 20NOK ($3.60/£1.80) children. Mar–Apr and Oct daily 10am–4pm; May and Sept daily 10am–5pm; June–Aug daily 9am–6pm; Nov–Dec daily 11am–3pm; Jan–Feb Mon–Fri 10am–3pm, Sat–Sun 10am–4pm. Ferry: From Pier 3 facing the Rådhuset (summer only). Bus: 30 from the National Theater.

Kon-Tiki **Museum** *Kon-Tiki* is the world-famed balsa-log raft in which the young Norwegian scientist Thor Heyerdahl and his five comrades sailed for 7,000km (4,350 miles) in 1947—all the way from Callao, Peru, to Raroia, Polynesia. Besides the raft, there are exhibits from Heyerdahl's subsequent visit to Easter Island, including an Easter Island family cave, with a collection of sacred lava figurines.

Bygdøynesveien 36. ✆ **23-08-67-67.** www.kon-tiki.no. Admission 50NOK ($9/£4.50) adults, 35NOK ($6.30/£3.15) students and seniors; 30NOK ($5.40/£2.70) children. Jan–Mar daily 10:30am–4pm; Apr–May daily 10am–5pm; June–Aug daily 9:30am–5:30pm; Sept daily 10am–5pm; Oct–Dec 10:30am–4pm. Closed Dec 24–25, 31, Jan 1, and May 17. Ferry: From Pier 3 facing the Rådhuset (summer only). Bus: 30 from the National Theater.

Norsk Folkemuseum ★★ From all over Norway, 140 original buildings have been transported and reassembled on 14 hectares (35 acres) on the Bygdøy Peninsula. This open-air folk museum includes a number of medieval buildings, such as the Raulandstua, one of the oldest wooden dwellings still standing in Norway, and a stave church from about 1200. The rural buildings are grouped together by region of origin, while the urban houses have been laid out in the form of an old town.

Museumsveien 10. ✆ **22-12-37-00.** www.norskfolke.museum.no. Admission 70NOK–90NOK ($13–$16/£7–£8) adults, 25NOK ($4.50/£2.25) children 16 and under, free for children under 6. Jan 2–May 14 Mon–Fri 11am–3pm, Sat–Sun 11am–4pm; May 15–Sept 14 daily 10am–6pm; Sept 15–Dec 30 Mon–Fri 11am–3pm, Sat–Sun 11am–4pm. Ferry: From Pier 3 facing the Rådhuset (summer only). Bus: 30 from the National Theater.

Norsk Sjøfartsmuseum (Norwegian Maritime Museum) This museum, which contains a complete ship's deck with helm and chart house, and a three-deck-high section of the passenger steamer *Sandnaes,* chronicles the maritime history and culture of Norway. The Boat Hall features a fine collection of original small craft. The fully restored polar vessel *Gjoa,* used by Roald Amundsen in his search for America's Northwest Passage, is also on display. The three-masted 1916 schooner *Svanen (Swan)* now belongs to the museum and is used as a training vessel.

Bygdøynesveien 37. ✆ **24-11-41-50.** www.norsk-sjofartsmuseum.no. Admission to museum and boat hall 40NOK ($7.20/£3.60) adults, 25NOK ($4.50/£2.25) students and seniors, free for children under 16. May 15–Aug 31 daily 10am–6pm; Sept 1–May 14 Mon–Wed and Fri–Sun 10:30am–4pm, Thurs 10:30am–6pm. Ferry: From Pier 3 facing the Rådhuset (summer only). Bus: 30 from the National Theater.

Vikingskiphuset (Viking Ship Museum) ★★★ Displayed here are three Viking burial vessels that were excavated on the shores of the Oslofjord and preserved in clay. The most spectacular find is the 9th-century ***Oseberg*** ★, discovered near Norway's oldest town. This 20m (66-ft.) dragon ship features a wealth of ornaments and is the burial chamber of a Viking queen and her slave. The *Gokstad* find is an outstanding example of Viking vessels because it's so well preserved. The smaller *Tune* ship was never restored. Look for the *Oseberg* animal-head post, the elegantly carved sleigh used by Viking royalty, and the *Oseberg* four-wheeled cart.

Huk Aveny 35, Bygdøy. ✆ **22-13-52-80.** Admission 50NOK ($9/£4.50) adults, 25NOK ($4.50/£2.25) children 8–16. Oct–Apr daily 11am–4pm; May–Sept daily 9am–6pm. Ferry: From Pier 3 facing the Rådhuset (summer only). Bus: 30 from the National Theater.

IN WESTERN OLSO

Vigeland Museet og Parken (Museum and Park) ★★ The lifetime work of Gustav Vigeland, Norway's greatest sculptor, is displayed inside the museum as well as throughout the nearby 80-hectare (198-acre) Frogner Park in western Oslo. Nearly 212 sculptures in granite, bronze, and iron can be admired. See in particular his four granite columns, symbolizing the fight between humanity and evil (a dragon, the embodiment of evil, embraces a woman). *The Angry Boy* is the most photographed statue in the park, but the really celebrated work is the 16m (52-ft.) monolith, composed of 121 figures of colossal size—all carved into a single piece of stone.

Frogner Park, Nobelsgate 32. ✆ **22-49-37-00.** Free admission to park. Museum 45NOK ($8.10/£4.05) adults, 25NOK ($4.50/£2.25) children 7–16 and seniors. Park daily 24 hr. Museum June–Aug Tues–Sun 10am–5pm; Sept–May Tues–Sun noon–4pm. Tram: 12 or 15. Bus: 20 or 45.

IN EASTERN OSLO

Munch Museum Devoted exclusively to the works of Edvard Munch (1863–1944), Scandinavia's leading painter, this exhibit (Munch's gift to the city) traces his work from early realism to his latter-day expressionism. The collection comprises 1,100 paintings, some 4,500 drawings, around 18,000 prints, numerous graphic plates, six sculptures, and important documentary material. Munch's *The Scream,* one of the world's most reproduced paintings, along with the artist's *Madonna,* were stolen in August 2004 in a daring daylight robbery (prompting a major security overhaul). The two paintings were recovered in good condition in 2006, so visitors can once again gaze upon these masterpieces.

Tøyengate 53. ✆ **23-49-35-00.** www.munch.museum.no. Admission 75NOK ($14/£7) adults, 40NOK ($7.20/£3.60) children. June–Aug daily 10am–6pm; Sept–May Tues–Fri 10am–4pm, Sat–Sun 11am–5pm. T-banen: Tøyen. Bus: 20.

IN THE CITY CENTER

Akershus Castle One of the oldest historical monuments in Oslo, Akershus Castle was built in 1300 by King Haakon V Magnusson. It was a fortress and a royal residence for several centuries. A fire in 1527 devastated the northern wing, and the castle was rebuilt and transformed into a Renaissance palace under the Danish-Norwegian king Christian IV. Now it's used for state occasions. A few rooms, including the chapel, are open to the public. In the rectangular court, markings show where the massive medieval keep used to stand. You can wander through two large halls (Olav's and Christian IV's), which occupy the top floor of the north and south wings, respectively. For many, the most interesting part is the dungeon, which includes an "escape-proof room" built for a prisoner, Ole Pedersewn Hoyland. After he was placed in the chamber and realized there was no way he could ever escape, he killed himself.

Festnings-Plassen. ✆ **23-09-56-71.** Admission 50NOK ($9.40/£4.70) adults, 10NOK ($1.80/90p) children, 35NOK ($6.30/£3.15) students and seniors. May–Aug Mon–Sat 10am–4pm, Sun 12:30–4pm; Sept–Apr Thurs noon–2pm. Closed Sept 16–May 1. Tram: 15 or 12. Bus: 60.

ATTRACTIONS NEARBY

Henie-Onstad Kunstsenter (Henie-Onstad Art Center) ★★ On a site beside the Oslofjord 11km (¾ miles) west of Oslo, the ex–movie star and skating champion Sonja Henie and her husband, Niels Onstad, a shipping tycoon, opened a museum to display their art collection. This especially good 20th-century collection includes some 1,800 works by Munch, Picasso, Matisse, Léger, Bonnard, and Miró. Henie's Trophy Room is impressive, with 600 trophies and medals, including three Olympic gold medals—she was the star at the 1936 competition—and 10 world skating championships.

Sonja Henie vei 31, Høkvikodden, Baerum. ✆ **67-80-48-80.** www.hok.no. Admission 80NOK ($14/£7) adults, 60NOK ($11/£6) seniors, 50NOK ($9/£4.50) students, 30NOK ($5.40/£2.70) children 6–16, free for children 5 and under. Tues–Thurs 11am–7pm; Fri–Sun 11am–5pm. Bus: 151.

Tryvannstårnet (Lookout Tower) This is the loftiest lookout tower in Scandinavia—the gallery is approximately 580m (1,900 ft.) above sea level and offers a view of the Oslofjord with Sweden to the east. A walk down the hill takes you to the famous restaurant Frognerseteren. You can take another 20-minute walk down the hill to the Holmenkollen ski jump, the site of the 1952 Olympic competitions, as well as the Holmenkollen Ski Festival, when skiers compete in downhill, slalom, giant slalom, cross-country ski races, and jumping.

Voksenkollen. ✆ **22-14-67-11.** Admission 50NOK ($9/£4.50) adults, 25NOK ($4.50/£2.25) children. May and Sept daily 10am–5pm; June–Aug 10am–7pm; Oct–Apr daily 10am–4pm. T-banen: Frognerseteren SST Line 1 from near the National Theater to Voksenkollen (30-min. ride), and then an uphill 15-min. walk.

ORGANIZED TOURS

H. M. Kristiansens Automobilbyrå, Hegdehaugsveien 4 (✆ **22-78-94-00**), has been showing visitors around Oslo for more than a century. Both of their bus tours are offered daily year-round. The 3-hour "Oslo Grand Highlights" tour is offered at 10am. It costs 280NOK ($50/£25) for adults, 140NOK ($25/£13) for children. The 2-hour "Oslo Panorama" tour costs 200NOK ($36/£18) for adults, 100NOK ($18/£9) for children. It departs at 10am. The starting point is in front of the National Theater, Vestbaneplassen 1; arrive 15 minutes before departure. Tours are conducted in English by trained guides.

THE SHOPPING SCENE

Near the marketplace and the Oslo Domkirche (cathedral), **Den Norske Husfliden,** Møllergata 4 (✆ **22-42-10-75**; T-banen: Stortinget; tram no. 17)—or Husfliden, as it's called—is the display and retail center for the Norwegian Association of Home Arts and Crafts, founded in 1891. Today it's almost eight times larger than any of its competitors, with two floors displaying the very finest of Norwegian design in ceramics, glassware, furniture, and woodworking. You can also purchase souvenirs, gifts, textiles, rugs, knotted Rya rugs, embroidery, wrought iron, and fabrics by the yard. Goods are shipped all over the world.

Norway's largest department store, **Steen & Strøm,** Kongensgate 23 (✆ **22-00-40-01;** T-banen: Stortinget), is a treasure house with hundreds of Nordic items spread through 58 individual departments. Look for hand-knit sweaters and caps, hand-painted wooden dishes reflecting traditional Norwegian art, and pewter dinner plates made from old molds. **Heimen Husflid,** Rosenkrantzgate 8 (✆ **23-21-42-00;** T-banen: Nationaltheatret), about a block from Karl Johans Gate, carries folk costumes, antiques, and reproductions. Hand-knit sweaters in traditional Norwegian patterns are a special item, as are pewter and brass items.

William Schmidt, Fridtjof Nansens Plass 9 (✆ **22-42-02-88;** T-banen: Stortinget), established in 1853, is a leading purveyor of unique souvenirs, including pewter items (everything from Viking ships to beer goblets), Norwegian dolls in national costumes, woodcarvings (the troll collection is the most outstanding in Oslo), and sealskin moccasins. The shop specializes in hand-knit cardigans, pullovers, gloves, and caps; sweaters are made from mothproofed 100% Norwegian wool.

OSLO AFTER DARK

To find out what's happening when you're visiting, pick up ***What's On in Oslo,*** which details concerts and theaters and other useful information.

Theater, ballet, and opera tickets are sold at various box offices and also at **Billettsentralen,** Karl Johans Gate 35 (✆ **81-53-31-33;** T-banen: Stortinget)—although this service costs quite a bit more than your typical box office. Tickets to sports and cultural events can now be purchased easily and more cheaply via computer linkup at any post office in the city, so when you buy a stamp you can also buy a voucher for a ticket to the ballet, theater, or hockey game.

THE PERFORMING ARTS

In the life of this edition, Oslo will get a new **National Opera House**, opening in Bjørvika at the head of the Oslofjord. Sheathed in white marble, the futuristic opera house will be the most modern in Europe. When it opens, the new opera house is expected to draw some of the world's leading stars. For more information check www.operaen.no.

Home to the National Theater Company, the **National Theater,** Johanne Dybwads Plass 1 (✆ **81-50-08-11;** T-banen: Nationaltheatret), opens in late August, so it may be of interest to off-season drama lovers who want to hear Ibsen and Bjørnson in the original. Avant-garde productions go on up at the **Amfiscenen,** in the same building. There are no performances in July and August. Guest companies often perform plays in English. Tickets range from 300NOK ($54/£27) adults, 100NOK to 240NOK ($18–$43/£9–£22) students and seniors.

Two blocks from the National Theater, **Oslo Konserthus,** Munkedamsveien 14 (✆ **23-11-31-11;** T-banen: Stortinget), is the home of the widely acclaimed Oslo Philharmonic. Performances are given from autumn to spring, on Thursday and Friday. Guest companies from around the world often appear on other nights. The hall is closed from June 20 until mid-August, except for occasional performances by folkloric groups. Tickets run from 200NOK to 720NOK ($36–$130/£18–£65).

Originally a movie theater, the 1931 building at Storgaten 23 was adapted for better acoustics and dedicated in 1959 to the **Den Norske Opera** (✆ **81-54-44-88;** T-banen: Jernbanetorget). It's also the leading venue for ballet—the companies alternate performances. About 10 different operas and operettas are staged every year. No performances are held from mid-June to August. Tickets are generally available to nonsubscribers; seats can be reserved in advance and paid for with a credit card. Tickets range from 100NOK to 325NOK ($18–$59/£9–£30) except for galas.

Norwegian Folk Museum, Museumsveien 10, Bygdøy (✆ **22-12-37-00**), often presents folk-dance performances by its own ensemble on summer Sunday afternoons at the museum's open-air theater. Admission to the museum includes admission to the dance performance; 70NOK to 95NOK ($13–$17/£7–£9) adults, 50NOK to 70NOK ($9–$13/£4.50–£7) students and seniors, 25NOK ($4.50/£2.25) children.

THE CLUB & MUSIC SCENE

Smuget, Rosenkrantzgate 22 (✆ **22-42-52-62;** T-banen: Nationaltheatret), is the most talked-about nightlife hotspot in the city, and has the long lines (especially on weekends) to prove it. It's in a 19th-century building in back of the City Hall and has a restaurant, an active dance floor, and a stage where live bands perform. It's open Monday to Saturday from 7pm to 4am; the cover ranges from 75NOK to 100NOK ($14–$18/£7–£9).

Tips Native Behavior

Although Norwegians love their beer, note that buying a round is virtually unheard of in a Norwegian pub. In this independent country, both men and women pay for their own libations. During the week, never ask someone you meet "out for a drink." He or she will think you're a drunk. On Friday or Saturday night, it's different. Anything goes. Beer taverns are wild and riotous, and few patrons are satisfied with a mere 10 beers.

Blå, Brennerivn 9C (✆ **40-00-04-27**), is the leading jazz club of Oslo. Dark and industrial with lots of wrought iron and mellow lighting, the place books some of the best jazz acts in Scandinavia. The crowd is a mix of young and old, dressed in casual but sophisticated attire. The weeknights focus strictly on jazz, with Friday and Saturday providing more of a disco atmosphere, when DJs brought in from all over the world spin the best in techno and house music. Open daily 11am to midnight. Cover ranges from 120NOK to 275NOK ($22–$50/£11–£25). **Muddy Waters,** Grensen 13 (✆ **22-40-33-70**), features live music almost nightly in its cavernous cellar pulsating to high-volume bands (often from the United States). The club also has what may be the longest bar in Norway. The cover ranges from 100NOK to 252NOK ($18–$45/£9–£23). Open Tuesday to Friday 4pm to 3am, Saturday 2pm to 3am, Sunday 8pm to 3am.

DAY TRIPS FROM OSLO

The best 1-day excursion from Oslo includes visits to Fredrikstad and Tønsberg, which gives you a chance to explore the scenic highlights of the Oslofjord. A trip to Fredrikstad, in Østfold on the east bank of the Oslofjord, can easily be combined in 1 day with a visit to the port of Tønsberg on the west bank, by crossing over on the ferry from Moss to Horten and then heading south.

FREDRIKSTAD ★

In recent years Fredrikstad, 95km (59 miles) south of Oslo, has become a major tourist center, thanks to its Old Town and 17th-century fortress. Across the river on the west is a modern industrial section, and although a bridge links the two sections, the best way to reach Old Town is by ferry, which costs 10NOK ($1.80/90p). The departure point is about 4 blocks from the Fredrikstad railroad station—simply follow the crowd out the main door of the station, make an obvious left turn, and continue down to the shore of the river. It's also possible to travel between the two areas by bus no. 360 or 362, although most pedestrians opt for the ferry.

Getting There To reach Fredrikstad, take E-6 south from Oslo toward Moss. Continue past Moss until you reach the junction of Route 110, which is signposted south of Fredrikstad. About six buses per day depart for the town from the Central Station in Oslo. Trains from Oslo's Central Station depart from Fredrikstad about every 2 hours during the day (trip time: 30 min.).

Visitor Information **Fredrikstad Turistkontor** is on Toihusgata 41, Turistsenteret, Østre Brohode in Gamle Fredrikstad (✆ **69-30-46-00**). From June to September, it's open Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm and Saturday and Sunday 1am to 4pm; from October to May, it's open Monday to Friday 9am to 4:30pm.

Fredrikstad was founded in 1567 as a marketplace at the mouth of the River Glomma. **Gamlebyen (Old Town)** became a fortress in 1663 and continued in that role until 1903, boasting some 200 guns in its heyday. It still serves as a military camp. The main guardroom and old convict prison are now the **Fredrikstad Museum,** Mindre Alvsvei 5 (✆ **69-95-85-00**), open from May to September, Monday to Friday 10am to 4:30pm, Saturday and Sunday noon to 4:30pm. Admission is 40NOK ($7.20/£3.60) adults and 20NOK ($3.60/£1.80) children.

Outside the gates of Old Town is **Kongsten Fort,** on what was first called Gallows Hill, an execution site. When Fredrikstad Fortress was built, it was provisionally fortified in 1677, becoming known as Svenskeskremme (Swede Scarer). Present-day Kongsten Fort, with its 20 cannons, underground chambers, passages, and countermines, eventually replaced it.

Since Fredrikstad's heyday as a trading port and merchant base, Old Town has attracted craftspeople and artisans, many of whom create their products in the Old Town's historic houses and barns. Many of these glass blowers, ceramic artists, and silversmiths choose not to display or sell their products at their studios, preferring instead to leave the sales aspect to local shops.

TØNSBERG ★

Bordering the western bank of the Oslofjord, Tønsberg, 100km (62 miles) south of Oslo, is Norway's oldest town. It's divided into a historic area, filled with old clapboard-sided houses, and the commercial center, where the marketplace is located.

Getting There You can drive back north from Fredrikstad to the town of Moss, where you can take a ferry to Horten. Once at Horten, signs will point the way south for the short drive to Tønsberg. Tønsberg is about 1½ hours from Oslo, with some 20 trains arriving daily.

Visitor Information **Tourist Information** is at Nedre Langgate 36, N-3126 Tønsberg (✆ **33-35-45-20**). June 19 to August 5 Monday to Saturday 9am to 7pm, Sunday 9am to 5pm; otherwise Monday to Friday 9:30am to 3:30pm.

Tønsberg was founded a year before King Harald Fairhair united parts of the country in 872, and this Viking town became a royal coronation site. Svend Foyn, who invented modern whaling and seal hunting, was born here.

Slottsfjellet, a huge hill fortress directly ahead of the train station, is touted as "the Acropolis of Norway." But it has only some meager ruins, and people mostly come here for the view from the lookout tower. Built in 1888, the **Slottsfjelltårnet** (✆ **33-31-18-72**) is open May 15 to June 25 Monday through Friday from 10am to 3pm; June 26 to August 20 daily from 11am to 6pm; August 19 to September 15 Saturday and Sunday from noon to 5pm; and September 16 to September 29 Saturday and Sunday from noon to 3pm. Admission is 20NOK ($3.60/£1.80) adults and 10NOK ($1.80/90p) children.

Nordbyen is the old and scenic part of town, with well-preserved houses. **Haugar** cemetery, at Møllebakken, is right in the town center, with the Viking graves of King Harald's sons, Olav and Sigrød.

Sem Church, Hageveien 32 (✆ **33-37-96-80**), the oldest in Vestfold, was built of stone in the Romanesque style around 1100. It's open May to September, Tuesday to Friday from 9am to 2pm; ask at the vestry. Admission is free.

You should also see **Fjerdingen,** a street of charming restored houses. Tønsberg was also a Hanseatic town during the Middle Ages, and some houses have been redone in typical Hanseatic style.

In the **Vestfold Folk Museum** ★, Frammannsveien 30 (✆ **33-31-29-19**), you'll find many Viking and whaling treasures. One of the biggest thrills is the skeleton of a blue whale. A real Viking ship is displayed, the *Klastad* from Tjolling, built about A.D. 800. Admission is 40NOK ($7.20/£3.60) adults, 10NOK ($1.80/90p) children. It's open Monday to Friday 10am to 2pm.

2 Bergen & the Fjords

In western Norway the landscape takes on an awesome beauty, with iridescent glaciers; deep fjords that slash into rugged, snowcapped mountains; roaring waterfalls; and secluded valleys that lie at the end of corkscrew-twisting roads. From Bergen the most beautiful fjords to visit are the **Hardanger** (best at blossom time, May and early June), to the south; the **Sogne,** Norway's longest fjord, immediately to the north; and the **Nordfjord,** north of that. A popular excursion on the Nordfjord takes visitors from Loen to Olden along rivers and lakes to the Brixdal Glacier.

If you have time, on the Hardangerfjord you can stop over at one of the fjord resorts, such as Ulvik or Lofthus. The Folgefonn Glacier, Norway's second-largest ice field, which spans more than 250 sq. km (100 sq. miles), can be seen from many vantage points.

Bergen, with its many sightseeing attractions; good hotels and restaurants; and excellent boat, rail, and coach connections, is the best center for touring the fjord district. This ancient city looms large in Viking sagas. Until the 14th century, it was the seat of the medieval kingdom of Norway. The Hanseatic merchants established a major trading post here, holding sway until the 18th century.

BERGEN: GATEWAY TO THE FJORDS

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **By Plane** The **Bergen Airport** at Flesland, 19km (12 miles) south of the city, offers frequent flights to Copenhagen and London, through which most international flights are routed.

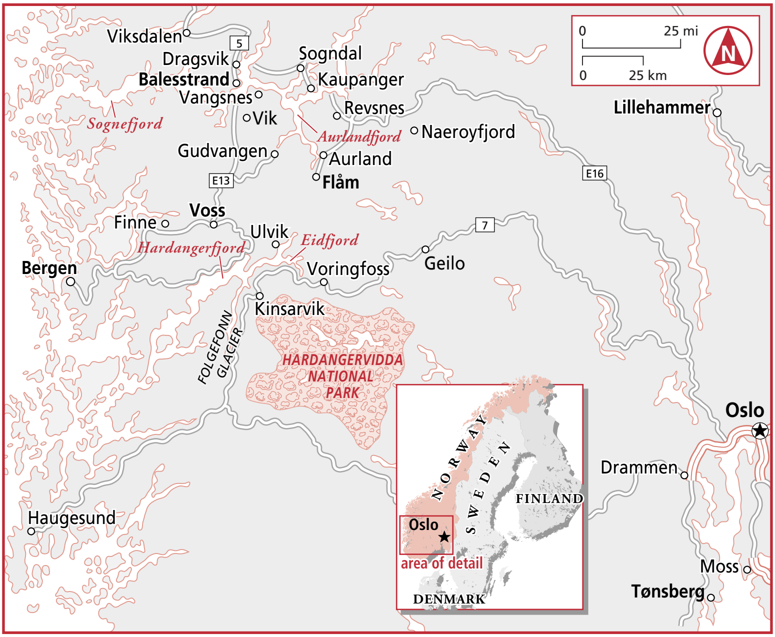
There is frequent airport bus service from the airport to the SAS Royal Hotel, Braathens airlines' office at the Hotel Norge, and the city bus station. Buses depart every 15 minutes from Monday to Friday and every 30 minutes Saturday and Sunday. The one-way fare is 75NOK ($14/£7). Taxis are readily available at the airport, or call ✆ **33-30-11-11.** A ride to the city center costs 450NOK to 500NOK ($81–$90/£41–£45).

By Train Day and night trains arrive from Oslo (trip time: 6–8½ hr.). For information, call the Bergen train station at ✆ **55-96-69-00.**

By Bus Express buses travel to Bergen from Oslo in 11 hours. For long-distance bus information, call ✆ **55-55-90-70.**

By Car A toll is charged on all vehicles driven into the city center Monday to Friday 6am to 10pm. A single ticket costs 15NOK ($2.70/£1.35); a book of 20 tickets, 250NOK ($45/£23).

The trip from Oslo to Bergen is a mountainous drive filled with dramatic scenery. Because mountains split the country, there's no direct road. The southern route, E76,



Oslo to Bergen & along the Fjords

0 25 mi
0 25 km
N
Viksdalen
5
Dragsvik
Balesstrand
Vangsnes
Sognefjord
Vik
Sogndal
Kaupanger
Revsnes
Aurlandfjord
Naeroyfjord
Gudvangen
Aurland
Flåm
E13
E16
Lillehammer
Voss
Finne
Ulvik
Eidfjord
Hardangerfjord
7
Bergen
Voringfoss
Geilo
Kinsarvik
FOLGEFONN GLACIER
HARDANGERVIDDA NATIONAL PARK
NORWAY
SWEDEN
FINLAND
Oslo
area of detail
DENMARK
Oslo
Drammen
Haugesund
Moss
Tønsberg

takes you through mountain passes until the junction with Rte. 47; then you head north to Kinsarvik and make the ferry crossing to E16 leading to Bergen. It's quickest to take the northern route following E16 west. For the first time it's possible to make a ferry-free road connection to Bergen. In 2001 the world's longest tunnel opened, the 40km (25-mile) Laerdal Tunnel. It begins 300km (186 miles) northwest of Oslo and goes as deep as 1,470m (4,820 ft.) beneath one of Norway's most scenic mountain areas. It takes 20 minutes to go through the tunnel.

VISITOR INFORMATION **Tourist Information,** Vagsallmenningen 1 (✆ **55-55-20-00;** www.visitbergen.com), provides information, maps, and brochures about Bergen and the rest of the region. It's open June to August, daily from 8:30am to 10pm; May and September, daily 9am to 8pm; October to April, Monday to Saturday 9am to 4pm.

SPECIAL EVENTS The annual **Bergen Festival,** generally held the last 2 weeks in May (the 2009 festival is scheduled for May 24–June 6), features performances by regional, national, and international orchestras, dance ensembles, and theater groups. The complete festival schedule is usually available by February of each year. For festival and ticket information, contact the **Bergen Festival Office** (✆ **55-21-06-30;** www.fib.no).

GETTING AROUND **By Bus** The **Bystasjonen (Central Bus Station),** Strømgaten 8 (✆ **55-31-44-30**), is the terminal for all buses serving the Bergen and the Hardanger area, as well as the airport bus. Bergen is serviced by a network of buses; if you didn't purchase the Bergen Card (see above), the average fare within the city is 23NOK ($4.10/£2.05).

Value The Bergen Card

The **Bergen Card** entitles you to free bus transportation and (usually) free museum entrance throughout Bergen, plus discounts on car rentals, parking, and some cultural activities. Ask for it at the tourist office (see "Visitor Information," above). A 24-hour card costs 190NOK ($34/£17) for adults, 75NOK ($14/£7) for children 3 to 15. A 48-hour card is 250NOK ($45/£23) for adults, 100NOK ($18/£9) for children 3 to 15. Children 2 and under generally travel or enter free.

By Taxi Sightseeing by taxi costs about 500NOK ($90/£45) for the first hour and then 380NOK ($68/£34) per hour after that (✆ **55-99-70-10**).

WHERE TO STAY

Expensive

Clarion Admiral Hotel ★ When it was built in 1906, this building was one of the largest warehouses in Bergen, with six sprawling floors peppered with massive trusses and beams. In 1987, it became a comfortable, tastefully appointed hotel, and in 1998, it was enlarged and renovated into the bustling establishment you'll see today. Rooms are a bit smaller than you might hope, but they are comfortable and have excellent beds. Many rooms lack water views, but the ones that open onto flower-bedecked balconies have the best harbor views in town.

Christian Sundts Gate 3, N-5004 Bergen. ✆ **55-23-64-00.** Fax 55-23-64-64. www.admiral.no. 210 units. Mon–Thurs 1,063NOK–1,284NOK ($191–$231/£96–£116) double; Fri–Sun 842NOK–1,250NOK ($152–$225/£76–£113) double; 2,600NOK–4,200NOK ($468–$756/£234–£378) suite (same price every night). AE, DC, MC, V. Very limited parking 100NOK ($18/£9). Bus: 2, 4, or 11. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; room service; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer.

First Hotel Marin ★★ In the heart of Bergen, this first-class hotel is one of Bergen's most modern and streamlined. The brown-brick building is set on a steep hillside. The bedrooms are moderate to spacious in size, and each is handsomely furnished in functional, stylish Nordic modern. For Bergen, the hotel offers a large number of suites—34 deluxe ones in all—the best of which are a trio of penthouse units with views so panoramic they encompass all seven mountains surrounding Bergen. The finest units are in front, overlooking the harbor.

Rosenkrantzgaten 8, N-5003 Bergen. ✆ **53-05-15-00.** Fax 53-05-15-01. www.firsthotels.com. 152 units. 1,6295NOK–1,495NOK ($233–$269/£117–£135) double; 1,895NOK–3,395NOK ($341–$611/£171–£306) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 155NOK ($28/£14) Bus: 5, 6, 9, 30, or 90. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; fitness center; sauna; room service; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer (in some).

Moderate

Augustin Hotel ★ Finds The Augustin has one of the best locations in Bergen—right in the harbor's shopping district—with front rooms that have terrific harbor views. Constructed in 1909 in the Jugend or Art Nouveau style, Augustin has been in the same family for four generations. In 1995 it more than doubled in size by adding a new wing, with modern new rooms designed by award-winning Bergen architect Aud Hunskår. The hotel is decorated with lots of art, many pieces from well-known contemporary Norwegian artists.

Carl Sundts Gate 22, N-5004 Bergen. ✆ **55-30-40-00.** Fax 55-30-40-10. www.augustin.no. 109 units. Mon–Thurs 1,790NOK ($322/£161) double, 2,240NOK ($403/£202) suite; Fri–Sun 1,190NOK ($214/£107) double, 1,640NOK ($295/£148) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 100NOK ($18/£9). Bus: 2. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer, trouser press, iron (in some).

Hotel Park ★ This converted 1890 town house is in an attractive university area near Grieghall and Nygård Park. The rooms are traditionally furnished, often with antiques. Accommodations vary in size but all have good beds. In the summer, a neighboring building (furnished in the same style) accommodates overflow guests. A delicious Norwegian breakfast is served in the dining room; later in the day, sandwiches, small hot dishes, and wine and beer are available there. In the summer, reserve well in advance. The Park is a 10-minute walk from the train and bus stations.

Harald Hårfagresgaten 35 and Allegaten 20, N-5007 Bergen. ✆ **55-54-44-00.** Fax 55-54-44-44. www.parkhotel.no. 33 units. 1,190NOK ($214/£107) double. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 50NOK ($9/£4.50). Bus: 80 or 90. **Amenities:** Lounge; breakfast room; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV, hair dryer.

Inexpensive

Steens Hotel *Value* Owned and operated by the same family since 1950, this stylish 1890 town house offers great accommodations at most reasonable prices. The modern guest rooms are moderate in size and comfortable, and the bathrooms, though small, are beautifully maintained. The public rooms have plenty of atmosphere. The best rooms are in front and open onto a park. Within a short walk are the bus and railway stations and attractions in the center of town. Coffee and light meals are served.

22 Parkveien, N-5007 Bergen. ✆ **55-30-88-88.** Fax 55-30-88-89. 21 units. 1,160NOK ($209/£105) double. Extra bed 220NOK ($40/£20). Rates include Norwegian breakfast. AE, MC, V. Free parking. Bus: 1 or 5. **Amenities:** Lounge; breakfast room, nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV.

WHERE TO DINE

Expensive

Kafe Krystall ★★★ *Finds* CONTINENTAL Thanks to Jugenstil accessories, the decor of this intimate restaurant evokes Vienna in the era of Sigmund Freud. Old-fashioned table settings and the quiet ministrations of a single server (Bergen-born owner Vibeke Bjørvik) create the feeling you're in a dignified private home. Menu listings change every 3 weeks. Our party recently sampled a menu that began delectably with spiced and pan-seared red snapper, accompanied by a shellfish guacamole and mussels sauce, followed by a divine creamed champagne soup topped with curried, marinated scallops. The rest of the menu items displayed well-balanced flavors, such as the baked sole with fresh tomato and green herbs, served with a fennel and potato purée, and the filet of lamb with caponata. For dessert, our hearts were won over by the vanilla and whiskey *panna cotta* (cooked cream) topped with chocolate sauce and a serving of lime-marinated raspberries.

16 Kong Oscargate. ✆ **55-32-10-84.** Reservations recommended. 4-course fixed-price menu 595NOK ($107/£54); 5-course fixed-price menu 675NOK ($122/£61); 6-course menu 725NOK ($131/£66). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri 6–10pm. Bus: 20, 21, 22, 23, 50, 70, 71, 80, or 90.

To Kokker ★ FRENCH/NORWEGIAN To Kokker ("Two Cooks") is a favorite with celebrities. Savvy local diners gravitate here for the chef's well-considered juxtaposition of flavors and textures. Menu items include such time-tested favorites as lobster soup; whitebait roe with chopped onions, sour cream, and fresh-baked bread;

reindeer with lingonberry sauce; and filet of lamb with mustard sauce and *pommes* (potatoes) Provençal. The dining room, one floor above street level, has scarlet walls, old paintings, and a solid staff that works competently under pressure, albeit without a lot of flair.

Enhjørninggården. ✆ **55-30-69-55.** Reservations required. Main courses 295NOK–330NOK ($53–$59/£27–£30); 4-course menu 595NOK ($107/£54); 5-course menu 695NOK ($125/£63); 7-course menu 858NOK ($154/£77). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat 5–10pm. Bus: 1, 5, 9, 70, or 80.

Inexpensive

Bryggeloftet and Stuene ★ NORWEGIAN The Bryggeloftet and Stuene is the best-established restaurant along the harbor. At street level, the Stuene has low-beamed ceilings, carved banquettes, and 19th-century murals of old Bergen, along with dozens of clipper-ship models. For a more formal meal, head upstairs to the Bryggeloftet, with its high ceilings and wood paneling. Dinner in either section might include fried *porbeagle* (a form of whitefish) served with shrimp, mussels, and white-wine sauce; roast reindeer with cream sauce; or pepper steak with a salad. Several different preparations of salmon and herring are featured, along with grilled filet of reindeer with a creamy wild game sauce. This is a quintessential Norwegian place—come here if you're seeking authentic flavors.

Bryggen 11. ✆ **55-30-20-70.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 200NOK–300NOK ($36–$54/£18–£27); lunch smørbrød 100NOK–150NOK ($18–$27/£9–£14). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Thurs 11am–11:30pm; Fri–Sat 11am–midnight; Sun 1–11:30pm. Bus: 1, 5, 9, 22, or 80.

SEEING THE SIGHTS

In addition to the sights below, take a stroll around **Bryggen (the Quay)** ★★★. This row of Hanseatic timbered houses, rebuilt along the waterfront after the disastrous fire of 1702, is what remains of medieval Bergen. The northern half burned to the ground as recently as 1955. Bryggen is on UNESCO's World Heritage List as one of the world's most significant cultural and historical re-creations of a medieval settlement. It's a center for arts and crafts, where painters, weavers, and craftspeople have their workshops.

Bergen Art Museum ★★ In the center of the city, this vastly expanded art museum—one of the largest in Scandinavia—displays an impressive array of Norwegian and international artists. Overlooking Lille Lungegard Lake, the museum after massive rebuilding is now displaying its extensive collection of art, for the first time, including such renowned artists as Edvard Munch, Miró, and Picasso. Norwegian art from the 18th century to 1915 is also exhibited. The Steneresen collection offers one of Europe's finest assemblages of the work of Paul Klee.

Rasmus Meyer allee 3, 7, and 9. ✆ **55-56-80-00.** www.bergenartmuseum.no. Admission 50NOK ($9/£4.50) adults, 35NOK ($6.30/£3.15) students, free for children 16 and under. Daily 11am–5pm. Closed Mon Sept 15–May 14.

Det Hanseatiske Museum ★ In one of the best-preserved wooden buildings at Bryggen, this museum illustrates Bergen's commercial life on the wharf centuries ago. German merchants, representatives of the Hanseatic League centered in Lübeck, lived in these medieval houses built in long rows up from the harbor. The museum is furnished with authentic articles dating from 1704.

Finnegårdsgaten 1A, Bryggen. ✆ **55-54-46-90.** May–Sept admission 45NOK ($8.10/£4.05) adults; Oct–Apr admission 25NOK ($4.50/£2.25) adults; free for children under 15. May 15–Sept 15 daily 10am–5pm, Sept 16–May 14 Tues–Sat 11am–2pm, Sun 11am–4pm. Bus: 1, 5, or 9.

Fløibanen ★ A short walk from the fish market is the station where the funicular heads up to Fløien, the most famous of Bergen's seven hills, reached after an 8-minute ride. At 320m (1,050 ft.), the view of the city, the neighboring hills, and the harbor is worth every øre.

Vetrlidsalm 21. ✆ **55-33-68-00.** Round-trip 70NOK ($13/£6.50) adults, 35NOK ($6.30/£3.15) children 4–16. Sept–Apr Mon–Thurs 7:30am–11pm, Fri 7:30am–11:30pm, Sat 8am–11:30pm, Sun 9am–11pm; May–Aug Mon–Fri 7:30am–midnight, Sat 8am–midnight, Sun 9am–midnight. Bus: 6.

Gamle Bergen ★ At Elsesro and Sandviken is a collection of houses from the 18th and 19th centuries set in a park. Old Town is complete with streets, an open square, and narrow alleyways. Some of the interiors are exceptional, including a merchant's living room in the typical style of the 1870s—padded sofas, heavy curtains, potted plants—a perfect setting for Ibsen's *A Doll's House.*

Elsesro and Sandviken. ✆ **55-39-43-03.** Admission 60NOK ($11/£5.50) adults, 30NOK ($5.40/£2.70) children and students. Houses mid–May to Sept only, guided tours daily on the hour 10am–5pm. Park and restaurant daily noon–6pm. Bus: 9, 20, 21, 22, or 50.

Mariakirke (St. Mary's Church) ★ This Romanesque church is the oldest building in Bergen (its exact date is unknown, but perhaps from the mid–12th c.) and one of the most beautiful churches in Norway. Its altar is the oldest ornament in the church, and there's a baroque pulpit, donated by Hanseatic merchants, with carved figures depicting everything from Chastity to Naked Truth. Church-music concerts are given several nights a week from May to August.

Dreggen 15. ✆ **55-31-59-60.** Admission 10NOK ($1.80/90p) adults, free for children; free to all Sept 10–May 17. May–Sept Mon–Fri 11am–4pm; Oct–Apr Tues–Fri noon–1:30pm. Bus: 5, 9, 20, 21, or 22.

Troldhaugen (Troll's Hill) ★ This Victorian house, in beautiful rural surroundings at Hop, near Bergen, was the summer villa of composer Edvard Grieg. The house contains Grieg's own furniture, paintings, and mementos. His Steinway grand piano is frequently used at concerts given in the house during the annual Bergen festival, as well as at Troldhaugen's own summer concerts. Grieg and his wife, Nina, are buried in a cliff grotto on the estate.

Troldhaugveien 65, N-5232. ✆ **55-92-29-92.** www.troldhaugen.com. Admission 60NOK ($11/£5.50) adults, 20NOK ($3.60/£1.80) students, free for children. Jan–Mar Mon–Fri 10am–2pm; Apr and Oct–Nov Mon–Fri 10am–2pm, Sat–Sun noon–4pm; May–Sept daily 9am–6pm. Bus: To Hop from the Bergen bus station (platforms 18–20), exit, turn right, walk about 180m (600 ft.), turn left at Hopsvegen, and follow signs. Hop is about 5km (3 miles) from Bergen.

THE SHOPPING SCENE

Bargain hunters head to the **Torget (Marketplace).** Many local handicrafts from the western fjord district, including rugs and handmade tablecloths, are displayed. This is one of the few places in Norway where bargaining is welcomed. The market keeps no set hours, but is best visited between 8am and noon. Take bus no. 1, 5, or 9. You'll find the widest selection of national handcrafts in and around **Bryggen Brukskunst,** the restored Old Town near the wharf, where many craftspeople have taken over old houses and ply ancient Norwegian trades. Crafts boutiques often display Bergen souvenirs, many based on designs 300 to 1,500 years old. For example, we purchased a reproduction of a Romanesque-style cruciform pilgrim's badge. Other attractive items are likely to include sheepskin-lined booties and exquisitely styled hand-woven wool dresses. The leading outlet for glassware and ceramics, **Prydkunst-Hjertholm,** Olav Kyrres Gate 7 (✆ **55-31-70-27**), purchases much of its merchandise directly from the studios of Norwegian and other Scandinavian artisans who turn out quality goods not only in glass and ceramics, but also in pewter, brass, wood, and textiles.

BERGEN AFTER DARK

The modern **Grieghallen (Grieg Hall),** Edvard Grieg Plass 1 (✆ **55-21-61-00**), is Bergen's monumental showcase for music, drama, and a host of other cultural events. The **Bergen Symphony Orchestra,** founded in 1765, performs here from August to May on Thursday at 7:30pm and Saturday at 12:30pm.

Norway's oldest theater performs from September to June at **Den National Scene,** Engen 1 (✆ **55-54-97-00**). Its repertoire consists of classical Norwegian and international drama and contemporary plays, as well as visiting productions of opera and ballet in conjunction with the annual Bergen Festival. Performances are held from Monday to Saturday.

In summer, the **Bergen Folklore dancing troupe** (✆ **55-55-20-06**) arranges a 1-hour folklore program at the Bryggens Museum on Tuesday and Thursday at 9pm. Tickets, which cost 100NOK ($18/£9), are on sale at the tourist information center or at the door.

The most-frequented pub in the city center, **Kontoret Pub,** Ole Bulls Plass 8–10 (✆ **55-36-31-33**), lies adjacent to the Hotel Norge next to the Dickens restaurant/pub. Drinkers can wander freely between the two places, since they're connected. In the Kontoret you can order the same food served at Dickens, though most people seem to come here to drink. The pub is open Sunday to Thursday from 4pm to 12:30am, Friday 4pm to 2am, and Saturday from noon to 2am.

EXPLORING THE FJORDS

Norway's fjords can be explored from both Oslo and Bergen by ship and car or by a scenic train ride. Here are the details.

BY CAR FROM BERGEN

Bergen is the best departure point for trips to the fjords: To the south lies the famous **Hardangerfjord** ★★ and to the north the **Sognefjord** ★★★, cutting 180km (112 miles) inland. We've outlined a driving tour of the fjords, starting in Bergen and heading east on Route 7 to Ulvik, a distance of 150km (93 miles).

ULVIK Ulvik is that rarity: an unspoiled resort. It lies like a fist at the end of an arm of the Hardangerfjord that's surrounded in summer by misty peaks and fruit farms. The village's 1858 church is attractively decorated in the style of the region. It's open June through August, daily from 9am to 5pm, and presents concerts.

From Ulvik, you can explore the **Eidfjord** district, which is the northern tip of the Hardangerfjord, home to some 1,000 people and a paradise for hikers. Anglers are attracted to the area because of its mountain trout.

The district contains nearly one-quarter of **Hardangervidda National Park** ★, which is on Europe's largest high-mountain plateau. It's home to 20,000 wild reindeer. Well-marked hiking trails connect a series of 15 tourist huts.

Several canyons, including the renowned **Måbø Valley,** lead down from the plateau to the fjords. Here, you'll see the famous 170m (558-ft.) **Voringfoss** ★ waterfall. The **Valurefoss** in **Hjømo Valley** has a free fall of almost 245m (800 ft.).

Part of the 1,000-year-old road across Norway, traversing the Måbø Valley, has been restored for hardy hikers.

En Route to Voss From Ulvik, take Hwy. 20 to Rte. 13. Follow Rte. 13 to Voss, 40km (25 miles) west of Ulvik and 100km (62 miles) east of Bergen.

VOSS Between the Sogne and Hardanger fjords, Voss is a famous year-round resort, also known for its folklore and as the birthplace of football hero Knute Rockne. Maybe the trolls don't strike fear into the hearts of farm children anymore, but they're still called out of hiding to give visitors a little fun.

Voss is a natural base for exploring the two largest fjords in Norway, the Sognefjord to the north and the Hardangerfjord to the south. In and around Voss are glaciers, mountains, fjords, waterfalls, orchards, rivers, and lakes.

A ride on the **Hangursbanen cable car** (✆ **56-53-02-20**) offers panoramic views of Voss and the environs. The hardy can take the cable car up, and then spend the rest of the afternoon strolling down the mountain. A round-trip ride costs 90NOK ($16/£8) adults, 55NOK ($9.90/£4.95) children 7 to 15, and is free for children 6 and under. The cable-car entrance is on a hillside that's a 1-hour walk north of the town center. It operates June 2 to September 9 from 11am to 5pm.

Built in 1277, the **Vangskyrkje,** Vangsgata 3 (✆ **56-52-38-80**), with a timbered tower, contains a striking Renaissance pulpit, a stone altar and triptych, fine woodcarvings, and a painted ceiling. It's a 5-minute walk east of the railroad station. We recommend that you call in advance to reserve an English-speaking guide. Admission is free. The church is open only June to August Monday to Saturday 10am to 4pm, Sunday 1 to 4pm.

Voss Folkemuseum, Mølster (✆ **56-51-15-11**), is a collection of authentically furnished houses that shows what early farm life was like. Lying just north of Voss on a hillside overlooking the town, the museum consists of more than a dozen farmhouses and other buildings, ranging in age from the 1500s to around 1870. Admission is 40NOK ($7.20/£3.60) adults, free for children. It's open mid-May to mid-September, daily from 10am to 5pm; and from mid-September to mid-May, Monday to Friday 10am to 3pm, Sunday noon to 3pm.

A little west of Voss in Finne, **Finnesloftet** (✆ **56-51-16-75**) is one of Norway's oldest timbered houses, dating from the mid–13th century. It's a 15-minute walk west of the railway station. Admission is 40NOK ($7.20/£3.60) adults and 15NOK ($2.70/£1.35) children. It's open June 15 to August 15, Tuesday to Sunday from 11am to 4pm.

BALESTRAND Long known for its arts and crafts, Balestrand lies on the northern rim of the Sognefjord, at the junction of the Vetlefjord, the Esefjord, and the Fjaerlandsfjord.

Kaiser Wilhelm II, a frequent visitor to Balestrand, presented the district with two statues of old Norse heroes, King Bele and Fridtjof the Bold, which stand in the town center.

You can explore by setting out in nearly any direction, on scenic country lanes with little traffic, or a wide choice of marked trails and upland farm tracks. A touring map may be purchased at the **tourist office** in the town center (✆ **57-69-12-55** in summer, or 57-69-16-17 in winter). There's good sea fishing, as well as lake and river trout fishing. Fishing tackle, rowboats, and bicycles can all be rented in the area.

En Route to Flåm From Balestrand, follow Rte. 55 east along the Sognefjord, crossing the fjord via ferry at Dragsvik and by bridge at Sogndal. At Sogndal, drive east to Kaupanger, where you'll cross the Ardalsfjord by ferry, south to Revsnes. In Revsnes, pick up Rte. 11 heading southeast. Drive east until you connect with a secondary road heading southwest through Kvigno and Aurland. When you arrive in Aurland, take Rte. 601 southwest to the town of Flåm, 95km (59 miles) southeast of Balestrand and 165km (103 miles) east of Bergen.

FLÅM ★ Flåm (pronounced *Flawm*) lies on the Aurlandsfjord, a tip of the more famous Sognefjord. In the village you can visit the old church dating from 1667, with painted walls done in typical Norwegian country style.

Flåm is an excellent starting point for excursions by car or boat to other well-known centers on the Sognefjord, Europe's longest and deepest fjord. Worth exploring are two of the wildest and most beautiful fingers of the Sognefjord: Næroyfjord and Aurlandsfjord. Ask at the **tourist office,** near the rail station (✆ **57-63-21-06**), about a cruise from Flåm, when you can experience the dramatic scenery of both of these fjords. From Flåm by boat, you can disembark in either Gudvangen or Aurland and continue the tour by coach. Alternatively, you can return to Flåm by train.

There are also a number of easy walks in the Flåm district. The tourist office has a map detailing these walks.

BY SHIP/TOUR FROM BERGEN

There are several ways to visit Sognefjord, Norway's longest fjord, from Bergen. One way is to cross the fjord on an express steamer that travels from Bergen to **Gudvangen.** From Gudvangen, passengers go to Myrdal, and from Myrdal a train runs back to Bergen. You can go by boat, bus, and then train for 800NOK ($144/£72) round-trip. Details about this and other tours are available from **Bergen Visitor Information** in Bergen (✆ **55-55-20-00**).

If you have more than a day to see the fjords in the environs of Bergen, you can take the grandest fjord cruise in the world, a **coastal steamer** going to the North Cape and beyond. The coastal steamers are elegantly appointed ships that cruise the western coast of Norway from Bergen to Kirkenes, carrying passengers and cargo to 34 ports along the Norwegian coast. Eleven ships in all make the journey year-round. The ships sail through Norway's more obscure fjords, providing panoramic scenery and numerous opportunities for adventure. Along the way, sightseeing excursions to the surrounding mountains and glaciers are offered, as well as sails on smaller vessels through some of the more obscure fjords.

The chief operator of these coastal cruises is the **Norwegian Coastal Voyage/Bergen Line,** 405 Park Ave., New York, NY 10022 (✆ **866/257-6071** or 212/319-1300 in the U.S.; www.coastalvoyage.com). Tours may be booked heading north from Bergen, or south from Kirkenes. The 12-day northbound journey costs from $2,999 (£1,500) per person double occupancy, including meals, taxes, and port charges.

15

Portugal

by Darwin Porter & Danforth Prince

Lisbon is growing and evolving, and the city is considerably more sophisticated than it once was, no doubt due in part to Portugal's joining the European Union (E.U.). The smallest capital of Europe is no longer a backwater at the far corner of Iberia. Some 1.6 million people now live in Lisbon. Lisbon presides over a country with one of the fastest-growing economies in Europe, much of it fueled by investments that have poured in since Portugal joined the E.U.

About 260km (160 miles) south of Lisbon, the maritime region of the Algarve, often called the "garden of Portugal," is the southwesternmost part of Europe. Its coastline stretches 160km (100 miles) and is dotted with hundreds of beaches—the finest in the country.

1 Lisbon & Environs

Lisbon, Europe's smallest capital, has blossomed into a cosmopolitan city. Sections of Avenida da Liberdade, the main street, evoke thoughts of Paris. Some of the formerly clogged streets of the downtown Baixa district have been closed to traffic, and cobblestone pedestrian malls have been created. Sidewalk portrait painters offer to sketch your likeness, and vendors peddle jewelry and handcrafts ranging from embroidery to leatherwork. In the cooler months, smoke billows from charcoal braziers roasting chestnuts.

The world dropped in on this city of seven hills as it celebrated EXPO '98, marking the 500th anniversary of Vasco da Gama's journey to India. Although Portugal has since stubbed its toe on its way to greater prosperity, many of its attractions and facilities were left behind after the exhibition, including the Oceanarium, the largest aquarium in Europe; indoor stadiums; convention centers; and a marina that can moor between 700 and 900 leisure craft.

Some 1.6 million people now call Lisbon home, and many of its citizens, having drifted in from the far corners of the world, don't even speak Portuguese. Consider an off-season visit, when the city is at its most glorious, before or after the hot and humid days of July and August. The city isn't overrun with visitors during spring and fall, and prices for lodgings are significantly lower than in summer.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **By Plane** Foreign and domestic flights land at Lisbon's **Aeroporto de Lisboa** (✆ **21/841-35-00;** www.ana-aeroportos.pt), about 6.5km (4 miles) from the heart of the city. An AERO-BUS runs between the airport and the Cais do Sodré train station every 20 minutes from 7:45am to 8:15pm. The fare is 3.10€ ($4.50). It makes 10 intermediate stops, including Praça dos Restauradores and

Praça do Comércio. There's no charge for luggage. Taxi passengers line up in a usually well-organized queue at the sidewalk in front of the airport, or you can call **Radiotaxi** at ✆ **21/811-90-00.** The average taxi fare from the airport to central Lisbon is 12€ ($17). Each piece of luggage is 1.60€ ($2.30) extra.

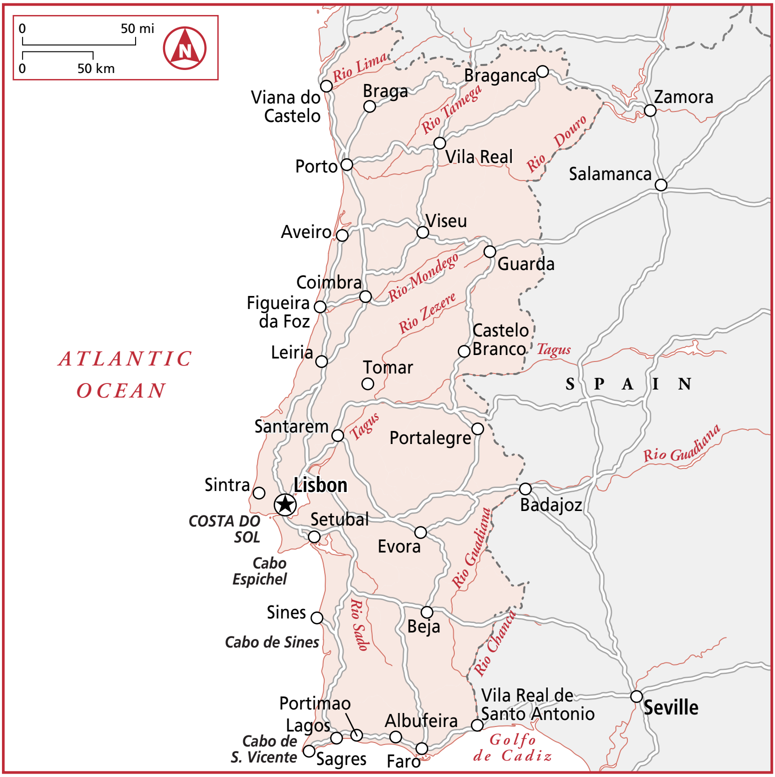
For ticket sales, flight reservations, and information about the city and the country, you can get in touch with the Lisboa personnel of **TAP Air Portugal,** Loja Gare do Oriente, Edifício Estação do Oriente, Avenida de Berlim, 1998 Lisboa (✆ **70/720-57-00** for reservations; www.tap-airportugal.pt).

By Train Most international rail passengers from Madrid and Paris arrive at the Estação da Santa Apolónia, Avenida Infante Dom Henrique, the major terminal. It's by the Tagus near the Alfama district. Two daily trains make the 10-hour run from Madrid to Lisbon. Rail lines from northern and eastern Portugal also arrive at this station. EXPO '98 brought a new, modern terminal to Lisbon. Connected to the Metro system and opened in 1998, Gare de Oriente at Expo Urbe is the hub for some long-distance and suburban trains, including service to such destinations as Porto, Sintra, the Beiras, Minho, and the Douro. At the Estação do Rossio, between Praça dos Restauradores and Praça de Dom Pedro IV, you can get trains to Sintra. The Estação do Cais do Sodré, just beyond the south end of Rua Alecrim, east of Praça do Comércio, handles trains to Cascais and Estoril on the Costa do Sol. Finally, you can catch a ferry at Sul e Sueste, next to the Praça do Comércio. It runs across the Tagus to the suburb of Barreiro; at the station there, Estação do Barreiro, you can catch a train for the Algarve and Alentejo. For all rail information, at any of the terminals above, call ✆ **80/820-82-08** (www.cp.pt) between 7am and 11pm daily.

By Bus Buses from all over Portugal, including the Algarve, arrive at the **Rodoviária da Seterios** (✆ **21/358-14-81;** www.rede-expressos.pt). If your hotel is in Estoril or Cascais, you can take bus no. 1, which goes on to the Cais do Sodré. At least six buses a day leave for Lagos, a gateway to the Algarve, and nine buses head north every day to Porto. There are 14 daily buses to Coimbra, the university city to the north. One-way fare from Lagos to Lisbon is 15€ ($22).

By Car International motorists must arrive through Spain, the only nation connected to Portugal by road. You'll have to cross Spanish border points, which usually pose no great difficulty. The roads are moderately well maintained. From Madrid, if you head west, the main road (N620) from Tordesillas goes southwest by way of Salamanca and Ciudad Rodrigo and reaches the Portuguese frontier at Fuentes de Onoro. Most of the country's 15 border crossings are open daily from 7am to midnight.

VISITOR INFORMATION The main **tourist office** in Lisbon is at the Palácio da Foz, Praça dos Restauradores (✆ **808/781-212;** www.visitportugal.com), at the Baixa end of Avenida da Liberdade. Open daily from 9am to 8pm (Metro: Restauradores), it sells the **Lisbon Card,** which provides free city transportation and entrance fees to museums and other attractions, plus discounts on admission to events. For adults, a 1-day pass costs 15€ ($22), a 2-day pass costs 26€ ($38), and a 3-day pass costs 31€ ($45). Children 5 to 11 pay 7.50€ ($11) for a 1-day pass, 13€ ($19) for a 2-day pass, and 16€ ($23) for a 3-day pass. Another tourist office is located across from the general post office in Lisbon on Rua do Arsenal 15, 1100-038 Lisbon (✆ **21/031-27-00;** www.visitlisboa.com). This tourist office is open daily from 9am to 7pm.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Rio Sado
Beja
Cabo de Sines
Rio Chanca
Vila Real de Santo Antonio
Seville
Portimao
Lagos
Albufeira
Cabo de S. Vicente
Sagres
Faro
Golfo de Cadiz

WEBSITES In addition to the tourist office's website, **www.portugalvirtual.pt** offers an extensive collection of links for exploring Portugal in depth. Another possibility is **www.portugal-info.net**.

CITY LAYOUT Lisbon is best approached through its gateway, **Praça do Comércio (Commerce Sq.),** bordering the Tagus. It's one of the most perfectly planned squares in Europe, rivaled only by the piazza dell'Unità d'Italia in Trieste, Italy. Before the 1755 earthquake, Praça do Comércio was known as Terreiro do Paço, the Palace Grounds, because the king and his court lived in now-destroyed buildings on that site. To confuse matters further, English-speaking residents often refer to it as Black Horse Square because of its statue (actually a bronze-green color) of José I.

Today the square is the site of the Stock Exchange and various government ministries. Its center is used as a parking lot, which destroys some of its harmony. In 1908, Carlos I and his elder son, Luís Filipe, were fatally shot here by an assassin. The monarchy held on for another 2 years, but the House of Bragança effectively came to an end that day.

Directly west of the square stands the City Hall, fronting Praça do Município. The building, erected in the late 19th century, was designed by the architect Domingos Parente.

Heading north from Black Horse or Commerce Square, you enter the hustle and bustle of **Praça de Dom Pedro IV,** popularly known as the Rossio. The "drunken" undulation of the sidewalks, with their arabesques of black and white, have led to the appellation "the dizzy praça." Here you can sit sipping strong unblended coffee from the former Portuguese provinces in Africa. The statue on the square is that of the Portuguese-born emperor of Brazil.

Opening onto the Rossio is the **Teatro Nacional de Dona Maria II,** a free-standing building whose facade has been preserved. From 1967 to 1970, workers gutted the interior to rebuild it completely. If you arrive by train, you'll enter the **Estação do Rossio,** whose exuberant Manueline architecture is worth seeing.

Separating the Rossio from Avenida da Liberdade is **Praça dos Restauradores,** named in honor of the Restoration, when the Portuguese chose their own king and freed themselves from 60 years of Spanish rule. An obelisk commemorates the event.

Lisbon's main avenue is **Avenida da Liberdade (Avenue of Liberty).** The handsomely laid-out street dates from 1880. Avenida da Liberdade is like a 1.5km-long (1-mile-long) park, with shade trees, gardens, and center walks for the promenading crowds. Flanking it are fine shops, the headquarters of many major airlines, travel agents, coffeehouses with sidewalk tables, and hotels. The comparable street in Paris is the Champs-Elysées; in Rome, it's via Vittorio Veneto.

At the top of the avenue is Praça do Marquês de Pombal, with a statue erected in honor of the 18th-century prime minister credited with Lisbon's reconstruction in the aftermath of the earthquake.

Proceeding north, you'll enter Parque Eduardo VII, named in honor of the son of Queen Victoria, who paid a state visit to Lisbon. In the park is the Estufa Fria, a greenhouse well worth a visit.

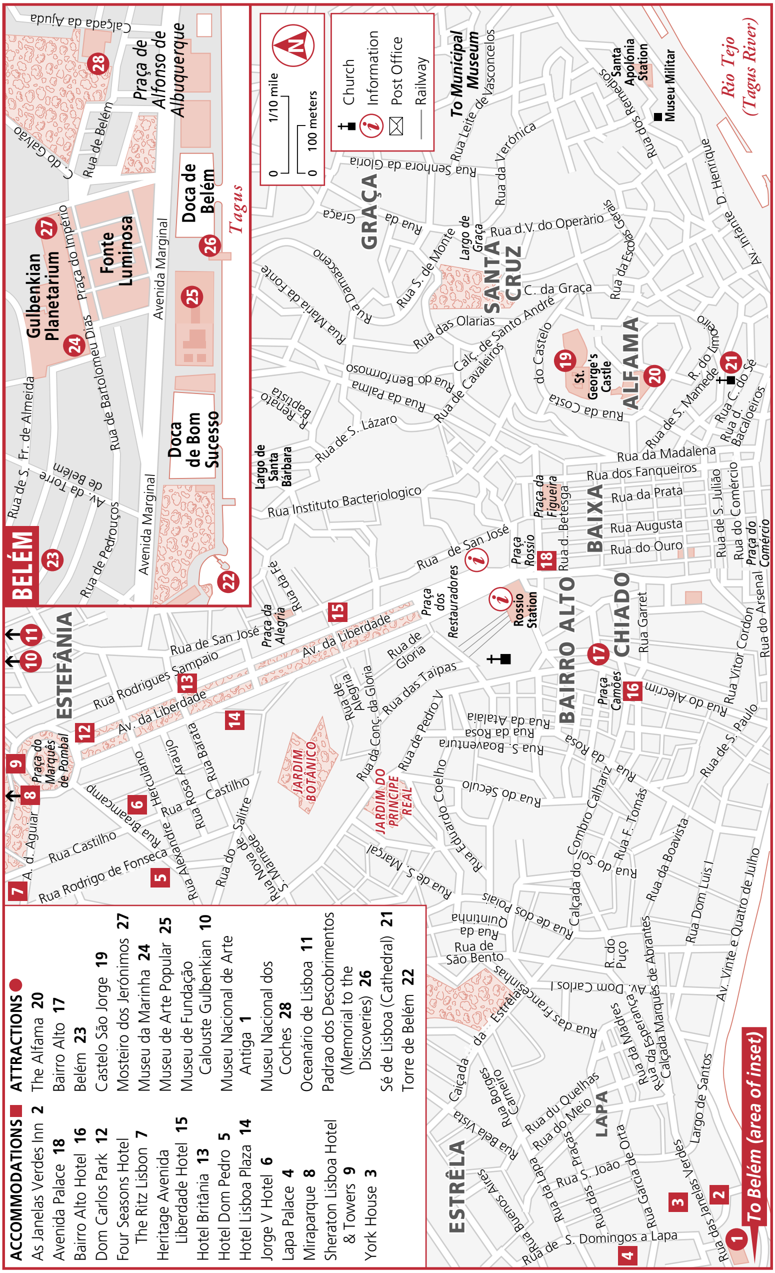
GETTING AROUND **CARRIS** (☎ **21/361-30-00;** www.carris.pt) operates the network of funiculars, trains, subways, and buses in Lisbon. The company sells a *bilhete de assinatura turístico* (tourist ticket). A 1-day pass goes for 3.50€ ($5); a 5-day pass costs 14€ ($20). Passes are sold in CARRIS booths, open from 8am to 8pm daily, in most Metro stations and network train stations. You must show a passport to buy a pass.

By Metro Lisbon's Metro stations are designated by large M signs. A single ticket costs .75€ ($1.10); 10 tickets at one time cost 6.65€ ($9.65). One of the most popular trips—and likely to be jampacked on *corrida* (bullfight) days—is from Avenida da República to Campo Pequeno, the brick building away from the center of the city. Service runs daily from 6:30am to 1am. For more information, call ☎ **21/350-01-15** (www.metrolisboa.pt).

By Bus & Tram Lisbon's buses and trams are among the cheapest in Europe. The *eléctricos* (trolley cars, or trams) make the steep run up to the Bairro Alto. The double-decker buses come from London and look as if they need Big Ben in the background to complete the picture. If you're trying to stand on the platform at the back of a jammed bus, you'll need both hands free to hold on.

The basic fare on a bus or eléctrico is 1.15€ ($1.70) if you buy the ticket from the driver (☎ **21/361-30-00;** www.carris.pt). The transportation system within the city limits is divided into zones ranging from one to five. The fare depends on how many zones you traverse. Buses and eléctricos run daily from 6am to 1am.

Lisbon



ACCOMMODATIONS ■
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Gulbenkian Planetarium
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Praça do Império
Rua de Bartolomeu Dias
Rua de Belém
Calçada da Ajuda
C. do Galvão
Rua de S. Fr. de Almeida
Av. da Torre de Belém
Rua de Pedrouços
ESTEFÂNIA
Praça do Marquês de Pombal
Av. da Liberdade
Rua Rodrigues Sampaio
Rua de San José
Rua Castilho
Rua Rodrigo de Fonseca
Rua Braamcamp
Rua Alexandre Herculano
Rua Rosa Araújo
Rua Barata Salgueiro
Rua do Salitre
JARDIM BOTÂNICO
JARDIM DO PRÍNCIPE REAL
Praça da Alegria
Praça dos Restauradores
Rossio Station
Praça Rossio
Praça da Figueira
BAIRRO ALTO
CHIADO
Praça Camões
BAIXA
Rua Augusta
Rua do Ouro
Rua da Prata
Rua dos Fanqueiros
Rua da Madalena
Rua do Comércio
Praça do Comércio
Rua do Arsenal
ALFAMA
St. George's Castle
SANTA CRUZ
GRAÇA
Largo da Graça
Largo de Santa Bárbara
Rua Instituto Bacteriologico
Rua de S. Lázaro
Rua da Palma
Rua do Benformoso
Rua das Olarias
Calç. de Santo André
Rua Damasceno
Rua Maria da Fonte
Rua S. de Monte
Rua d.V. do Operàrio
Rua Senhora da Gloria
Rua da Verónica
Rua Leite de Vasconcelos
To Municipal Museum
Rua dos Remédios
Santa Apolónia Station
Museu Militar
Rio Tejo (Tagus River)
Av. Infante D. Henrique
Rua Garrett
Rua do Alecrim
Rua Vitor Cordon
Rua de S. Paulo
Rua do Século
Rua da Rosa
Rua da Atalaia
Rua da Boavista
Av. Vinte e Quatro de Julho
Rua Dom Luís I
Calçada do Combro
Rua de São Bento
Rua Dom Carlos I
Calçada da Estrela
ESTRÊLA
LAPA
Rua Buenos Aires
Rua de S. Domingos a Lapa
Rua das Janelas Verdes
Largo de Santos
Av. Dom Carlos I
To Belém (area of inset)

At the foot of the Santa Justa Elevator, on Rua Aurea, there's a stand with schedules pinpointing the zigzagging tram and bus routes. Your hotel concierge should have information.

By Electric Train A smooth-running, modern electric train system connects Lisbon to all the towns and villages along the Portuguese Riviera. There's only one class of seat, and the rides are cheap and generally comfortable. You can board the train at the waterfront Cais do Sodré Station in Lisbon and head up the coast all the way to Cascais.

The electric train does not run to Sintra. For Sintra, you must go to the Estação do Rossio station, opening onto Praça de Dom Pedro IV, or the Rossio, where frequent connections can be made. The one-way fare from Lisbon to Cascais, Estoril, or Sintra is 1.50€ to 3.35€ ($2.20–$4.85) per person (✆ **21/261-30-00;** www.carris.pt).

By Taxi Taxis in Lisbon tend to be inexpensive and are a popular means of transport for all but the most economy-minded tourists. They usually are diesel-engine Mercedes. The basic fare is 2.15€ ($3.10) for the first 153m (502 ft.), .05€ (10¢) for each extra 162m (531 ft.), plus 20% from 10pm to 6am. The law allows drivers to tack on another 50% to your bill if your luggage weighs more than 66 pounds. Portuguese tip about 20% of the modest fare. For a Radio Taxi, call ✆ **21/811-90-00** (www.retalis.pt).

Many visitors stay at a Costa do Sol resort hotel, such as the Palácio in Estoril or the Cidadela in Cascais. If you stay there, you'll probably find taxi connections from Lisbon prohibitively expensive. Far preferable for Costa do Sol visitors is the electric train system (see above).

By Car In congested Lisbon, driving is extremely difficult and potentially dangerous—the city has an alarmingly high accident rate, and parking is seemingly impossible. Wait to rent a car until you're making excursions from the capital. If you drive into Lisbon from another town or city, call ahead and ask at your hotel for the nearest garage or other place to park. Leave your vehicle there until you're ready to depart. Car-rental kiosks at the airport and in the city center include **Avis,** Av. Praia da Vitoria 12C (✆ **21/351-45-60**); **Hertz,** Rua Castilho 72 (✆ **21/381-24-30** or 21/381-24-35; www.hertz.com); and **Budget,** Rua Castillo 167B (✆ **21/386-05-16;** www.budget.com).

FAST FACTS: Lisbon

American Express The entity representing American Express, although operating independently under license from American Express, is **Travel Store** located in Lisbon at Rua Rodrigues Sampaio (✆ **21/356-53-00**). Another office in Lisbon at Aeroporto de Lisboa (✆ **96/696-82-96**) also serves as the headquarters for American Express.

Business Hours Typically, **shops** are open Monday through Friday from 9am to 1pm and 3 to 7pm (some stay open through lunch) and Saturday from 9am to 1pm; some are also open Saturday afternoon. **Banks** are open Monday through Friday from 8:30am to 3pm; some offer a foreign-exchange service Monday through Saturday from 6 to 11pm.

Currency Portugal uses the **euro** (€). At press time, 1€ = $1.45.

Dentists & Doctors Contact **Clinica Medical Espanha,** Rua Dom Luis de Noroha 32 (✆ **21/796-74-57;** Metro: Plaça Espanha), where some dentists speak English. Virtually every hotel maintains a list of doctors and dentists who can be called upon in emergencies.

Drugstores **Farmácia Valmor,** Av. Visconde Valmor 60B (✆ **21/781-97-43**), is centrally located and well stocked. Pharmacies that are closed post a notice indicating the nearest one that's open.

Embassies & Consulates If you lose your passport or have some other pressing problem, you'll need to get in touch with your embassy.

The Embassy of the United States, on Avenida das Forças Armadas (Sete Rios), 1600 Lisboa (✆ **21/727-33-00**), is open Monday through Friday from 8am to 12:30pm and from 1:30 to 5pm. If you've lost a passport, the embassy can take photographs for you and help you to obtain the proof of citizenship needed to get a replacement.

The Embassy of Canada is at Av. da Liberdade 200, EDIT Victoria 4th Floor, 1269 Lisboa (✆ **21/316-46-00**). It's open Monday through Friday from 9am to noon and from 2 to 4pm (in July and Aug the embassy closes at 1pm on Fri).

The Embassy of the United Kingdom, Rua São Bernardo 33, 1249 Lisboa (✆ **21/392-40-00**), is open Monday through Thursday from 9:30 to 11:30am and from 3 to 4:30pm, Friday 9am to 12:30pm.

The Embassy of the Republic of Ireland, Rua de Imprensa à Estrêla 1, 1200 Lisboa (✆ **21/392-94-40**), is open Monday through Friday from 9:30am to 12:30pm and from 2:30 to 4:30pm.

The Embassy of Australia, on Av. de Liberdade 200, 1250 Lisboa (✆ **21/310-15-00**), is open Monday through Friday from 9 to 11:30am and 3 to 4:30pm. **New Zealanders** should go to the British Embassy (see above).

Emergencies For the police or an ambulance in Lisbon, call ✆ **112.** In case of fire, call ✆ **21/342-22-22.**

Hospitals In case of a medical emergency, ask at your hotel or call your embassy and ask the staff there to recommend an English-speaking physician. Or try the **British Hospital,** Rua Saraiva de Carvalho 49 (✆ **21/394-31-00**), where the telephone operator, staff, and doctors speak English.

Internet Access You can check your e-mail at **Cyber.bica,** Duques de Bragança 7 (✆ **21/322-50-04**), in the Chiado district. Its website is www.cyberbica.com (Metro: Baixa-Chiado). It's open Monday to Friday 11am to midnight.

Post Office The main post office in Lisbon, **Correio Geral,** is at Praça do Restauradores, 1100 Lisboa (✆ **21/323-89-71**). It's open Monday to Friday 8am to 10pm, and Saturday and Sunday 9am to 6pm.

Safety Lisbon used to be one of the safest capitals of Europe, but that hasn't been true for a long time. It's now quite dangerous to walk around at night. Many travelers report being held up at knifepoint. Some bandits operate in pairs or in trios. Not only do they take your money but they demand your ATM code. One of the robbers holds a victim captive while another withdraws money. (If the number proves to be fake, the robber might return and harm the victim.) During the day, pickpockets galore prey on tourists, aiming for wallets, purses, and cameras. Congested areas are particularly hazardous. Avoid walking at night, especially if you're alone.

Taxes Since Portugal and neighboring Spain simultaneously joined the Common Market (now the European Union) on January 1, 1986, Portugal has imposed a value-added tax (VAT) on most purchases made within its borders. It ranges from 8% to 30%. Known in Portugal as the IVA, the amount is almost always written into the bottom line of the bill for any purchase a foreign visitor makes. Hotel and restaurant bills are taxed at 18%. Car rentals are subject to an additional 18% tax (less than in some other European countries).

Such deluxe goods as jewelry, furs, and expensive imported liquors include a 30% built-in tax.

To get a VAT refund on purchases that qualify (ask the shopkeeper), present your passport to the salesperson and ask for the special stamped form. Present the form with your purchases at the booth marked for IVA tax refunds at the airport. You'll get your money refunded right at the booth. For VAT refunds, you can also apply to **Global Refund** (www.globalrefund.com).

Telephone The **country code** for Portugal is **351.** The **city code** for Lisbon is now **21;** use this code when calling from anywhere outside or inside Portugal—even within Lisbon itself.

You can make a **local call** in Lisbon in one of the many telephone booths. For most **long-distance calls,** particularly transatlantic calls, go to the central post office (see above). Give an assistant there the number you wish, and he or she will make the call, billing you at the end. Some phones are equipped to use calling cards, including American Express and Visa. You can also purchase phone cards at the post office; they can be used at any public phone in Portugal. Phone debit cards are used only in public phones in public places. These cards bear one of two different names: TLP or CrediFone. Both are sold at the cashier's desk of most hotels as well as at post offices.

To charge a call to your calling card, dial **AT&T** (✆ 800/800-128); **MCI** (✆ 800/800-123); **Sprint** (✆ 800/800-187); **Canada Direct** (✆ 800/800-122); **British Telecom** (✆ 800/800-440); or **Telecom New Zealand** (✆ 800/800-640).

Tipping Most service personnel expect a good tip rather than a small one, as in the past. Hotels add a service charge (known as *servio*), which is divided among the entire staff, but individual tipping is also the rule. Tip 1€ ($1.45) to the bellhop for running an errand, 1€ ($1.45) to the doorman who hails you a cab, 1€ ($1.45) to the porter for each piece of luggage carried, 2.50€ ($3.65) to the wine steward if you've dined often at your hotel, and 1.50€ ($2.20) to the chambermaid.

In first-class or deluxe hotels, the concierge will present you with a separate bill for extras, such as charges for bullfight tickets. A gratuity is expected in addition to the charge. The amount will depend on the number of requests you've made.

Figure on tipping about 20% of your taxi fare for short runs. For longer treks—for example, from the airport to Cascais—15% is adequate.

Restaurants and nightclubs include a service charge and government taxes of 18%. As in hotels, this money is distributed among the entire staff, so extra tipping is customary. Add about 5% to the bill in a moderately priced restaurant, and up to 10% in a deluxe or first-class establishment. For hatcheck in *fado* houses, restaurants, and nightclubs, tip at least 1€ ($1.45). Washroom attendants get .50€ (75¢).

WHERE TO STAY

IN THE CENTER

Very Expensive

Four Seasons Hotel The Ritz Lisbon ★★★ The 10-floor Ritz, built by the dictator Salazar in the late 1950s on one of Lisbon's seven hills, is now operated by Four Seasons. Its suites boast the finest decoration you'll see in any major Portuguese hotel: slender mahogany canopied beds with fringed swags, marquetry desks, satinwood dressing tables, and plush carpeting. Some of the soundproof, spacious, modern rooms have terraces opening onto Edward VII Park; each boasts a marble bathroom with a double basin and a tub/shower combination. The least desirable rooms are the even-numbered ones facing the street. The odd-numbered accommodations, opening onto views of the park, are the best. Some studios with double beds are rented as singles, attracting business travelers.

Rua Rodrigo de Fonseca 88, 1099-039 Lisboa. ✆ **1-800/819-5053** in the U.S., or ✆ 21/381-14-00. Fax 21/383-17-83. www.fourseasons.com. 282 units. 355€–600€ ($515–$870) double; from 975€ ($1,414) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. Metro: Marquês de Ponbal. Bus: 1, 2, 9, or 32. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; indoor pool; health spa; sauna; room service; massage; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

Hotel Dom Pedro ★★ Rated five stars by the Portuguese government and associated with some of the most glamorous hotels of the Algarve and Madeira, this bastion of luxury is in the central Amoreiras district, across from one of the city's biggest shopping centers. A hypermodern sheathing of reflective glass covers its 21 stories. The interior is as conservative and rich-looking as the exterior is futuristic. The good-size guest rooms are richly furnished, usually with heraldic symbols or medallions woven subtly through the fabrics and wallpapers. Rooms also contain immaculately kept bathrooms with tub/shower combinations.

Av. Engenheiro Duarte Pacheco 24, 1070-109 Lisboa. ✆ **21/389-66-00.** Fax 21/389-66-01. www.dompedro.com. 263 units. 180€–395€ ($261–$573) double; 330€–630€ ($479–$914) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 15€ ($22). Metro: Marquês de Pombal. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; 2 bars; car rental; business center; room service; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

Sheraton Lisboa Hotel & Towers ★★ Built in 1972, and completely restored in 2007, this deluxe hotel is sheltered in a 25-floor skyscraper lying at a traffic-clogged intersection a bit removed from the center of the action, a few blocks north of Praça do Marquês de Pombal. The impressive pink-marble lobby features chandeliers and fancy carpeting. The guest rooms are small to midsize for the most part, but have been given a trendy look with all new furniture. The marble bathrooms are a highlight, with tub/shower combinations. The most desirable rooms are in the tower, opening onto views of the Vasco da Gama Bridge, the Tagus, or the city. There's also a private lounge and bar where you can mingle with other hotel guests (many of whom are business travelers), as well as a bar on the 26th floor, with a panoramic view of Lisbon and dancing to live music nightly.

Rua Latino Coelho 1, 1069-025 Lisboa. ☎ **800/325-3535** in the U.S., or ☎ 21/312-00-00. Fax 21/354-71-64. www.sheratonlisbon.com. 366 units. 220€ ($319) double; from 475€ ($689) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: 1, 36, 44, or 45. **Amenities:** Restaurant; 2 bars; indoor pool; health club; sauna; spa; car rental; room service; massage; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, iron, safe, Wi-Fi.

Expensive

Avenida Palace ★★ Built in 1892, Avenida Palace is the grandest old-fashioned hotel in Lisbon, an antiques-filled link to the past. Its extremely convenient location right at the Rossio is terribly noisy, but inside, it is another world entirely. Still the grand dame of Lisbon hotels, it retains its 19th-century aura and elegance, with a marble staircase, beautiful salons, and silk brocades. The Belle Epoque–style Palace offers all the modern comforts, especially in its restored guest rooms. They're soundproof and elegantly furnished, often in 17th- or 18th-century style. The marble bathrooms come equipped with tub/shower combinations.

Rua 1er Dezembro 123, 1200-359 Lisboa. ☎ **21/321-81-00.** Fax 21/342-28-84. www.hotel-avenida-palace.pt. 82 units. 220€ ($319) double; 260€ ($377) junior suite; 425€ ($616) suite. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. Metro: Restauradores. Tram: 35. **Amenities:** Breakfast room; bar; lounge; room service; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Heritage Avenida Liberdade Hotel ★ Right on the main street of Lisbon, this sleekly modern hotel in a restored late-18th-century palace opened its doors in 2006. It's already considered one of Lisbon's best hotels, partly because the decor was created by famed architect Miguel Cancio Martins, known for such landmarks as the Buddha Bar in Paris. His designs combine traditional architectural features with the most modern of technology, a winning combination the way he does it. Though the 18th-century exterior was retained, the interior was virtually re-created to fit modern living standards. Rooms range from midsize to spacious, and are glamorously laid out, each with a tiled bathroom with shower and tub. The six-floor hotel also boasts the sort of personalized service you'd expect from a small property.

Av. da Liberdade 28, 1250-145 Lisboa. ☎ **21/340-40-40.** Fax 21/340-40-44. www.heritage.pt. 42 units. 220€–320€ ($319–$464) double; 253€–410€ ($367–$595) triple. Children under 12 stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 10€ ($15). Metro: Restauradores. **Amenities:** Bar; gym; room service; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

Hotel Lisboa Plaza ★★ Hotel Lisboa Plaza, in the heart of the city, is a charmer of a boutique hotel. A family-owned and -operated government-rated four-star hotel, it has many appealing Art Nouveau touches, including the facade. The hotel was built in 1953 and has been frequently overhauled and modernized since. A well-known Portuguese designer, Graca Viterbo, decorated it in contemporary classic style. The midsize guest rooms—with well-stocked marble bathrooms with tub/shower combinations, and double-glazed windows—are well styled and comfortable. Try for a unit in the rear, looking out over the botanical gardens.

Travessa do Salitre 7, Av. da Liberdade, 1269-066 Lisboa. ☎ **21/321-82-18.** Fax 21/347-16-30. www.heritage.pt. 106 units. 156€–235€ ($226–$341) double; 260€–450€ ($377–$653) suite. Children under 12 stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 9€ ($13) nearby. Metro: Avenida. Bus: 1, 2, 36, or 44. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; car rental; room service; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

Moderate

Dom Carlos Park *Value* This central hotel lies just off Praça do Marquês de Pombal but it charges only a fraction of what its rivals in the neighborhood do. The curvy facade is all glass, lending an outdoorsy feeling reinforced by trees and beds of orange and red canna. The good-size guest rooms are paneled in reddish Portuguese wood; even so, they're rather uninspired and functional. An occasional hand-carved cherub softens the Nordic-inspired furnishings. All units come equipped with well-maintained bathrooms containing tub/shower combinations. The hotel faces a triangular park dedicated to Camilo Castelo Branco, a 19th-century poet. The lobby lounge is satisfactory; more inviting is the mezzanine salon, where sofas and chairs face the park.

Av. Duque de Loulé 121, 1050-089 Lisboa. ☎ **21/351-25-90.** Fax 21/352-07-28. www.domcarlospark.com. 76 units. 126€ ($183) double; 152€ ($220) triple; 214€ ($310) suite. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Marquês de Pombal. Bus: 1, 36, 44, or 45. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; room service; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Hotel Britânia ★ In its own way, the Britânia is one of the most traditional hotels in Lisbon. The well-known Portuguese architect Cassiano Branco designed the Art Deco building in 1942. Located about a block from Avenida da Liberdade, it boasts a distinguished, loyal clientele and an old-fashioned, almost courtly staff. The six-story hotel hasn't been renovated in quite a while, but there is yearly maintenance and upgrading on an as-needed basis. A former town house, it originally housed studio apartments, which explains why the bedrooms are much larger than most other competitors in Lisbon. The staff is the friendliest and most helpful we've encountered in central Lisbon.

Rua Rodrigues Sampaio 17, 1150-278 Lisboa. ☎ **21/315-50-16.** Fax 21/315-50-21. www.heritage.pt. 32 units. 164€–245€ ($238–$355) double. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Avenida. Bus: 1, 2, 11, or 21. **Amenities:** Bar; lounge; room service; laundry service; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

Inexpensive

Jorge V Hotel The Jorge V is a neat little hotel with a 1960s design. It boasts a choice location a block off the noisy Avenida da Liberdade. Its facade contains rows of balconies roomy enough for guests to have breakfast or afternoon refreshments. A tiny elevator runs to a variety of aging rooms, which aren't large but are comfortable; all have small tile bathrooms with well-kept showers. A highlight is the regional-style combination bar and breakfast room.

Rua Mouzinho da Silveira 3, 1250-165 Lisboa. ☎ **21/356-25-25.** Fax 21/315-03-19. www.hoteljorgev.com. 49 units. 82€–111€ ($119–$161) double; 105€–135€ ($152–$196) suite. Rates include continental breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. Metro: Avenida or Marquês de Pombal. **Amenities:** Bar; lounge; room service; laundry service; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Miraparque Miraparque lies on a secluded, quiet street opposite Edward VII Park. The small guest rooms haven't been called modern since the 1960s, but are well maintained. All come equipped with tidily kept bathrooms containing tub/shower combinations. The hotel is a little worn but still recommendable because of its central location and low prices. The wood-paneled lounges are furnished in simulated brown leather.

Av. Sidónio Pais 12, 1050-214 Lisboa. ☎ **21/352-42-86.** Fax 21/357-89-20. www.miraparque.com. 100 units. 65€–100€ ($94–$145) double; 95€–125€ ($138–$181) triple. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Parque. Bus: 91. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; room service; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

IN THE BAIRRO ALTO

Expensive

Bairro Alto Hotel ★ Inaugurated in 2005, this 18th-century building has been successfully converted into a winning hotel. The structure lies at the point where the Chiado district meets Bairro Alto. This is a boutique hotel, and immediately after its opening it began to win its devotees. The decor blends the old and the new—everything from plasma TVs on the walls to stylishly modern furniture to old-world architectural details. Bedrooms are midsize to spacious and are handsomely appointed. Opt for a room on the top floor, as these have small balconies opening onto dramatic cityscapes.

Praça Luís de Camões 8, 1200-243 Lisboa. ✆ **21/340-82-88.** Fax 21/340-82-00. www.bairroaltohotel.com. 55 units. 250€–380€ ($363–$551) double; 380€–590€ ($551–$856) suites. Rates include breakfast. Parking 15€ ($22). AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Baixa/Chiado. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; gym; room service; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

WEST OF THE CENTER

Expensive

Lapa Palace ★★★ In a palace built in 1870 for the count of Valença, this government-rated five-star hotel, purchased by Orient Express in 1998, is the most talked-about accommodations in Lisbon. We never thought we'd see a hotel replace the Four Seasons Hotel The Ritz as the city's premier address, but Lapa has done just that. In 1910, the de Valença family sold the villa and its enormous gardens to a wealthy, untitled family that retained it until 1988. After more than 4 years of renovation, it opened in 1992 amid a flurry of publicity. Its lushly manicured gardens lie close to the Tagus, south of the city center.

All but about 20 of the rooms are in a modern six-story wing. The spacious guest rooms in both sections contain amply proportioned marble surfaces, reproductions of French and English furniture, and a classic design inspired by a late-18th-century model. The marble bathrooms are among the city's most elegant, often adorned with bas-reliefs and containing tub/shower combinations and, in some cases, whirlpool tubs. Each unit opens onto a balcony. The older rooms have more charm and grace; many of the newer ones open onto panoramic vistas of Lisbon. The public areas have multicolored ceiling frescoes and richly patterned marble floors.

Rua do Pau de Bandeira 4, 1249-021 Lisboa. ✆ **21/394-94-94.** Fax 21/395-06-65. www.lapapalace.com. 109 units. 355€–725€ ($515–$1051) double; 675€–775€ ($979–$1,124) junior suite; from 970€ ($1,407) suite. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. Bus: 13 or 27. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; 2 pools (1 indoors); health club; spa; sauna; room service; massage; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

Moderate

As Janelas Verdes Inn ★★ *Finds* Although York House is still the most atmospheric—and certainly the most famous in its category in Lisbon—this hotel is giving it serious competition and is almost its equal. In fact, it used to be an annex to York House but broke away and is becoming known as a historic hotel in its own right. Lying near the Museum of Ancient Art, it was the former house of the Portuguese novelist Eça de Queiroz. During a major renovation, the place was modernized but its traditional past was respected. Rooms are luxurious with comfortable furniture, style, and abundant closet space, and the spacious tile bathrooms come with tub/shower combos. The red lounge evokes turn-of-the-20th-century Lisbon. Other special features include

Tips Stateside Booking

You can make reservations for Janelas Verdes Inn and many other Lisbon hotels, as well as all the country's rural *pousadas* (inns), through **Marketing Ahead,** 381 Park Ave. S., Ste. 718, New York, NY 10016 (✆ **800/223-1356** or 212/686-9213; www.marketingahead.com).

a small but beautiful garden and two honor bars as well as a top-floor library and terrace.

Rua das Janelas Verdes 47, 1200-690 Lisboa. ✆ **21/396-81-43.** Fax 21/396-81-44. www.heritage.pt. 29 units. 235€–295€ ($341–$428) double; 300€–375€ ($435–$544) triple. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: 27, 40, 49, or 60. **Amenities:** Bar; lounge; room service; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

York House ★★ Once a 17th-century convent, this boutique hotel is outside the center of traffic-filled Lisbon, and so attracts those who desire peace and tranquillity. It has long been known to the English and to diplomats, artists, writers, poets, and professors. Book well in advance. Near the National Art Gallery, it sits high on a hillside overlooking the Tagus and is surrounded by a garden. A distinguished Lisbon designer selected the tasteful furnishings. Guest rooms vary in size; all have antique beds, bathrooms equipped with tub/shower combinations, and 18th- and 19th-century bric-a-brac. The public rooms boast inlaid chests, coats of armor, carved ecclesiastical figures, and ornate ceramics. The former monks' dining hall has deep-set windows, large niches for antiques, and—best of all—French-Portuguese cuisine.

Rua das Janelas Verdes 32, 1200-691 Lisboa. ✆ **21/396-24-35.** Fax 21/397-27-93. www.yorkhouselisboa.com. 32 units. 150€–260€ ($218–$377) double. AE, DC, MC, V. Nearby parking 10€ ($15). Bus: 27, 40, 49, 54, or 60. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; room service; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer, safe.

WHERE TO DINE

IN THE CENTER

Very Expensive

Casa da Comida ★★★ TRADITIONAL PORTUGUESE/FRENCH Local gourmets tout Casa da Comida as offering some of the finest food in Lisbon. The dining room is handsomely decorated, the bar is done in the French Empire style, and there's a charming walled garden. Specialties include lobster with vegetables, roast kid with herbs, a medley of shellfish, and *faisoa à convento de Alcântara* (stewed pheasant marinated in port wine for a day). The cellar contains an excellent selection of wines. The food is often more imaginative here than at some of the other top-rated choices. The chef is extraordinarily attentive to the quality of his ingredients, and the menu never fails to deliver some delightful surprises.

Travessa de Amoreiras 1 (close to Jardin de Las Amoreiras). ✆ **21/388-53-76.** Reservations required. Main courses 30€–60€ ($44–$87). AE, DC, MC, V. Tues–Fri 1–3pm; Mon–Sat 8–11pm. Metro: Rato.

Clara ★★ PORTUGUESE/INTERNATIONAL On a hillside amid decaying villas and city squares, this green-tile house owned by Célia Pimpista contains an elegant restaurant with a number of different seating areas. You can enjoy a drink under the ornate ceiling of the bar or grab a seat in the indoor dining room—perhaps near the large marble fireplace, in range of the soft music played during dinner; during lunch, you can sit near the garden terrace's plants and fountain. Specialties include tournedos Clara, stuffed rabbit with red-wine sauce, four kinds of pasta, codfish Clara, filet of sole with orange, pheasant with grapes, and Valencian paella. Again, as in too many of Lisbon's top-rated restaurants, these dishes aren't innovative in any way, but they're often prepared flawlessly. As one of the staff told us, "When a dish has stood the test of time, why change it?" Perhaps you'll agree.

Campo dos Mártires da Pátria 49. ✆ **21/885-30-53.** Reservations required. Main courses 20€–40€ ($29–$58). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri 12:30–3pm and 7:30–11:30pm; Sat 7:30–11:30pm. Closed Aug 1–15. Metro: Avenida.

Expensive

Kais ★ INTERNATIONAL At the docks, this bar and restaurant opens onto an esplanade by the river. It's installed in a late-19th-century warehouse which has been amazingly converted into one of the most beautiful restaurants in Lisbon. Against a backdrop of Frank Lloyd Wright–inspired furniture, you can select from a dazzling array of fresh foodstuffs deftly handled by the skilled chefs in the kitchen. Shrimp in a champagne sauce is just one of the many tempting dishes that await you.

Rua da Cintura-Santos. ✆ **21/393-29-30.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 25€–30€ ($36–$44); fixed-price menus 50€–60€ ($73–$87). Mon–Thurs 8pm–midnight; Fri–Sat 8pm–1am. AE, DC, MC, V. Closed first 2 weeks in Aug. Tram: 15 or 18.

Moderate

Restaurant 33 ★ PORTUGUESE/INTERNATIONAL Restaurant 33 is a treasure. Decorated in a style evocative of an English hunting lodge, it lies near many recommended hotels, including the Four Seasons Hotel The Ritz Lisbon (p. 793). It specializes in succulent seafood dishes, including shellfish rice served in a crab shell, smoked salmon, and lobster Tour d'Argent; it also features tender, well-flavored pepper steak. One reader from New Rochelle, New York, found her meal here "flawless." A pianist performs during dinner. You can enjoy a glass of port in the small bar at the entrance or in the private garden.

Rua Alexandre Herculano 33A. ✆ **21/354-60-79.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 16€–29€ ($23–$42). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri 12:30–3pm and 8–10:30pm; Sat 8–10:30pm. Metro: Marquês Do Pombal. Bus: 6 or 9.

Inexpensive

Bonjardim *Value* *Kids* PORTUGUESE Bonjardim rightly deserves this enthusiastic endorsement of a traveler from Boston: "I was given the names of eight inexpensive restaurants to try in Lisbon during my 5-day stay. I ended up trying only two, as I took the rest of my meals at Bonjardim, sampling a different dish for lunch and dinner every day." The restaurant caters mostly to families, providing wholesome meals that fit most budgets. The operation has been so successful that it has taken over a building across the street, where the same menu is offered. The restaurant is just east of Avenida da Liberdade near the grimy Praça dos Restauradores.

In the main restaurant, the air-conditioned, sun-flooded second-floor dining room is designed in rustic Portuguese style, with a beamed ceiling. The street-floor dining room, with an adjoining bar for before-meal drinks, has walls of decorative tiles. During dinner, the aroma of plump chickens roasting on the charcoal spit is likely to prompt you to try one. An order of this house specialty, *frango no espeto* (chicken on a skewer), is adequate for two, with a side dish of french fries. Other highlights of the menu are hake in the Portuguese style, pork fried with clams, and chicken with *piri-piri,* a fiery chili sauce.

Bonjardim also has a self-service cafeteria nearby, at Travessa de Santo Antão 11 (✆ **21/342-43-89**). It serves Portuguese dishes, including seafood soup; half a roast chicken with trimmings; grilled fish of the day (the chef's specialty); and velvety chocolate mousse.

Travessa de Santo Antão 12. ✆ **21/342-74-24.** Main courses 9€–22€ ($13–$32). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily noon–11pm. Metro: Restauradores.

Cervejaria Brilhante SEAFOOD/PORTUGUESE Lisboans from every walk of life stop here for a stein of beer and *mariscos* (seafood). The tavern is decorated with stone arches, wood-paneled walls, and pictorial tiles of sea life. The front window is packed with an appetizing array of king crabs, oysters, lobsters, baby clams, shrimp, and even barnacles. The price changes every day, depending on the market, and you pay by the kilo. This is hearty, robust eating, although attracting a waiter's attention is a challenge.

Rua das Portas de Santo Antão 105 (opposite the Coliseu). ✆ **21/346-14-07.** Main courses 10€–20€ ($15–$29); tourist menu 16€ ($23). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily noon–midnight. Metro: Rossio or Restauradores. Bus: 1, 2, 36, 44, or 45.

Pastelaria Sala de Cha Versailles ★ CAFE/PASTRIES This is the most famous teahouse in Lisbon, and it has been declared part of the "national patrimony." Some patrons reputedly have been coming here since it opened in 1932. In older days the specialty was *licungo,* the famed black tea of Mozambique; you can still order it, but nowadays many drinkers enjoy English brands. (The Portuguese claim that they introduced the custom of tea-drinking to the English court after Catherine of Bragança married Charles II in 1662.) The decor is rich, with chandeliers, gilt mirrors, stained-glass windows, tall stucco ceilings, and black-and-white marble floors. You can also order milkshakes, mineral water, and fresh orange juice, along with beer and liquor. The wide variety of snacks includes codfish balls and toasted ham-and-cheese sandwiches. A limited array of platters of simple but wholesome Portuguese fare is on offer, too.

Av. da República 15A. ✆ **21/354-63-40.** Sandwiches 3€ ($4.35); pastries 1€ ($1.45); plats du jour 9.50€–16€ ($14–$23). AE, MC, V. Daily 7:30am–10pm. Metro: Salvanhe.

In Chiado & Bairro Alto

Expensive

Tasquinha d'Adelaide ★ *Finds* REGIONAL PORTUGUESE At the western edge of the Bairro Alto, about 2 blocks northeast of the Alcântara subway station and 2 blocks west of the Basilica da Estrêla, this small restaurant is cramped and convivial. It's known for the culinary specialties of Trás-os-Montes, a rugged province in northeast Portugal, and for its homey, unpretentious warmth. Robust specialties include *alheriras fritas com arroz de grelos* (tripe with collard greens and rice) and *lulas grelhadas* (grilled squid served in a black clay casserole). To finish, try Dona Adelaide's *charcade de ovos* (a secret recipe made with egg yolks). Although we like this hearty cooking, the flavors might be too pungent for some palates.

Rua do Patrocinio 70–74. ✆ **21/396-22-39.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 14€–27€ ($20–$39). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat 12:30–4pm and 8pm–2am. Metro: Rato. Tram: 25, 28, or 30. Bus: 9, 15, or 28.

Moderate

Comida de Santo *Finds* BRAZILIAN Opening in the early 1980s, this was the first all-Brazilian restaurant in Lisbon. At the edge of the Bairro Alto, in a century-old former private house, it contains only 12 tables. Recorded Brazilian music plays softly from the bar, lending a New World flavor, and a quintet of oversize panels depicts huge, idealized jungle scenes. The appropriate beginning of any meal is a deceptively potent *caipirinha* (aguardiente cocktail with limes and sugar). Main courses include spicy versions of *feijoada* (meat-and-bean stew), *picanha* (boiled Brazilian beef with salt), *vatapá* (peppery shrimp), and several versions of succulent grilled fish. The place is incredibly popular; reservations are very important.

Calçado Engenheiro Miguel Pais 39. ✆ **21/396-33-39.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 13€–17€ ($19–$25); tasting menu 35€ ($51). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 12:30–3:30pm and 7:30pm–1am. Metro: Rato. Bus: 58.

Consenso ★★ PORTUGUESE/CONTINENTAL Set within the cellar of the palace where the Marquês de Pombal (rebuilder of Lisbon after the earthquake of 1755) was born, this restaurant manages to be chic, historically conscious, and trendy all at the same time. It consists of four separate rooms, each with an individualized decor based on air (the bar), fire (*trompe l'oeil* flames adorn the ceiling, and an iron stove sends warmth into the room), earth, and water—check out their respective color schemes. If you opt for a meal here, you won't be alone: The prime minister of Portugal drops in for meals from time to time, bringing with him one or several of his cabinet ministers. Impeccably prepared menu items include marinated salmon with citrus pâté, bacon with dates, grilled monkfish and grouper served with shrimp-studded rice, and monkfish loin in a spicy cream sauce. Veal medallions "à la Consenso" are served with shellfish and shrimp.

Rua da Academia das Ciencias 1–1A. ✆ **21/346-86-11.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 13€–30€ ($19–$44). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat 7:30–11:30pm. Closed holidays. Metro: Chiado. Bus: 28, 58, 92, or 100.

WEST OF THE CENTER

Expensive

Restaurante Cipriani INTERNATIONAL/PORTUGUESE/ITALIAN This is the most upscale and most highly recommended restaurant in Lisbon's major government-rated five-star hotel, the Lapa Palace (reviewed earlier in this chapter). The dignified, elegant dining room has a view of one of the most lavish gardens in this exclusive neighborhood. This restaurant is a favorite with diplomats from the many embassies and consulates nearby. A la carte items available at lunch and dinner vary with the season. They might include fresh salmon fried with sage, lamb chops with mint sauce, a succulent version of a traditional Portuguese *feijoada* (meat stew), and perfectly prepared duck breast baked with pears. This is a perfect spot to retreat to when you want an elegant meal in a refined atmosphere.

In the Lapa Palace Hotel, Rua do Pau de Bandeira 4. ✆ **21/394-94-01.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 25€–35€ ($36–$51). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 12:30–3pm and 7:30–10:30pm. Closed for lunch in summer. Tram: 15.

Moderate

Espalha Brasas *Finds* TAPAS/PORTUGUESE This is our favorite of the many shoulder-to-shoulder restaurants lined up at the Alcântara Docks, although part of your evening's entertainment will involve picking whichever of the 20 or so cheek-by-jowl restaurants you actually prefer. You'll enter a high-ceilinged room whose centerpiece is a weather-beaten wooden statue of a nude male beside stairs leading to an upstairs balcony with additional tables. The setting is comfortably cluttered and amiable, with candlelit tables and a display of whatever fresh seafood and meats can be grilled to your preference. The finest menu items include every imaginable kind of meat or fish, grilled the way you prefer, as well as daily specials that include rice studded with either turbot and prawns or marinated duck meat, baked haunch of pork, and codfish stuffed with prawns and spinach.

Native Behavior

Machismo pertains in Portugal, as in most Latin countries, but it is of a gentler, often wistful variety. Over shots of cherry *ginginha,* a man is less likely to boast of his amorous accomplishments in the bedroom last night than of the prodigious amounts of food he ingested in the dining room. While he is proud of the work he does, he concedes that the true working-class heroes are fishermen, and deep inside he thinks that fishing is what a man *should* do. And, of course, in the Portuguese *tourada*—bullfight—not only does the animal leave the ring alive, but it is encouraged to charge repeatedly into a line of men with no weapons but their bravado.

A strain of nostalgia coupled with fatalism runs deep in Portuguese culture. There is a special word for it—*saudade*—which is, as always seems true of such words, not easily translated into English. It concerns a longing melancholy, for a place, a person, a spirit, even a practice now lost. Hardly unusual for a nation of seafarers and explorers and reluctant emigrants, who are gone from their homes and loves for years or forever, it is expressed in the musical art form called *fado* (see "The Quintessential Lisbon Experience: Fado," later in this chapter). Fado is a mournful wail about loss, and ordinary people, not just professional performers, are still known to break into the sobbing lament in clubs, at fiestas, and even on street corners.

Doca de Santa Amaro, Armazém 12. Alcântara. ✆ **21/396-20-59.** Reservations recommended for dinner Fri–Sat nights only. Main courses 11€–25€ ($16–$36). AE, MC, V. Sept–July Mon–Sat noon–1am; Aug daily 7:30pm–1am. Bus: 57. Tram: 15 or 18.

Nariz do Vinho Tinto ★ *Finds* PORTUGUESE This is one of our favorite restaurants in Lisbon—and known only to the most discerning of palates—so don't tell anyone about it. In the elegant Lapa district, the restaurant—"Red Wine Nose" in English—is owned by Antonio Ignacio. He gives equal attention to his wines as he does to his market-fresh produce. In two small dining rooms, decorated with cookbooks and wine bottles, he serves a cuisine that raises many dishes to gastronomic heights for Lisbon. His *pata negra* ham, for example, coming from the black-hoofed pig, is the single best platter of this dish we've ever tasted in Lisbon. Try his deeply smoky "game sausage" with its crackly skin and tantalizing filling, or else his cod roasted with ham fat (don't tell your doctor). Even the turnip tops cooked here are a savory treat and super green.

Rua do Conde 75. ✆ **21/395-30-55.** Reservations required. Main courses 15€–30€ ($22–$44). AE, DC, MC, V. Tues–Fri 12:30–3pm; Tues–Sun 7:45–11pm. Metro: Rato. Bus: 7 or 27.

Sua Excelência ★ *Finds* TRADITIONAL PORTUGUESE Sua Excelência is the creation of Francisco Queiroz, who was a travel agent in Angola before settling in Portugal. His restaurant feels like a fashionable drawing room, with colorful tables done up in intimate Portuguese provincial decor. Some dishes served are uncommon in Portugal, such as Angolan chicken Moamba. Sure-to-please specialties include prawns *piri-piri* (not unreasonably hot), *lulas à moda da casa* (squid stewed in white wine, crème fraîche, and cognac), the self-proclaimed best smoked swordfish in Portugal, and clams prepared five different ways. One unusual specialty is "little jacks," a small fish eaten whole, served with a well-flavored paste made from 2-day-old bread. The restaurant is just a block up the hill from the entrance to the National Art Gallery; it could be part of a museum-luncheon adventure, although its ambience is more charming in the evening. Over the years it has remained popular with our readers. We were the first guidebook to discover it, but today it seems to be on everybody's list.

Rua do Conde 34. ✆ **21/390-36-14.** Reservations required. Main courses 15€–28€ ($22–$41). AE, MC, V. Mon–Tues and Thurs–Fri 1–3pm; Thurs–Sun 8–10:30pm. Closed Sept. Bus: 27, 49, or 60. Tram: 15 or 18.

SEEING THE SIGHTS

SIGHTSEEING SUGGESTIONS FOR FIRST-TIME VISITORS

If You Have 1 Day Take a stroll through the Alfama, the most interesting district of Lisbon. Visit the 12th-century **Sé de Lisboa** (cathedral), and take in a view of the city and the river Tagus from the **Santa Luzia Belvedere.** Climb up to the **Castelo de São Jorge (St. George's Castle).** Take a taxi or bus to Belém to see the **Mosteiro dos Jerónimos (Jerónimos Monastery)** and the **Torre de Belém.** While at Belém, explore one of the major sights of Lisbon, the **Museu Nacional dos Coches (National Coach Museum).**

If You Have 2 Days On day 2, head for Sintra, the single most visited sight in the environs of Lisbon—Byron called it "glorious Eden." You can spend the day exploring the castle and other palaces in the stunning area. Try at least to visit the **Palácio Nacional de Sintra** and the **Palácio Nacional da Pena.** Return to Lisbon for a night at a fado cafe.

If You Have 3 Days On day 3, spend a morning at the **Museu da Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian,** one of Europe's artistic treasure-troves. Have lunch in the Bairro Alto. In the afternoon, see the **Fundação Ricardo Espírito Santo (Museum of Decorative Art)** and the **Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga (National Museum of Ancient Art).** At the day's end, wander through Parque Eduardo VII.

If You Have 4 Days On day 4, take an excursion from Lisbon. (For convenience, consider an organized tour—see listings later in this chapter.) Visit the fishing village of **Nazaré** and the walled city of **Óbidos.** Those interested in Roman Catholic sights might also want to include a visit to the shrine at **Fátima,** although seeing this on the same day would be hectic.

If You Have 5 Days On the final day, slow your pace a bit with a morning at the beach at **Estoril** on Portugal's Costa do Sol. Then continue along the coast to **Cascais** for lunch. After lunch, wander around the old fishing village, now a major resort. Go to **Guincho,** 6.5km (4 miles) along the coast from Cascais, which is near the westernmost point on the European continent and has panoramic views.

THE MAIN NEIGHBORHOODS

The Alfama East of Praça do Comércio lies the oldest district, the Alfama. Saved only in part from the devastation of the 1755 earthquake, the Alfama was the Moorish section of the capital. Nowadays it's home in some parts to stevedores, fishermen, and *varinas* (fishwives). Overlooking the Alfama is **Castelo São Jorge,** or St. George's Castle, a Visigothic fortification that was later used by the Romans. On the way to the Alfama, on Rua dos Bacalheiros, stands another landmark, the **Casa dos Bicos (House of the Pointed Stones),** an early-16th-century town house whose facade is studded with diamond-shape stones. Be careful of muggers in parts of the Alfama at night.

Bairro Alto Continuing your ascent, you'll arrive at the Bairro Alto (Upper City). This sector, reached by trolley car, occupies one of the legendary seven hills of Lisbon. Many of its buildings were left fairly intact by the 1755 earthquake. Containing much of the charm and color of the Alfama, it's the location of some of the finest *fado* (meaning "fate" and describing a type of music) clubs in Lisbon, as well as excellent restaurants and bars. There are also antiques shops. Regrettably, many of the side streets at night are peopled with drug dealers and addicts, so be duly warned.

Belém In the west, on the coastal road to Estoril, is the suburb of Belém. It contains some of the finest monuments in Portugal, several built during the Age of Discovery, near the point where the caravels set out to conquer new worlds. (At Belém, the Tagus reaches the sea.) At one time, before the earthquake, Belém was an aristocratic sector filled with elegant town houses.

Two of the country's principal attractions stand here: the **Mosteiro dos Jerónimos,** a Manueline structure erected in the 16th century, and the **Museu Nacional dos Coches,** the National Coach Museum, the finest of its kind in the world. Belém is Lisbon's land of museums—it also contains the Museu de Arte Popular and the Museu de Marinha.

THE TOP ATTRACTIONS

Castelo São Jorge ★★★ Believed to have predated the Romans, this fortress on a hilltop was used to guard the River Tejo and the settlement below. Beginning in the 5th century A.D., the site was a Visigothic fortification; it fell in the early 8th century to Arab invaders. Many of the walls still standing were erected during the centuries of Moorish domination. The Moors were in control until 1147, when Afonso Henríques, the country's first king, pushed them out and extended his kingdom south. Even before Lisbon was made the capital of the newly emerging nation, the site was used as a royal palace. For the finest view of the Tejo and the city, walk the esplanades and climb the ramparts of the old castle, named in commemoration of an Anglo-Portuguese pact dating from as early as 1371. On the grounds, you can stroll through a setting of olive, pine, and cork trees, graced by swans and rare white peacocks.

Rua da Costa do Castelo. ✆ **21/880-06-20.** www.egeac.pt. Admission 5€ ($7.25) adults, free for children under 10. Mar–Oct daily 9am–9pm; Nov–Feb daily 9am–6pm. Bus: 37. Tram: 12 or 28.

Mosteiro dos Jerónimos (Jerónimos Monastery) ★★ In an expansive mood of celebration, Manuel I, the Fortunate, ordered this monastery built in 1502 to commemorate Vasco da Gama's voyage to India and to give thanks to the Virgin Mary for its success. Manueline, the style of architecture to which the king contributed his name, combines Flamboyant Gothic and Moorish influences with elements of the nascent Renaissance. The 1755 earthquake damaged the monastery, and extensive restoration, some of it ill conceived, was carried out. The church interior is divided into a trio of naves, noted for their fragile-looking pillars. Some of the ceilings, like those in the monks' refectory, have ribbed barrel vaults. The "palm tree" in the sacristy is exceptional.

Praça do Império. ✆ **21/362-00-34.** www.mosteirojeronimos.pt. Admission: Church free; cloisters 4.50€ ($6.55) adults 26 and older, 2.25€ ($3.25) adults and children 15–25, free for seniors 65 and over and children under 14. May–Sept Tues–Sun 10am–6pm; Oct–Apr Tues–Sun 10am–5pm.

Museu de Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian ★★★ Opened in 1969, this museum houses the collection of Armenian oil tycoon Calouste Gulbenkian—declared by one critic "one of the world's finest private art collections." It covers Egyptian, Greek, and Roman antiquities; remarkable Islamic art; and vases, prints, and lacquerwork from China and Japan. European works include medieval illuminated manuscripts and ivories, 15th- to 19th-century painting and sculpture, 18th-century French decorative works, French Impressionist painting, and Lalique jewelry and glassware. Notable are two Rembrandts, Rubens's *Portrait of Hélène Fourment,* and Renoir's *Portrait of Madame Claude Monet.*

Av. de Berna 45. ☎ **21/782-30-00.** www.museu.gulbenkian.pt. Admission 3€ ($4.35), free for seniors (65 and over) and students and teachers. Free to all Sun. Tues–Sun 10am–5:45pm. Metro: Sebastião or Praça de Espanha. Bus: 16, 26, 31, 41, 46, or 56.

Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga (National Museum of Ancient Art) ★ This museum has a number of notable paintings, including the famous 15th-century polyptych from St. Vincent's monastery attributed to Nuno Gonçalves. Outstanding works are Hieronymus Bosch's triptych *The Temptation of St. Anthony;* Hans Memling's *Mother and Child;* Albrecht Dürer's *St. Jerome;* and paintings by Velázquez, Zurbarán, Poussin, and Courbet. Paintings from the 15th through the 19th centuries trace the development of Portuguese art. The museum also exhibits a remarkable collection of gold- and silversmiths' work.

Rua das Janelas Verdes 95. ☎ **21/391-28-00.** www.mnarteantiga-ipmuseus.pt. Admission 3€ ($4.35), 1.50€ ($2.20) students, free for children under 14. Tues 2–6pm; Wed–Sun 10am–6pm. Tram: 15 or 18. Bus: 27, 49, 51, or 60.

Museu Nacional dos Coches (National Coach Museum) ★★ The most visited attraction in Lisbon, the National Coach Museum is the finest of its type in the world. The coaches stand in a former horse ring; most date from the 17th to the 19th centuries. Drawing the most interest is a trio of opulently gilded baroque carriages used by the Portuguese ambassador to the Vatican at the time of Pope Clement XI (1716). Also on display is a 17th-century coach in which the Spanish Habsburg king, Phillip II, journeyed from Madrid to Lisbon to see his new possession.

Praça de Afonso de Albuquerque. ☎ **21/361-08-50.** Admission 3€ ($4.35), 1.50€ ($2.20) students 14–25, free for children under 14. Tues–Sun 10am–6pm. Closed holidays.

Oceanario de Lisboa ★★ *Kids* This world-class aquarium remains the most enduring and impressive achievement of EXPO '98 (the EXPO site has been renamed the Parque das Nações). Described as the second-biggest aquarium in the world, exceeded in size only by a facility in Osaka, Japan, it's contained within a stone-and-glass building whose centerpiece is a 5-million-liter holding tank. Its waters are divided into four distinct ecosystems replicating the Atlantic, Pacific, Indian, and Antarctic oceans. Each is supplemented with land portions on which birds, amphibians, and reptiles flourish. Look for otters in the Pacific, penguins in the Antarctic, Polynesian trees and flowers in the Indian, and puffins, terns, and seagulls in the Atlantic.

Esplanada d. Carlos I. ☎ **21/891-70-02.** www.oceanario.pt. Admission 11€ ($16) adults, 5.25€ ($7.60) students and children under 13. Summer daily 10am–8pm; winter daily 10am–7pm. Metro: Estação do Oriente. Pedestrians should turn right after leaving the metro station and go along Av. Dom João II where you'll see a signpost directing you left and to the water for the attraction itself.

ELSEWHERE IN LISBON

Museu da Marinha (Maritime Museum) ★ The pageant and the glory that characterized Portugal's domination of the high seas is evoked for posterity at the Maritime Museum. Appropriately, it's installed in the west wing of the Mosteiro dos Jerónimos, which was built in celebration of Vasco da Gama's voyage. These royal galleys re-create an age of opulence that never feared excess, as exemplified by dragons' heads dripping with gilt and sea monsters coiling with abandon. The museum contains hundreds of models, from 15th-century sailing ships to 20th-century warships. In a special room is a model of the queen's stateroom on the royal yacht of Carlos I, the Bragança king who was assassinated at Praça do Comércio in 1908.

Praça do Império. ✆ **21/362-00-19.** www.museu.marinha.pt. Admission 3€ ($4.35) adults, 1.50€ ($2.20) students and children ages 6–17, free for seniors (65 and over) and children under 5. Apr–Sept Tues–Sun 10am–6pm; Oct–Mar Tues–Sun 10am–5pm; closed Mon and holidays.

Padrão dos Descobrimentos (Memorial to the Discoveries) ★ Like the prow of a caravel from the Age of Discovery, this exploration memorial stands on the Tagus, looking ready to strike out across the Sea of Darkness. Notable explorers, chiefly Vasco da Gama, are immortalized in stone along the ramps. At the point where the two ramps meet is a representation of Henry the Navigator, whose genius opened up new worlds. One of the stone figures is that of a kneeling Philippa of Lancaster, Henry's English mother. Other figures in the frieze symbolize the crusaders (represented by a man holding a flag with a cross), navigators, monks, cartographers, and cosmographers. At the top of the prow is the coat of arms of Portugal at the time of Manuel the Fortunate. On the floor in front of the memorial lies a map of the world in multicolored marble, with the dates of the discoveries set in metal.

Praça da Boa Esperança, Av. de Brasília. ✆ **21/303-19-50.** www.egeac.pt. Admission 2.50€ ($3.65). May–Sept Tues–Sun 10am–7pm; Oct–Apr Tues–Sun 10am–6pm.

Sé de Lisboa ★ Characterized by twin towers flanking its entrance, the Sé represents an architectural wedding of Romanesque and Gothic styles, with a facade resembling a medieval fortress. When Christian Crusaders, led by Portugal's first king, Afonso Henríques, captured the city early in the 12th century, the Sé became the first church in Lisbon. It was damaged in the earthquakes of 1344 and 1755. Inside the rough exterior are many treasures, including the font where St. Anthony of Padua is said to have been christened in 1195. The cloister, built in the 14th century by King Dinis, is of Gothic ogival construction, with garlands, a Romanesque wrought-iron grille, and tombs with inscription stones. In the sacristy and Treasury Museum, you'll find marbles, relics, valuable images, and ecclesiastical treasures from the 15th and 16th centuries.

Largo da Sé. ✆ **21/886-67-52.** Admission: Cathedral free; cloister 2.50€ ($3.65). Daily 9am–7pm; holidays 9am–5pm. Tram: 28 (Graça). Bus: 37.

Torre de Belém The quadrangular Tower of Belém is a monument to Portugal's Age of Discovery. Erected between 1515 and 1520, the tower is Portugal's classic landmark. It stands near the spot where the caravels once set out to sea on their courageous exploratory voyages. Its architect, Francisco de Arruda, blended Gothic and Moorish elements in what became known as the Manueline style, using such details as twisting ropes carved in stone. The coat of arms of Manuel I rests above the loggia, and balconies grace three sides. Along the balustrade of the loggias, stone crosses symbolize the Portuguese crusaders.

Praça do Império, Av. de Brasília. ✆ **21/362-00-34.** www.mosteirojeronimos.pt. Admission 3€ ($4.35) adults, 1.50€ ($2.20) for young adults 15–25 years, free for children under 14 and for seniors (65 and over), Sun free until 2pm. Oct–Apr Tues–Sun 10am–5pm; May–Sept Tues–Sun 10am–6pm.

ORGANIZED TOURS

The best tours of Lisbon are offered by **Lisboasighting,** Rua Pascoal de Melo 3 (✆ **21/967-08-65-36;** www.lisboasightseeing.com). The half-day tour of Lisbon, costing 33€ ($48), is the most popular, taking in the highlights of the Alfama and visiting the major monuments, including Jerónimos Monastery and other attractions of Bélem. It even goes over the bridge over the Tagus for a panoramic view. Both morning and afternoon tours leave daily throughout the year. Ancient Lisbon, concentrating on the Alfama, always leaves daily, costing 32€ ($46). On this tour you're taken on a guided walk of Lisbon's oldest section, among other highlights.

The most recommended tour of the environs of Lisbon is a daily full-day tour costing 79€ ($115) and taking in all the highlights, concentrating on Sintra, Cascais, and Estoril. There's also a full-day (and jampacked) tour offered daily of the highlights north of Lisbon—Fátima, Batalha, Nazaré, and Óbidos. This tour costs 84€ ($122). Many other tours are offered that might be more suited to your desires—check with the agency for the current agenda.

THE SHOPPING SCENE

Baixa, a grid of streets dating from the 18th-century restoration of central Lisbon, is a major shopping area between the Rossio and the River Tejo. **Rua Aurea** (**Street of Gold,** the location of the major jewelry shops), **Rua da Prata (Street of Silver),** and **Rua Augusta** are Lisbon's three principal shopping streets. Another major upscale shopping artery is **Rua Garrett,** in Chiado, the district on the hill due west of Baixa. Antiques lovers gravitate to **Rua de São José** in the Graça District. **Rua Dom Pedro V,** in the Bairro Alto, is another street lined with antiques shops.

At the **Feira da Ladra,** an open-air flea market, vendors peddle their wares on Tuesday and Saturday; haggling is expected. Portable stalls and dropcloth displays are lined up in Campo de Santa Clara behind the Igreja São Vicente. Take bus no. 12 from the Santa Apolónia station.

Pottery is one of the best buys in Portugal, and pottery covered with brightly colored roosters from Barcelos is legendary, as is the ubiquitous blue-and-white pottery made in Coimbra. From Caldas da Rainha come yellow-and-green dishes in the shapes of vegetables, fruits, and animals. Vila Real is known for its black pottery, polychrome pieces come from Aceiro, and the red-clay pots from the Alentejo region are based on designs that go back to the Etruscans.

Another good buy in Portugal is gold. Gold is strictly regulated by the government, which requires jewelers to put a minimum of 19¼ karats in the jewelry they sell. Filigree jewelry, made of fine gold or silver wire, is an art that dates from ancient times. **W. A. Sarmento,** Rua Aurea 251 (✆ **21/347-07-83;** Metro: Rossio or Chiado), is the most distinguished silver- and goldsmith in Portugal, specializing in lacy filigree jewelry, including charm bracelets. Well on its way to being a century old, the **Joalharia do Carmo,** Rua do Carmo 87B (✆ **21/342-42-00;** Metro: Rossio), is an important shop for gold filigree work.

MORE SELECT SHOPS & GALLERIES In the same building as the Hotel Avenida Palace, **Casa Bordados da Madeira,** Rua 1 de Dezembro 137 (✆ **21/342-14-47;** Metro: Restauradores), offers handmade embroideries from Madeira and Viana. If you wish to place an order, the staff will mail it to you. **Madeira House,** Rua Augusta 131–135 (✆ **21/342-68-13;** Metro: Chiado), specializes in high-quality regional cottons, linens, and gift items.

Galeria Sesimbra, Rua Castilho 77 (✆ **21/387-02-91;** Metro: Marquês de Pombal), is one of the city's leading art galleries, operated by one of the most distinguished art dealers in Iberia. It sells the finest Portuguese painting, sculpture, and ceramics.

Galeria 111, Campo Grande 113 (✆ **21/797-74-18;** Metro: Entre Campus), features wide-ranging exhibitions of sculpture, painting, and graphics including work by leading contemporary Portuguese artists. It's closed August 4 to September 4.

LISBON AFTER DARK

Consult ***What's On in Lisbon*** or ***Your Companion in Portugal,*** available at most newsstands, for the latest entertainment listings (in English). A local newspaper, ***Diário de Noticias,*** also carries cultural listings, but in Portuguese. Few discount tickets are offered, but students get 50% off tickets purchased for the national theater. Also of interest is ***Agenda Cultural,*** an English- and Portuguese-language seasonal periodical that's often available without charge at cafes, at hotels, and at the Portuguese tourist office. In it, you'll find an abbreviated listing of musical, theatrical, and cultural choices available throughout the city.

THE PERFORMING ARTS

Teatro Nacional de São Carlos, Rua Serpa Pinto 9 (✆ **21/325-30-00;** tram no. 28, 58, 100, 204 [night service]; bus no. 46; Metro: Baixa-Chiado), attracts opera and ballet

Moments

The Quintessential Lisbon Experience: Fado

Fado is Portugal's most vivid folkloric art form. No visit to Lisbon is complete without at least one experience in one of the taverns where this traditional music is heard. Fado is typically sung by women, called *fadistas,* accompanied by guitar and viola. The songs express romantic longing and melancholy—saudade, the Portuguese sense of nostalgia for the past.

Adega Machado, Rua do Norte 91 (✆ **21/322-46-40;** bus no. 58 or 100), is still one of Portugal's favored fado clubs. Alternating with the fadistas are folk dancers in costume whirling, clapping, and singing. Dinner is a la carte, and the cuisine is Portuguese, featuring regional dishes. Expect to spend 25€ to 30€ ($36–$44) for a complete meal. The dinner hour starts at 8pm, music begins at 9:15pm, and doors don't close until 3am. Cover (including two drinks) is 16€ ($23). The club is open from Tuesday to Sunday.

Every night at **A Severa,** Rua das Gaveas 51 (✆ **21/332-46-40;** bus no. 20 or 24), male and female singers, alternating with folk dancers, perform. In a niche is a statue honoring the club's namesake, Maria Severa, the legendary 19th-century Gypsy fadista who made fado famous. The kitchen turns out regional dishes based on recipes from the north of Portugal. Expect to spend from at least 36€ ($52) per person for a meal with wine. Cover (including two drinks) is 16€ ($23), and the club is open daily from 9pm to 2am.

Seemingly every fadista worth her shawl has sung at the old-time **Parreirinha da Alfama,** Beco do Espirito Santo 1 (✆ **21/886-82-09;** bus no. 9, 39, or 46), just a minute's walk from the docks of the Alfama. It's fado only here, open daily from 8pm to 1am; music begins at 9pm. In the first part of the program, fadistas get all the popular songs out of the way, and then settle into their more classic favorites. Cover (credited toward drinks) is 15€ ($22).

aficionados to performances by top companies from around the world at this 18th-century theater. The season begins in mid-September and extends through July. The box office is open Monday through Friday from 1 to 7pm, Saturday, Sunday, and holidays from 1pm to 30 minutes after the show begins. Tickets run from 10€ to 70€ ($15–$102), depending upon seat location and attraction.

A full menu of jazz, dance, light opera, and chamber concerts is presented at the **Centro Cultural de Belém,** Praça do Império (✆ **21/361-24-00;** www.ccb.pt; tram no. 15; bus: no. 27, 28, 29, or 43). Check locally to see what's happening when you're in town. Admission to the center is free but prices vary for tickets to temporary exhibitions.

Originally built in the 1840s and restored after a disastrous fire in 1964, the **Teatro Nacional Doña Maria II,** Plaza Dom Piedro IV (Rossio; ✆ **21/325-08-00;** Metro: Rossio; bus no. 21, 31, 36, or 41), ranks along with the Teatro São Carlos as one of the most important cultural venues in Lisbon. Despite being funded by the Ministry of Culture, it does not limit its repertoire to just Portuguese-language productions, although those are the most common. Tickets run 2.50€ to 15€ ($3.65–$22). Students up to 25 years old (with valid ID) are given a 50% discount.

From October to June, jazz and other concerts, plus recitals and occasional ballet shows, are performed at the **Museu da Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian,** Av. de Berna 45 (✆ **21/782-30-00;** Metro: Sebastião or Praça de Espanha; bus no. 16, 26, 31, 41, 46, or 56). Inquire locally about what is happening at the time of your visit. Admission is 3€ ($4.35); free for seniors (65 and over) and students and teachers.

BARS

Bachus, Largo da Trindade 9 (✆ **21/342-28-28;** bus no. 58 or 100), is both a restaurant and a convivial watering spot. Amid Oriental carpets, fine hardwoods, bronze statues, and intimate lighting, mingle with some of Lisbon's stylish people. The array of drinks is international, starting at 3.50€ ($5.10). Bachus is open Monday to Saturday from noon to 3:30am.

A longtime favorite of journalists, politicians, and actors, the once-innovative **Procópio Bar,** Alto de San Francisco 21A (✆ **21/385-28-51;** bus no. 9), has become a tried-and-true staple. It might easily become your favorite bar—if you can find it. It lies just off Rua de João Penha, which itself is near the landmark Praça das Amoreiras. It's open Monday through Saturday from 6pm to 3am. Mixed drinks cost 7€ ($10) and up; beer costs 3€ ($4.35) and up. It's open Monday through Friday from 6pm to 3am, Saturday from 9pm to 3am; closed August 1 to August 15.

It would take an appraiser years to catalog the stuff filling the walls and ceilings of **Pavilhão Chines,** Dom Pedro V 89 (✆ **21/342-47-29;** Metro: Rato). An often-kitschy collection of toys, collectibles, and oddities packs several rooms. Replicas of everyone from Buddha to Popeye decorate the joint, along with bronze cupids, Toby tankards, baubles and beads, and enough Victoriana to fill half the attics of London. It's a lively venue open Monday to Friday 5pm to 2am, and Saturday 6pm to 2am.

Panorama Bar, Rua Latino Coelho 1 (✆ **21/357-57-57;** Metro: Picos), occupies the top floor of the Hotel Lisboa Sheraton. The view sweeps across the old and new cities, the River Tejo, and the towns on the river's far bank. A polite uniformed staff serves you amid a decor of chiseled stone and stained glass. Mixed drinks cost 8.50€ to 12€ ($12–$17). The bar is open daily from 6pm to 2am.

PORT WINE TASTING A bar devoted exclusively to the drinking and enjoyment of port in all its known types, **Solar do Vinho do Porto,** Rua de São Pedro de Alcântara 45 (✆ **21/347-5707;** Metro: Restauradores; bus no. 58 or 100), is at the edge of the Bairro Alto. Owned by the Port Wine Institute, the facility displays many artifacts related to the industry. But the real reason for dropping in is its *lista de vinhos*—there are more than 200 wines from which to choose. Solar is across the street from the upper terminus of the Gloria funicular. It's open Monday through Saturday from 2pm to midnight. A glass of wine costs on average from 1€ to 25€ ($1.45–$36).

DANCE CLUBS

At **Kapital,** Av. do 24 de Julio 68 (✆ **21/395-71-01;** tram no. 15; bus no.14, 28, 32, or 43), a dance club and bar next to the docks of the Tagus, you're likely to find surprisingly elite patrons rubbing elbows with regular folks. On the animated dance floor on the ground level, the music is loud, sometimes experimental, danceable, and up-to-date. The cover charge varies widely depending on whether the doorman thinks you're cool, well-dressed, or rich-looking enough. It's open Tuesday to Saturday 11pm until dawn.

Lux, Avenida Infante Don Henrique, Armazen (Warehouse) A, Cais da Pedra a Sta. Apolónia (✆ **21/882-08-90;** bus no. 9, 39, or 46), contains a labyrinth of interconnected spaces, each of which is likely to feature a radically different scene from the one in the room that's immediately adjacent. It attracts and amuses counterculture hipsters. The upstairs bar, where a DJ spins records, is open daily from 10pm to 6am. The more manic, street-level dance floor is open Thursday to Saturday 1am to 7am. Entrance to both areas is free before midnight; after that, a 15€ ($22) cover applies, although there might be a doorman with a velvet rope/barrier keeping out rowdies on weekends.

Near the Kapital (see above), **Plateau,** Escadinhas da Praia 7 (✆ **21/396-51-16;** tram no. 15), is a one-story nightclub with a confetti-colored decor and a mixed clientele. The elite mingle with everyday folk who are just looking for love and good music. DJs spin an appealing mixture of rock 'n' roll, garage, hip-hop, and, on rare occasions, even reggae. Many patrons come to watch and listen, not to boogie. It's open Tuesday to Saturday 10pm to 6am. Cover is 5€ ($7.25).

GAY & LESBIAN BARS & CLUBS

You might begin your night crawl at **Agua no Bico,** Rua de São Marçal 170 (✆ **21/347-28-30;** bus no. 58 or 100, though we recommend you take a taxi), a bar and dance club at the eastern edge of the Bairro Alto that combines aspects of an English pub with the futuristic trappings of a gay club. It's marked by a discreet brass plaque on a steeply sloping street lined with 18th-century villas. The young crowd sometimes remains after the "official" 2am closing for all-male porn flicks. It's open Monday to Saturday 9pm to 2am.

A short walk from Agua non Bico you'll find **Bar 106,** Rua de São Marçal 106 (✆ **21/342-73-73;** tram no. 28; bus no. 100), a popular rendezvous point, and watering hole for gay men, most of whom arrive here after around 10pm. Expect a simple, restrained decor, a busy bar area, and enough space to allow subgroups and cliques of like-minded friends to form quickly and easily. It's open nightly from 9pm until 2am.

In the narrow streets of the Bairro Alto, the **Memorial Bar,** Rua Gustavo de Matos Sequeira 42A (✆ **21/396-88-91**), is well known to the city's lesbian community. Around 60% of its patrons are women—the remainder are gay men. Twice a week (days vary), the joint features live entertainment—including comedy, cross-dressing shticks, or live Portuguese musicians. It's open Tuesday to Sunday 11pm to 4am. (Dance music begins at midnight.) Cover is 7€ ($10).

THE PORTUGUESE RIVIERA: EXCURSIONS ALONG THE COSTA DO SOL

Lisbon's environs are most appealing, and at least 2 or 3 days should be budgeted to take them in. At minimum, your tour should incorporate the former fishing port of Cascais, the headlands at Guincho, and Lord Byron's "glorious Eden" of Sintra. If you have more time, add in the wonders of the pink rococo palace at Queluz or check out the casino or golf at Estoril.

The **Costa do Sol** ★★★ is the string of beach resorts that forms the Portuguese Riviera, along the northern bank of the mouth of the Tejo, west of Lisbon. Many visitors choose to stay in seaside hotels in Estoril or Cascais, near enough to Lisbon to dart in and out of the capital to see the sights or visit the fado clubs. An inexpensive electric train leaving from the Cais do Sodré in Lisbon makes the trip frequently throughout the day and evening, ending its run in Cascais.

Do ride out on the train, even if you don't plan to stay there. Along the way, you'll pass pastel-washed houses with tile roofs and facades of antique blue-and-white *azulejos;* the traditional ceramic tiles of the region; miles of modern apartment blocks; rows of pine, mimosa, and eucalyptus; and, in the background, green hills studded with villas, chalets, and housing developments. The "Sun Coast" is sometimes known as the Costa dos Reis, the "Coast of Kings," because of all the members of Europe's deposed royalty who settled here over the last 60 years—exiled kings, pretenders, marquesses from Italy, princesses from Russia, baronesses from Germany.

ESTORIL ★ The first stop is 24km (15 miles) west of Lisbon. This once-chic resort has long basked in its reputation as a playground of monarchs. The **Parque Estoril,** in the town center, is a well-manicured piece of landscaping, a subtropical setting with plants and stands of palm swaying in the breeze. At night, when it's floodlit, you can go for a stroll. At the top of the park sits the **casino,** which offers not only gambling but international floor shows, dancing, and movies.

Across the railroad tracks is the **beach,** where fashionable men and women sun themselves on peppermint-striped canvas chairs along the Tamariz Esplanade. The atmosphere is cosmopolitan and the beach is sandy, unlike the pebbly strand found at Nice. If you don't want to swim in the polluted ocean, you can check in at an oceanfront pool for a plunge.

CASCAIS ★ Just 6km (3¾ miles) west of Estoril and 61km (38 miles) west of Lisbon, Cascais has more of a Portuguese atmosphere than Estoril, even though it has been increasingly overbuilt. Apartment houses, new hotels, and some of the best restaurants along the Costa do Sol draw a never-ending stream of visitors every year.

Even so, commercial fishermen still set out in their boats each day and return to the beach with their catches. Auctions of their bounty, called *lotas,* take place on the main square, though a modern hotel has sprouted up in the background. In the small harbor, rainbow-colored fishing boats share space with pleasure craft owned by an international set that flocks to Cascais from early spring until autumn.

The most popular excursion outside Cascais is to the **Boca do Inferno (Mouth of Hell)** ★. Reached by heading out on the highway to Guincho, and then turning left toward the sea, the Boca deserves its ferocious reputation. Thundering waves sweep in with such power that they long ago carved a wide hole in the cliffs. However, if you should arrive when the sea is calm, you'll certainly wonder why it's called the Mouth of Hell. This place can be a windswept roaring attraction if you don't stumble over too many souvenir hawkers.

The three sandy **beaches** at Cascais are almost as overcrowded as those at Estoril, but the waters here are said to be less polluted. Still, hotel pools remain the safer choice. Though there's a dangerous undertow, the best beach—at least from the standpoint of lying on the sand—is Praia do Guincho, around Cabo da Roca, right outside Cascais. The beach has dunes and is relatively uncrowded and pollution free. The continental winds make it a favorite of surfers.

QUELUZ ★★ From the Estação Rossio in Lisbon, take the Sintra-line train 15km (9⅓ miles) northwest to Queluz. Trains depart every 15 minutes (trip time: 30 min.). After leaving the train station in Queluz, take a left turn and follow the signs to the **Palácio de Queluz** ★, Largo do Palácio (✆ **21/434-38-60**), a brilliant example of the rococo style in Portugal. Pedro III ordered its construction in 1747, and the work dragged on until 1787. What you see now isn't exactly what you would have seen in the 18th century. Queluz suffered a lot during the French invasions, and almost all of its belongings were transported to Brazil with the royal family. A 1934 fire destroyed a great deal of Queluz, but tasteful reconstruction has restored the lighthearted aura of the 18th century. Inside, you can wander through the queen's dressing room, lined with painted panels depicting a children's romp; the Don Quixote Chamber (Dom Pedro was born here and returned from Brazil to die in the same bed); the Music Room, complete with a French grand pianoforte and an 18th-century English harpsichord; and the mirrored Throne Room adorned with crystal chandeliers. The palace is open Wednesday through Monday (except holidays) from 9:30am to 5pm. Admission is 4€ ($5.80). It's always free for anyone under 14.

SINTRA ★★★ Sintra, 29km (18 miles) northwest of Lisbon, is a 45-minute train ride from the Estação Rossio in Lisbon. Lord Byron called it a "glorious Eden," and so it remains. Visitors flock here not only to absorb the town's beauty and scenic setting but also to visit two major sights.

Opening onto the central town square, the **Palácio Nacional de Sintra** ★★, Largo da Rainha D. Amélia (✆ **21/910-68-40**), was a royal palace until 1910. Much of it was constructed in the days of Manuel the Fortunate. The palace's two conical chimney towers are the most distinctive landmarks on the Sintra skyline. The Swan Room was a favorite of João I, one of the founding kings of the Aviz dynasty, father of Henry the Navigator, and husband of Philippa of Lancaster. The Room of the Sirens or Mermaids is one of the most elegant in the palace. In the Heraldic or Stag Room, coats of arms of aristocratic Portuguese families and hunting scenes are depicted. The palace is rich in paintings and Iberian and Flemish tapestries. But it's at its best when you wander into the tree- and plant-shaded patio and listen to the fountain. Admission is 4€ ($5.80) adults, half price for those ages 15 to 25, free for children 13 and under. Admission is free on Sunday. The palace is open Thursday through Tuesday from 10am to 1pm and 2 to 5pm.

Towering over Sintra, the **Palácio Nacional da Pena** ★★, Estrada de Pena (✆ **21/910-53-40**), sits on a plateau about 450m (1,476 ft.) above sea level. At the top, the castle is a soaring agglomeration of towers, cupolas, and battlements. Crossing a drawbridge, you'll enter the palace proper, whose last royal occupant was Queen Amélia in 1910. Pena has remained much as Amélia left it, which is part of its fascination; it emerges as a rare record of European royal life in the halcyon days preceding World War I. Admission is 4€ ($5.80), 2€ ($2.90) for children ages 6 to 17, 1.60€ ($2.30) for seniors, and free for children 5 and under. The palace is open October through

May, Tuesday through Sunday from 10am to 4:30pm (last admittance at 4pm); June through September, Tuesday through Sunday from 10am to 6:30pm (last admittance 6pm).

2 The Algarve

The Algarve region, at the southwesternmost corner of Europe, is the nation's foremost resort destination. Its coast stretches 160km (100 miles)—all the way from Henry the Navigator's Cape St. Vincent to the border town of Vila Real de Santo António. The varied shore contains sluggish estuaries, sheltered lagoons, low-lying areas where the cluck of the marsh hen can be heard, long sandy spits, and promontories jutting into the whitecapped ocean. Called Al-Gharb by the Moors, the land south of the *serras* (hills) of Monchique and Caldeirão remains a spectacular anomaly that seems more like a transplanted section of North Africa. Inland, nudging the heavily developed shore, the countryside is heavily cultivated with groves of almonds, lemons, oranges, carobs, pomegranates, and figs.

Phoenicians, Greeks, Romans, Visigoths, Moors, and Christians all touched this land. A distinct Arabic flavor prevails in the region's fretwork chimneys, mosquelike cupolas, and whitewashed houses, and some Moorish and even Roman ruins remain. However, much of the historic flavor is gone forever, swallowed by the swarms of dreary high-rise apartment blocks surrounding most towns. Many former fishing villages, now summer resorts, dot the Algarvian coast: Carvoeiro, Albufeira, Olhão, and Portimão. The Atlantic and nearby Mediterranean remain primary sources of life, as they always have been. The marketplaces in the villages sell mats made of *esparto* (a long, coarse grass), copperwork, pottery, and almond and fig sweets that are sometimes shaped like birds and fish.

Lagos and Faro make logical home bases, with ample lodging choices, railroad and air connections with Lisbon, and an easy driving range to all the likely destinations along the coast.

LAGOS ★

Known to the Lusitanians and Romans as Locobriga and to the Moors as Zawaia, Lagos developed as a town dedicated to shipbuilding during the time of Henry the Navigator. Edged by the Costa do Ouro (Golden Coast), the Bay of Sagres at one point in its epic history was big enough to allow 407 warships to maneuver with ease. A port city that has traced its origins back to the Carthaginians, 3 centuries before the birth of Christ, Lagos was well known by the sailors of Admiral Nelson's fleet.

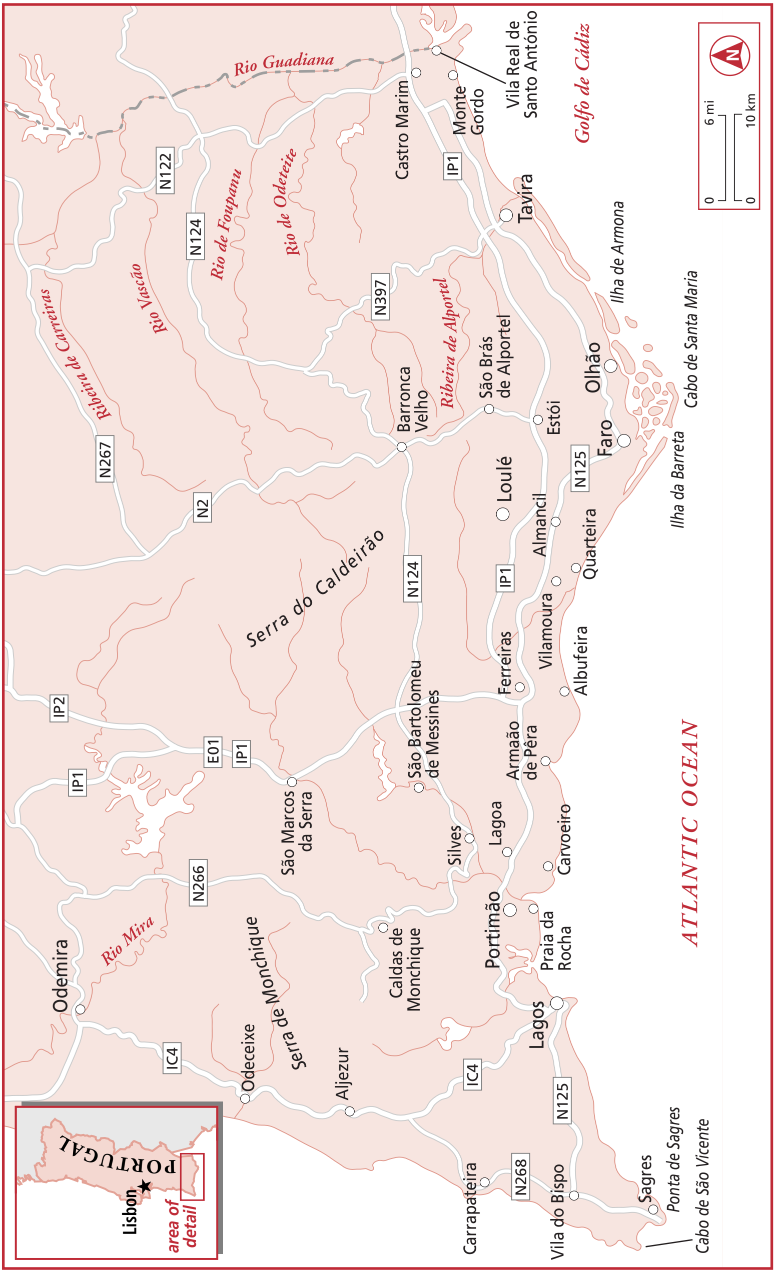
The principal reasons to go to Lagos are to enjoy the pleasures of the table and the beach. Even in winter, the almond blossoms match the whitecaps on the water and the climate is often warm enough for sunbathing. In town, a flea market sprawls through narrow streets, with vendors selling rattan baskets, earthenware pottery, fruits, vegetables, crude furniture, cutlery, knitted shawls, and leather boots.

Just down the coast, the rocky headland of the **Ponta da Piedade (Point of Piety)** ★★ appears. This spot is arguably the most beautiful on the entire coast. Amid the colorful cliffs and secret grottoes carved by the waves are the most flamboyant examples of Manueline architecture.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **By Ferry & Train** From Lisbon, take an Algarve-bound train to the junction at Tunes, where a change of trains will take you south all the way

The Algarve


Rio Guadiana
Vila Real de Santo António
Monte Gordo
Castro Marim
Golfo de Cádiz
IP1
N122
N124
Rio de Foupana
Rio de Odeleite
Tavira
Ilha de Armona
Cabo de Santa Maria
N397
Ribeira de Alportel
São Brás de Alportel
Olhão
Estói
Faro
Ilha da Barreta
Barranca Velho
Ribeira de Carreiras
Rio Vascão
N267
N2
Loulé
N125
Almancil
Quarteira
Serra do Caldeirão
N124
IP1
Vilamoura
Albufeira
Ferreiras
São Bartolomeu de Messines
IP2
E01
IP1
IP1
São Marcos da Serra
Armação de Pêra
Lagoa
Silves
Carvoeiro
ATLANTIC OCEAN
N266
Rio Mira
Odemira
Serra de Monchique
Caldas de Monchique
Portimão
Praia da Rocha
Lagos
IC4
Odeceixe
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to Lagos. Five trains a day arrive from Lisbon. The trip takes 5½ hours and costs at least 18€ ($26) one-way. For more information and schedules, call ✆ **808/208-208** (www.cp.pt).

By Bus Six buses a day make the run between Lisbon and Lagos. The trip takes 4 hours and costs 18€ ($26) each way. Call ✆ **28/276-29-44** for schedules.

By Car If you're coming from Lisbon, after leaving Sines, take Route 120 southeast toward Lagos and follow the signs into the city. From Sagres, take N268 northeast to the junction with N125, which will lead you east to Lagos.

VISITOR INFORMATION The **Lagos Tourist Office,** Rua Belchior Moreira de Barbudo, Sitio de São Joao, Lagos (✆ **28/276-30-31;** www.visitalgarve.pt), is open daily 9:30am to 1pm and 2 to 5:30pm.

WHERE TO STAY

Casa de São Gonçalo da Lagos ★ *Finds* This pink villa with fancy iron balconies dates to the 18th century. At the core of Lagos, close to restaurants and shops, the antiques-filled home is almost an undiscovered gem. Most of the public lounges and guest rooms turn, in the Iberian fashion, to the inward peace of a sun-filled patio. Surrounded by bougainvillea climbing balconies, guests order breakfast while sitting under a fringed parasol and enjoying the splashing of the fountain. Furnishings include hand-embroidered linens, period mahogany tables, chests with brass handles, ornate beds from Angola, and even crystal chandeliers. The street-level rooms can be very noisy. The well-maintained bathrooms, for the most part, contain tub/shower combinations.

Rua Cândido dos Reis 73, 8600-681 Lagos. ✆ **28/276-21-71.** Fax 28/276-39-27. 13 units. 60€–90€ ($87–$131) double. Rates include breakfast. AE, MC, V. Limited free parking on street. Closed Oct–Apr. **Amenities:** Breakfast room; bar. *In room:* A/C in some rooms.

Romantik Hotel Vivenda Miranda ★★★ *Finds* A real discovery, this small, Moorish-style hotel towers on a cliff overlooking the coast, 2.8km (1¾ miles) south of Lagos near the beach of Praia do Porto de Mos. Surrounded by exotic gardens and terraces, the inn opens onto the most panoramic views of any hotel in the area. Midsize to spacious bedrooms are stylish and exceedingly comfortable, with first-class tiled bathrooms, mainly with tub/shower combinations (some with shower only). This is the kind of hotel that would be ideal for a honeymoon or romantic getaway. The cuisine is so good that you might want to stay in at night enjoying a gourmet dinner with organic produce along with an excellent selection of regional wines.

Porto de Mos, 8600-282 Lagos. ✆ **28/276-32-22.** Fax 28/276-03-42. www.vivendamiranda.com. 28 units. 130€–200€ ($189–$290) double; 140€–390€ ($203–$566) suite. Rates include buffet breakfast. Free parking. AE, MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; outdoor pool; spa; room service; babysitting; laundry service. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

WHERE TO DINE

Don Sebastião ★ REGIONAL PORTUGUESE This rustically decorated tavern on the main pedestrian street is one of the finest dining choices in Lagos. Portuguese-owned and -operated, it offers a varied menu of local specialties. Options include lip-smacking pork chops with figs, succulent shellfish dishes like clams and shrimp cooked with savory spices, and grills. Live lobsters are kept on the premises. One of the best selections of Portuguese vintage wines in town accompanies the filling, tasty meals. In summer, outdoor dining is available.

Rua do 25 de Abril 20–22. ✆ **28/276-27-95.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 8€–25€ ($12–$36). AE, MC, V. Daily noon–10pm. Closed Dec 24–26 and Dec 31–Jan 2.

Os Arcos Marisqueira ★ PORTUGUESE/SEAFOOD One of the best seafood restaurants in town is this old-style tavern serving what is market-fresh every day. Their menu is adjusted daily, depending on the catch. The service is courteous, and the classic cookery never seems to disappoint. Of course, the recipes are the tried-and-true, familiar fare to all devotees of seafood along the Algarve. Our favorite is the *parrilhada de mariscos,* a mixed grill of shellfish. Also savory is the *arroz de marisco,* shellfish-studded rice and *gambas* (shrimp), prepared in the style of Mozambique, or with hot peppers. The chefs also do the best lobster dishes in town, and serve up a limited selection of meat dishes, including roast beef, roast pork, and veal escalopes *cordon bleu.*

Rua 25 de Abril 30. ✆ **28/276-32-10.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 10€–40€ ($15–$58). AE, MC, V. Daily 10am–1am. Closed Jan.

SEEING THE SIGHTS

Antigo Mercado de Escravos The Old Customs House stands as a painful reminder of the Age of Exploration. The arcaded slave market, the only one of its kind in Europe, looks peaceful today, but under its four Romanesque arches, captives were once sold to the highest bidders. The house opens onto the tranquil main square dominated by a statue of Henry the Navigator.

Praça do Infante Dom Henríques. Free admission. Daily 24 hr.

Igreja de Santo António ★ The 18th-century Church of St. Anthony sits just off the waterfront. The altar is decorated with some of Portugal's most notable baroque **gilt carvings** ★, created with gold imported from Brazil. Begun in the 17th century, they were damaged in the earthquake but subsequently restored. What you see today represents the work of many artisans—each, at times, apparently pursuing a different theme.

Rua General Alberto Carlos Silveira. ✆ **28/276-23-01.** Admission 2€ ($2.90) adults, 1€ ($1.45) students and seniors 65 and older, free for children under 12. Tues–Sun 9:30am–12:30pm and 2–5pm.

Museu Municipal Dr. José Formosinho The Municipal Museum contains replicas of the fret-cut chimneys of the Algarve, three-dimensional cork carvings, 16th-century vestments, ceramics, 17th-century embroidery, ecclesiastical sculpture, a painting gallery, weapons, minerals, and a numismatic collection. There's also a believe-it-or-not section displaying, among other things, an eight-legged calf. In the archaeological wing are Neolithic artifacts, Roman mosaics found at Boca do Rio near Budens, fragments of statuary and columns, and other remains of antiquity from excavations along the Algarve.

Rua General Alberto Carlos Silveira. ✆ **28/276-23-01.** Admission 2€ ($2.90) for adults; 1€ ($1.45) for children 12–14. Tues–Sun 9:30am–12:30pm and 2–5pm. Closed holidays.

PLAYING GOLF

Parque da Floresta, Budens, Vale do Poco, 8650 Vila do Bispo (✆ **28/269-00-00** for general inquiries, or 28/269-00-54 for golf reservations), lies 15km (9⅓ miles) west of Lagos, just inland from the fishing hamlet of Salema. Designed by Spanish architect Pepe Gancedo and built as the centerpiece of a complex of holiday villas, it offers sweeping views. Some shots must be driven over vineyards and others over ravines, creeks, and gardens. Critics of the course have cited its rough grading and rocky terrain. Greens fees are 24€ to 42€ ($35–$61) for 9 holes, and 42€ to 70€ ($61–$102) for 18.

Less than 1km (⅔ mile) from the center of Lagos is the par-71 **Palmares** course (✆ **28/279-05-00**), designed by Frank Pennink with many differences in altitude. Some fairways require driving a ball across railroad tracks, over small ravines, or around groves of palm, fig, and almond trees. The view from the 17th green is among the most dramatic of any golf course on the Algarve. Greens fees are 59€ to 89€ ($86–$129), depending on the season. To reach it from the heart of town, follow signs toward Meia Praia.

SAGRES ★★: "THE END OF THE WORLD"

At the extreme southwestern corner of Europe—once called *o fim do mundo* (the end of the world)—Sagres is a rocky escarpment jutting into the Atlantic Ocean. From here, Henry the Navigator, the Infante of Sagres, launched Portugal and the rest of Europe on the seas of exploration. Here he established his school of navigation, where Magellan, Diaz, Cabral, and Vasco da Gama apprenticed. A virtual ascetic, Henry brought together the best navigators, cartographers, geographers, scholars, sailors, and builders; infused them with his rigorous devotion; and methodically set Portuguese caravels upon the Sea of Darkness.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **By Ferry & Train** From Lisbon, take an Algarve-bound train to the junction at Tunes, where a change of trains will take you south all the way to Lagos. The rest of the distance is by bus (see below). For information and schedules, call ✆ **808/208-208** (www.cp.pt). From Lagos, buses go to Sagres.

By Bus Ten EVA buses (✆ **28/276-29-44**) in Lagos run hourly from Lagos to Sagres each day. The trip time is 1 hour, and a one-way ticket costs 3€ ($4.35).

By Car From Lagos, drive west on Rte. 125 to Vila do Bispo, and then head south along Rte. 268 to Sagres.

VISITOR INFORMATION The **Sagres Tourist Office,** rua Comandante Matos, Plaza da Republica, Sagres (✆ **28/262-48-73**), is open Tuesday to Saturday 9:30am to 12:30pm and 1:30 to 7:30pm.

WHERE TO STAY

Hotel da Baleeira In a ship's-bow position, Hotel da Baleeira is designed like a first-class *baleeira* (whaleboat) and spread out above the fishing port, lying 50m (164 ft.) from a pleasant beach. The largest hotel on this land projection, it offers guest rooms with sea-view balconies and a private beach. The number of its rooms has nearly doubled in recent years; the older ones are quite small, and some have linoleum floors. The bathrooms are also tiny and equipped with tub/shower combinations.

Sítio da Baleeira, Sagres, 8650 Vila do Bispo. ✆ **28/262-42-12.** Fax 28/262-44-25. www.memmohotels.com. 111 units. 95€–150€ ($138–$218) double. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. **Amenities:** Restaurant; snack bar; bar; outdoor pool; tennis court; gym; spa; sauna; Turkish bath; children's playground; car rental; room service; babysitting; laundry service. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, safe.

Pousada do Infante ★★ Pousada do Infante, the best address in Sagres, seems like a monastery built by ascetic monks who wanted to commune with nature. You'll be charmed by the rugged beauty of the rocky cliffs, the pounding surf, and the sense of the ocean's infinity. Built in 1960, the glistening white government-owned tourist inn spreads along the edge of a cliff that projects rather daringly over the sea. It boasts a long colonnade of arches with an extended stone terrace set with garden furniture, plus a second floor of accommodations with private balconies. Each midsize guest room is furnished with traditional pieces. Room nos. 1 to 12 are the most desirable. All are equipped with neatly kept bathrooms containing tub/shower combinations.

The public rooms are generously proportioned, gleaming with marble and decorated with fine tapestries depicting the exploits of Henry the Navigator. Large velvet couches flank the fireplace.

Ponta da Atalaia, 8650-385 Sagres. ✆ **28/262-02-40.** Fax 28/262-42-25. www.pousadas.pt. 39 units. 110€–190€ ($160–$276) double; 165€–234€ ($239–$339) suite. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; swimming pool; tennis court; riding stables; car rental; room service; babysitting; laundry service; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

WHERE TO DINE

O Telheiro do Infante ★ SEAFOOD This two-floor restaurant is the best place for dining in the area, especially if you like your food fresh from the sea. There may be a bit of a wait, as all the dishes are prepared to order to maintain freshness. Originally, the location was a small farm which grew and changed into its present role as tourism to the area increased. Raw ingredients are prepared with succulent simplicity. We always like to begin with the fresh oysters or the shrimp cocktail. Our favorite salad is the one made with fresh asparagus. Your best seafood selection is always the *peixe do dia* or fresh catch of the day. It can be grilled to your specifications, or the fish can also be sautéed and served in a butter sauce with fresh vegetables. An array of pork and beef dishes from the Portuguese plains north of here should satisfy any meat eater. (The pork is very sweet because the pigs are often fed a diet of acorns.) Some tables are placed outside so you can enjoy the view of the ocean.

Praia da Mareta. ✆ **28/262-41-79.** Reservations recommended in summer. Main courses 12€–25€ ($17–$36). AE, DC, MC, V. Wed–Mon 10am–10pm.

EXPLORING THE AREA

Both the cape and Sagres offer a view of the sunset. In the ancient world, the cape was the last explored point, although in time the Phoenicians pushed beyond it. Many mariners thought that when the sun sank beyond the cape, it plunged over the edge of the world.

Today, at the reconstructed site of Henry's windswept fortress on Europe's Land's End (named after the narrowing westernmost tip of Cornwall, England), you can see a huge stone compass dial. Henry supposedly used the Venta de Rosa in his naval studies at Sagres. Housed in the **Fortaleza de Sagres,** Ponta de Sagres, is a small museum of minor interest that documents some of the area's history. It's open May to September daily 9:30am to 8pm, October to April 9:30am to 5:30pm. Admission is 3€ ($4.35) for adults, 1.50€ ($2.20) for ages 15 to 25, and free for children 14 and under. At a simple chapel, restored in 1960, sailors are said to have prayed for help before setting out into uncharted waters. The chapel is closed to the public.

About 5km (3 miles) away is the promontory of **Cabo de São Vicente** ★★. It got its name because, according to legend, the body of St. Vincent arrived mysteriously here on a boat guided by ravens. (Others claim that the body of the patron saint, murdered at Valencia, Spain, washed up on Lisbon's shore.) A lighthouse, the second most powerful in Europe, beams illumination 100km (62 miles) across the ocean. To reach the cape, you can take a bus Monday through Friday only leaving from Rua Comandante Matos near the tourist office. Trip time is 10 minutes, and departures are at

11:15am, 12:30pm, and 6pm; a one-way ticket costs 1.50€ ($2.20). You can also contact Turinfo (see below), which offers 2-hour boat rides to the tip of Cabo de São Vicente for sightseeing (no fishing) for 18€ ($26) per person every afternoon, weather permitting, at 2pm.

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

BEACHES Many beaches fringe the peninsula; some attract nude bathers. Mareta, at the bottom of the road leading from the center of town toward the water, is the best and most popular. East of town is Tonel, also a good sandy beach. The beaches west of town, Praia de Baleeira and Praia de Martinhal, are better for windsurfing than for swimming.

EXPLORING If you'd like to rent a bike to explore the cape, go to **Turinfo,** Beco do Henrique, Sagres (✆ **28/262-00-03**). The charge is 6€ ($8.70) for 4 hours and 9.50€ ($14) for a full day.

PRAIA DA ROCHA

En route to Praia da Rocha, off N-125 between Lagos and Portimão, 18km (11 miles) away, you'll find several good beaches and rocky coves, particularly at **Praia dos Três Irmãos** and **Alvor.** But the most popular seaside resort on the Algarve is the creamy yellow beach of Praia da Rocha. At the outbreak of World War II there were only two small hotels on the Red Coast, but nowadays Praia da Rocha is booming, as many have been enchanted by the spell cast by its shoreline and climate.

The area is named Praia da Rocha, the "Beach of the Rock," because of its sculptural rock formations. At the end of the mussel-encrusted cliff, where the Arcade flows into the sea, are the ruins of the **Fort of St. Catarina,** whose location offers many views of Ferragudo (the village adjacent to Portimão) and of the bay.

To reach Praia da Rocha from Portimão, you can catch a bus for the 2.5km (1½-mile) trip south. Service is frequent. Algarve buses aren't numbered but are marked by their final destination, such as PRAIA DA ROCHA.

WHERE TO STAY

Algarve Hotel Casino ★★★ The Algarve, the leading hotel in this area, is strictly for those who love glitter and glamour and don't object to the prices. With a vast staff at your beck and call, you'll be well provided for in this elongated block of rooms poised securely on the top ledge of a cliff.

The midsize to spacious guest rooms have white walls, colored ceilings, intricate tile floors, mirrored entryways, indirect lighting, balconies with garden furniture, and bathrooms with separate tub/shower combinations. Many are vaguely Moorish in design, and many have terraces opening onto the sea. The Yachting, Oriental, Presidential, and Miradouro suites are decorative tours de force.

Av. Tomás Cabreira, Praia da Rocha, 8500-802 Portimão. ✆ **28/240-20-00.** Fax 28/240-20-99. www.solverde.pt. 208 units. 117€–264€ ($170–$383) double; 173€–471€ ($251–$683) suite. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking on street, 5€ ($7.25) in garage. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; 2 bars; 2 pools (1 indoor); 2 tennis courts; sauna; watersports; salon; barbershop; boutiques; room service; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

Bela Vista ★ *Finds* Bela Vista is an old Moorish-style mansion built in 1916 as a wealthy family's summer home. It has a minaret-type tower at one end and a statue of the Virgin set into one of the building's corners. Since 1934, it has been a special kind of hotel, ideal for those who respond to the architecture of the past; you'll need to make a reservation far in advance. Guest rooms facing the sea, the former master bedrooms, are the most desirable. All come with neatly kept bathrooms equipped with tub/shower combinations. Decorations vary from crystal sconces to an inset tile shrine to the Virgin Mary. The hotel is on the ocean, atop its own palisade, with access to a sandy cove where you can swim. The villa is white with a terra-cotta tile roof, a landmark for fishermen bringing in their boats at sundown. It's flanked by the owner's home and a simple cliff-edge annex shaded by palm trees.

The attractive structure and its decorations have been preserved—the entry hallway has a winding staircase and an abundance of 19th-century blue-and-white tiles depicting allegorical scenes from Portuguese history—but that's partly counteracted by the plastic furniture in the public lounges.

Av. Tomás Cabreira, Praia da Rocha, 8500-802 Portimão. ✆ **28/245-04-80.** Fax 28/241-53-69. www.hotelbelavista.net. 14 units. 55€–120€ ($80–$174) double; 85€–170€ ($123–$247) junior suite. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. **Amenities:** Breakfast room; bar; breakfast-only room service; laundry service. *In room:* TV, minibar, safe.

WHERE TO DINE

Titanic ★★ INTERNATIONAL Complete with gilt and crystal, the 100-seat air-conditioned Titanic is the most elegant restaurant in town. Its open kitchen serves the best food in Praia da Rocha, including shellfish and flambé dishes. Despite the name, it's not on—or in, thank goodness—the water, but in a modern residential complex. You can dine very well here on such appealing dishes as the fish of the day, pork filet with mushrooms, prawns *a la plancha* (grilled), Chinese fondue, or excellent sole Algarve. Service is among the best in town.

In the Edifício Colúmbia, Rua Eng. Francisco Bivar. ✆ **28/242-23-71.** Reservations recommended, especially in summer. Main courses 12€–27€ ($17–$39). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 7pm–midnight. Closed Nov 27–Dec 27.

PLAYING GOLF

Amid tawny-colored rocks and arid hillocks, **Vale de Pinta** (✆ **28/234-09-00**), Praia do Carvoeiro, sends players through groves of twisted olive, almond, carob, and fig trees. Views from the fairways, designed in 1992 by Californian Ronald Fream, sweep over the low masses of the Monchique mountains, close to the beach resort of Carvoeiro. Experts say it offers some of the most varied challenges in Portuguese golf. Clusters of "voracious" bunkers, barrier walls of beige-colored rocks assembled without mortar, and abrupt changes in elevation complicate the course. Par is 72. Greens fees are 60€ to 92€ ($87–$133). From Portimão, drive 14km (8⅔ miles) east on N125, following signs to Lagoa and Vale de Pinta/Pestana Golf.

PRAIA DOS TRÊS IRMÃOS & ALVOR ★★

You can visit **Praia dos Três Irmãos (Beach of the Three Brothers)** for its beach, even if you prefer not to stay overnight. It's just a 5km (3-mile) drive southwest of Portimão, or you can reach it (or the tourist development at Alvor) by bus. Service is frequent throughout the day. At Praia dos Três Irmãos, you'll find 14km (8⅔ miles) of golden sand, broken only by an occasional crag riddled with arched passages. Snorkelers and scuba divers have discovered this beach and enjoy exploring its undersea grottoes and shore-side cave.

Praia dos Três Irmãos's neighbor is the whitewashed fishing village of **Alvor,** where Portuguese and Moorish arts and traditions have mingled since the Arabs gave up their 500 years of occupation. Alvor was a favorite coastal haunt of João II. The summer hordes descend on the long strip of sandy beach here. It's not the best beach in the area, but at least you'll have ample space.

WHERE TO STAY

Le Méridien Penina Golf Hotel ★★★ The first deluxe hotel on the Algarve between Portimão and Lagos continues to be a major sporting mecca. Most rooms contain picture windows and honeycomb balconies, with views of the golf course and pool or vistas of the Monchique hills. Standard rooms are spacious and contain good-size Portuguese provincial spool beds; the so-called attic rooms have the most charm, with French doors opening onto terraces. Facilities include three championship golf courses (one 18-hole and two 9-hole) and a private beach.

Estrada Nacional 125, 8501-952 Portimão. ✆ **800/225-5843** in the U.S., or 28/242-02-00. Fax 28/242-03-00. www.starwoodhotels.com. 196 units. 185€–280€ ($268–$406) double; 390€–550€ ($566–$798) junior suite; 645€–980€ ($935–$1,421) suite. 1 child 3–12 free in parent's room. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. **Amenities:** 5 restaurants; 3 bars; outdoor pool; 3 golf courses; 6 tennis courts; sauna; watersports; nursery for children; salon; room service; babysitting; laundry service; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

Pastana Alvor Praia Hotel ★★★ This citadel of hedonism, built in 1968 and constantly renewed, has more *joie de vivre* than any other hotel on the Algarve. Poised regally on a landscaped crest, this hotel is so well appointed that you might never stray from the premises. Many of the guest and public rooms face the ocean, the gardens, and the free-form Olympic-size pool. Accommodations vary from a cowhide-decorated room evoking Arizona's Valley of the Sun to typical Portuguese-style rooms with rustic furnishings. Most contain oversize beds, plenty of storage space, long desk-and-chest combinations, and well-designed bathrooms with double basins and tub/shower combinations. Many rooms have private balconies where guests can have breakfast facing the Bay of Lagos. Avoid rooms in the rear with so-so views, small balconies, and Murphy beds.

Praia dos Três Irmãos, Alvor, 8501-904 Portimão. ✆ **28/240-09-00.** Fax 28/240-09-75. www.pestana.com. 195 units. 239€–300€ ($347–$435) double; 381€–460€ ($552–$667) suite. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; 2 bars; 3 pools (1 heated indoor); 7 tennis courts; health club; sauna; Turkish bath; solarium; water-skiing; horseback riding; salon; room service; babysitting; laundry service. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

WHERE TO DINE

O Búzio ★ INTERNATIONAL Restaurante O Búzio stands at the end of a road encircling a resort development dotted with private condos and exotic shrubbery. In summer, so many cars line the narrow road that you'll probably need to park near the resort's entrance and then walk downhill to the restaurant.

Dinner is served in a room whose blue curtains reflect the shimmering ocean at the bottom of the cliffs. Your meal might include excellent fish soup, refreshing gazpacho, or *carre de borrego Serra de Estrêla* (gratinée of roast rack of lamb with garlic, butter, and mustard). Other good choices are Italian pasta dishes, boiled or grilled fish of the day, flavorful pepper steak, and lamb kabobs with saffron-flavored rice. The restaurant maintains an extensive wine cellar.

Aldeamento da Prainha, Praia dos Três Irmãos. ✆ **28/245-87-72.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 10€–30€ ($15–$44). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 7–10:30pm. Closed Dec 15–Jan 7.

PLAYING GOLF

Penina (✆ **28/242-02-00**) is 5km (3 miles) west of the center of Portimão, farther west than many of the other great golf courses. Completed in 1966, it was one of the first courses in the Algarve and the universally acknowledged masterpiece of the British designer Sir Henry Cotton. It replaced a network of marshy rice paddies on level terrain that critics said was unsuited for anything except wetlands. The solution involved planting groves of eucalyptus (350,000 trees in all), which grew quickly in the muddy soil. Eventually they dried it out enough for the designer to bulldoze dozens of water traps and a labyrinth of fairways and greens. The course wraps around a luxury hotel (Le Méridien Penina). You can play the main championship course (18 holes, par 73), and two 9-hole satellite courses, Academy and Resort. Greens fees for the 18-hole course are 77€ to 110€ ($112–$160); for either of the 9-hole courses, they're 60€ ($87). To reach it from the center of Portimão, follow signs to Lagos, turning off at the signpost for Le Méridien Penina.

ALBUFEIRA ★

This cliff-side town, formerly a fishing village, is the St-Tropez of the Algarve. The lazy life, sunshine, and beaches make it a haven for young people and artists, although the old-timers still regard the invasion that began in the late 1960s with some ambivalence. Some residents open the doors of their cottages to those seeking a place to stay. Travelers with less money often sleep in tents.

The big, bustling resort has the characteristics of a North African seaside community. Its streets are steep, and villas are staggered up and down the hillside. Albufeira rises above a sickle-shaped beach that shines in the sunlight. A rocky, grotto-filled bluff separates the strip used by the sunbathers from the working beach, where brightly painted fishing boats are drawn up on the sand. Beach access is through a passageway tunneled through the rock.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **By Train** Trains run between Albufeira and Faro (see "Faro," below), which has good connections to Lisbon. For schedule information, call ✆ **808/208-208** (www.cp.pt). The train station lies 6.5km (4 miles) from the town's center. Buses from the station to the resort run every 30 minutes; the fare is 2.25€ ($3.25) one-way.

By Bus Buses run between Albufeira and Faro every hour. Trip time is 1 hour, and a one-way ticket costs 3.85€ ($5.60). Twenty-three buses per day make the 1-hour trip from Portimão to Albufeira. It costs 3.75€ ($5.45) one-way. For information and schedules, call ✆ **28/958-97-55.**

By Car From east or west, take the main coastal route, N125. Albufeira also lies near the point where the express highway from the north, N264, feeds into the Algarve. The town is well signposted in all directions. Take Route 595 to reach Albufeira and the water.

VISITOR INFORMATION The **Tourist Information Office** is at Rua do 5 de Outubro (✆ **28/958-52-79**). From July to September, hours are daily from 9:30am to 7pm; October to June, they're from 10am to 5:30pm.

WHERE TO STAY

Clube Mediterraneo de Balaïa ★ On 16 hectares (40 acres) of sun-drenched scrubland about 6.5km (4 miles) east of Albufeira, this all-inclusive high-rise resort is one of the most stable in the Club Med empire. Favored by vacationers from northern Europe, it encompasses a shoreline of rugged rock formations indented with a private beach and a series of coves for surf swimming. The small accommodations have twin beds. They're decorated in understated, uncluttered style, with private balconies or terraces. Many vacationers here appreciate the nearby golf course; others opt to participate in semiorganized sports. Meals are usually consumed at communal tables; there are lunchtime buffets and copious amounts of local wine.

Praia Maria Luisa, 8200-854 Albufeira. ✆ **800/CLUB-MED** in the U.S., or 28/951-05-00. www.clubmed.com. Fax 28/958-71-79. 386 units. 261€–504€ ($378–$731) double. Rates include full board and use of most sports facilities. Children 4–12 20% discount in parent's room. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; 3 bars; outdoor pool; 9-hole golf course; health club; sauna; room service; laundry service; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Estalagem do Cerro ★ *Finds* Estalagem do Cerro, built in 1964, captures Algarvian charm without neglecting modern amenities. This Inn of the Craggy Hill is at the top of a hill overlooking Albufeira's bay, about a 10-minute walk from the beach. A similar Moorish style unites an older, regional-style building and a more modern structure. The tastefully furnished midsize guest rooms have verandas overlooking the sea, pool, or garden. All units also have neatly kept bathrooms with tub/shower combinations. Ten units are large enough for families.

Rua Samora Barros Cerro de Piedade, 8200-320 Albufeira. ✆ **28/959-80-84.** Fax 28/959-80-01. www.docerro.com. 95 units. 60€–130€ ($87–$189) double; 170€ ($247) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Limited free parking on street. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; 2 bars; outdoor pool; gym; Jacuzzi; sauna; Turkish bath; salon; room service; massage room; babysitting; laundry service; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

WHERE TO DINE

O Cabaz da Praia (The Beach Basket) ★ FRENCH/PORTUGUESE The Beach Basket sits on a colorful little square near the Church of São Sebastião. In a former fishermen's cottage, the restaurant boasts a large, sheltered terrace with an inviting view over the main Albufeira beach. The food's good, too. Main courses, including such justifiable favorites as cassoulet of seafood, salade océane, monkfish with mango sauce, and beef filet with garlic and white-wine sauce, are served with a selection of fresh vegetables. The lemon meringue pie and soufflés here are justly renowned.

Praça Miguel Bombarda 7. ✆ **28/951-21-37.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 20€–26€ ($29–$49). AE, MC, V. Fri–Wed noon–3pm and 7:30–11pm.

VALE DO LOBO ★ & QUINTA DO LAGO

Almancil, 13km (8 miles) west of Faro and 24km (15 miles) east along N-125 from Albufeira, is a small market town of little interest, yet it's a center for two of the most exclusive tourist developments along the Algarve: **Vale do Lobo,** 6.5km (4 miles) southeast of Almancil, and **Quinta do Lago,** less than 10km (6¼ miles) southeast of town. Both are golfers' paradises.

WHERE TO STAY

Le Méridien Dona Filipa ★★★ *Kids* A citadel of ostentatious living, Dona Filipa is a deluxe golf hotel with such touches as gold-painted palms holding up the ceiling. The grounds are impressive, embracing 180 hectares (445 acres) of rugged coastline with steep cliffs, inlets, and sandy bays. The hotel's exterior is comparatively uninspired, but Duarte Pinto Coelho lavished the interior with green silk banquettes, marble fireplaces, Portuguese ceramic lamps, and old prints over baroque-style love seats. The midsize to spacious guest rooms are handsomely decorated with antiques, rustic accessories, and handmade rugs. Most have balconies and twin beds. Bathrooms have dual basins, tub/shower combinations, and robes.

Vale do Lobo, 8135-901 Almancil. ✆ **28/935-72-00.** Fax 28/935-72-01. www.lemeridien.com. 154 units. 245€–414€ ($355–$600) double; 455€–626€ ($660–$908) junior suite; 575€–930€ ($834–$1,349) deluxe suite. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; outdoor heated pool; outdoor children's pool; golf nearby; 3 tennis courts; "village" for children; salon; room service; babysitting; laundry service; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms; 1 room for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

Quinta do Lago ★★★ A pocket of the high life since 1986, Quinta do Lago is a sprawling 800-hectare (1,976-acre) estate that contains some private plots beside the Ria Formosa estuary. Its riding center and 27-hole golf course are among the best in Europe. The estate's contemporary Mediterranean-style buildings rise three to six floors. The luxurious hotel rooms overlook a saltwater lake and feature modern comforts. Decorated with thick carpeting and pastel fabrics, the guest rooms are generally spacious, with tile or marble bathrooms equipped with tub/shower combinations. Rooms are decorated with contemporary art and light-wood furniture, and the balconies open onto views of the estuary.

Quinta do Lago, 8135-024 Almancil. ✆ **800/223-6800** in the U.S., or 28/935-03-50. Fax 28/939-63-93. www.quintadolagohotel.com. 141 units. 207€–552€ ($300–$799) double; 300€–520€ ($435–$754) junior suite; 552€–2,650€ ($800–$3,843) suite. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; 2 heated pools (1 indoor); 2 tennis courts; health club; spa; sauna; Turkish bath; car rental; business center; room service; massage; babysitting; laundry service; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

WHERE TO DINE

Casa Velha ★★★ FRENCH Casa Velha, an excellent dining choice, is not part of the nearby Quinta do Lago resort. Yet on a hillside behind its massive neighbor, it overlooks the resort's lake from the premises of a century-old farmhouse that has functioned as a restaurant since the early 1960s. The cuisine is mainly French, with a scattering of Portuguese and international dishes. Start with foie gras or marinated lobster salad. Entree specialties include a salad of chicken livers and gizzards with leeks and vinaigrette, and lobster salad flavored with an infusion of vanilla. Other good choices are carefully flavored preparations of sea bass, filet of sole, and breast of duck with 12 spices.

Quinta do Lago. ✆ **28/939-49-83.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 18€–30€ ($26–$44); fixed-price menus 49€–76€ ($71–$110). AE, MC, V. Mon–Sat 7–10:30pm.

São Gabriel ★★★ SWISS/CONTINENTAL A classic, elegant restaurant, this deluxe choice lies directly southeast of the center of Almancil. Gourmets drive for miles around to sample the food and wine in the refined dining room, which also features a summer terrace. The actual dishes served depend on the time of the year and the mood of the chef. You might encounter lamb perfectly roasted in an old oven, tender duck flavored with port wine, or roasted veal cutlets with Swiss-style "hash browns." The cuisine is remarkably well crafted, though not daringly original. You are, however, assured of the freshest of ingredients and a changing array of tempting desserts.

Estrada Vale do Lobo. ✆ **28/939-45-21.** Reservations required. Main courses 22€–40€ ($32–$58). AE, MC, V. Tues–Sun 7–10:30pm. Closed Jan 6–Mar 11.

PLAYING GOLF

One of the most deceptive golf courses on the Algarve, **Pinheiros Altos,** Quinta do Lago, 8135 Almancil (✆ **28/935-99-10**), has contours that even professionals say are far more difficult than they appear at first glance. American architect Ronald Fream designed the 100 hectares (247 acres), which abut the wetland refuge of the Rio Formosa National Park. Umbrella pines and dozens of small lakes dot the course. Par is 72. Greens fees are 75€ ($109) for 9 holes and 150€ ($218) for 18 holes. Pinheiros Altos lies about 5km (3 miles) south of Almancil. From Almancil, follow the signs to Quinta do Lago and Pinheiros Altos.

The namesake course of the massive development, **Quinta do Lago,** Quinta do Lago, 8135 Almancil (✆ **28/939-07-00**), consists of two 18-hole golf courses, Quinta do Lago and Rio Formosa. Together they cover more than 240 hectares (593 acres) of sandy terrain that abuts the Rio Formosa Wildlife Sanctuary. Very few long drives here are over open water; instead, the fairways undulate through cork forests and groves of pine trees, sometimes with abrupt changes in elevation. Greens fees are 150€ ($218) for 18 holes. The courses are 6km (3¾ miles) south of Almancil. From Almancil, follow signs to Quinta do Lago.

Of the four golf courses at the massive Quinta do Lago development, the par-72 **San Lorenzo (São Lourenço)** course, Quinta do Lago, Almancil, 8100 Loulé (✆ **28/939-65-22**), is the most interesting and challenging. San Lorenzo opened in 1988 at the edge of the grassy wetlands of the Rio Formosa Nature Reserve. American golf designers William (Rocky) Roquemore and Joe Lee created it. The most panoramic hole is the 6th; the most frustrating is the 8th. Many long drives, especially those aimed at the 17th and 18th holes, soar over a saltwater lagoon. Priority tee times go to guests of the Granada organization's Dona Filipa and Penina Hotel, but others may play when the course is not too busy. Greens fees are 75€ ($109) for 9 holes and 150€ ($218) for 18 holes. From Almancil, drive 8km (5 miles) south, following signs to Quinta do Lago.

The **Vale do Lobo** course, Vale do Lobo, 8135 Almancil (✆ **28/935-34-65**), technically isn't part of the Quinta do Lago complex. Because it was established in 1968, before any of its nearby competitors, it played an important role in launching southern Portugal's image as a golfer's mecca. Designed by the British golfer Henry Cotton, it contains four distinct 9-hole segments. All four include runs that stretch over rocks and arid hills, often within view of olive and almond groves, the Atlantic, and the high-rise hotels of nearby Vilamoura and Quarteira. Some long shots require driving golf balls over two ravines, where variable winds and bunkers that have been called "ravenous" make things particularly difficult. Greens fees, depending on the day of the week and other factors, range from 84€ to 94€ ($122–$136) for 9 holes to 140€ to 155€ ($203–$225) for 18 holes. From Almancil, drive 4km (2½ miles) south of town, following signs to Vale do Lobo.

Visit www.algarvegolf.net for more information on courses in the Algarve region.

FARO ★

Loved by the Romans and later by the Moors, Faro is the principal city of the Algarve. Since Afonso III drove out the Moors for the last time in 1266, Faro has been Portuguese. On its outskirts, an international airport brings in thousands of visitors every summer. The airport has done more than anything else to increase tourism not only to Faro, but also to the entire Algarve.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **By Plane** Jet service makes it possible to reach Faro from Lisbon in 30 minutes. For flight information, call the **Faro airport** (☎ **28/980-08-00**). You can take bus no. 14 or 16 from the airport to the railway station in Faro for 2€ ($2.90). The bus operates every 35 minutes daily from 7:20am to 10:15pm.

By Train Trains arrive from Lisbon five times a day. The trip takes 4¾ hours and costs 18€ ($26). The train station is at Largo da Estação (☎ **808/208-208;** www.cp.pt). This is the most strategic railway junction in the south of Portugal, thanks to its position astride lines that connect it to the north-south lines leading from Lisbon.

By Bus Buses arrive every 5 hours from Lisbon. The journey takes 3½ hours. The bus station is on Av. da República 5 (☎ **28/989-97-60**); a one-way ticket costs 18€ ($26).

By Car From the west, Rte. 125 runs into Faro and beyond. From the Spanish border, pick up N125 west.

VISITOR INFORMATION The **tourist office** is at Rua da Misericórdia 8–12 (☎ **28/980-36-04**) or at the airport (☎ **28/981-85-82**). It's open daily 9:30am to 5:30pm September to May, and 9:30am to 7pm June to August.

WHERE TO STAY

Eva ★ Eva dominates the harbor like a fortress. It's a modern, eight-story hotel that occupies an entire side of the yacht-clogged harbor. Most of the midsize, albeit austere guest rooms offer direct sea views. The better rooms have large balconies and open onto the water. All units are equipped with well-maintained bathrooms containing tub/shower combinations. Three rooms are available for those with limited mobility. Eva's best features are its penthouse restaurant and rooftop pool, supported on 16 posts, with sun terraces and a bar.

Av. da República, 8000-078 Faro. ☎ **28/900-10-00.** Fax 28/900-10-02. 148 units. 99€–154€ ($144–$223) double; 144€–210€ ($209–$305) suite. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Limited free parking available on street. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; 3 bars; outdoor pool; salon; room service; babysitting; laundry service. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

WHERE TO DINE

Adega Nortenha *Value* PORTUGUESE It's hardly a deluxe choice, but if you gravitate to simple yet well-prepared regional food, this little restaurant does the job. It's also one of the best value spots in town, which is probably why locals swear by it. Fresh tuna steak is a delicious choice, as is the roast lamb, which is herb-flavored and perfumed with garlic. The service is friendly and efficient, and the restaurant is done up in typical Algarvian style—there's even a balcony that's great for people-watching on the street below.

Praça Ferreira de Almeida 25. ☎ **28/982-27-09.** Main courses 7€–13€ ($10–$19). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily noon–3pm and 7–10pm.

Dois Irmãos PORTUGUESE This popular bistro, founded in 1925, offers a no-nonsense atmosphere and has many devotees. The menu is as modest as the establishment and its prices, but you get a good choice of fresh grilled fish and shellfish dishes. Ignore the paper napkins and concentrate on the fine kettle of fish before you. Clams in savory sauce are a justifiable favorite, and sole is regularly featured—but, of course, everything depends on the catch of the day. Service is slow but amiable.

Largo do Terreiro do Bispo 20. ☎ **28/982-33-37.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 10€–25€ ($15–$36). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily noon–4pm and 6–11pm.

SEEING THE SIGHTS

The most bizarre attraction in Faro is the **Capela d'Ossos (Chapel of Bones).** Enter through a courtyard from the rear of the **Igreja de Nossa Senhora do Monte do Carmo do Faro,** Largo do Carmo (✆ **28/982-44-90**). Erected in the 19th century, the chapel is completely lined with human skulls (an estimated 1,245) and bones. It's open daily 10am to 2pm and 3 to 5:30pm. Entrance is free to the church and 1€ ($1.45) to the chapel.

Other religious monuments include the old **Sé** (cathedral), on Largo da Sé (✆ **28/989-83-00**). Built in the Gothic and Renaissance styles, it stands on a site originally occupied by a mosque. Although the cathedral has a Gothic tower, it's better known for its tiles, which date from the 17th and 18th centuries. The beautiful cloisters are the most idyllic spot in Faro. The cathedral is open daily from 10am to 5:30pm. Admission is 2€ ($2.90). **Igreja de São Francisco,** Largo de São Francisco (✆ **28/987-08-70**), is the other church of note. Its facade doesn't even begin to hint at the baroque richness inside. Panels of glazed earthenware tiles in milk-white and Dutch blue depict the life of the patron saint, St. Francis. One chapel is richly gilded. Open hours are Monday through Friday from 8 to 9:30am and 5:30 to 7pm (but in the sleepy Algarve, you might sometimes find it closed).

But most visitors don't come to Faro to look at churches. Bus no. 16, leaving from the terminal, runs to **Praia de Faro;** the one-way fare is 1€ ($1.45). A bridge also connects the mainland and the beach, about 6km (3¾ miles) from the town center. At the shore, you can water-ski, fish, or just rent a deck chair and umbrella and lounge in the sun.

DAY TRIPS FROM FARO

OLHÃO This is the Algarve's famous cubist town, long beloved by painters. In its heart, white blocks stacked one upon the other, with flat red-tile roofs and exterior stairways on the stark walls, evoke the casbahs of North Africa. The cubist buildings are found only at the core. The rest of Olhão has almost disappeared under the onslaught of modern commercialism.

While you're here, try to attend the fish market near the waterfront when a *lota,* or auction, is underway. Olhão is also known for its "bullfights of the sea," in which fishers wrestle with struggling tuna trapped in nets en route to the smelly warehouses along the harbor.

For the best view, climb **Cabeça Hill,** with grottoes punctured by stalagmites and stalactites, or St. Michael's Mount, offering a panorama of the casbahlike Baretta. Finally, to reach one of the most idyllic beaches on the Algarve, take a 10-minute motorboat ride to the Ilha de Armona, a nautical mile away. Ferries run hourly in summer; the round-trip fare is 4€ ($5.80). Olhão is 8km (5 miles) east of Faro.

SÃO BRÁS DE ALPORTEL Traveling north from Faro, you'll pass through groves of figs, almonds, and oranges, and through pine woods where resin collects in wooden cups on the tree trunks. After 20km (13 miles) you'll come upon isolated São Brás de Alportel, one of the most charming and least-known spots on the Algarve. Far from the crowded beaches, this town attracts those in search of pure air, peace, and quiet. It's a bucolic setting filled with flowers pushing through nutmeg-colored soil. Northeast of Loulé, the whitewashed, tile-roofed town livens up only on market days. Like its neighbor, Faro, it's noted for its perforated plaster chimneys. The area at the foot of the Serra do Caldeirão has been described as one vast garden.

Pousada de São Brás ★, Estrada de Lisboa (N2), 8150-054 São Brás de Alportel (✆ **28/984-23-05**), is a change of pace from seaside accommodations. The government-owned hilltop villa has fret-cut limestone chimneys and a crow's-nest view of the surrounding countryside. It's approached through a fig orchard.

Many visitors come to the pousada just for lunch or dinner (served daily 1–3pm and 7:30–10pm), returning to the coastline at night, but a knowing few remain for the evening. In the dining room, rustic mountain-tavern chairs and tables rest on hand-woven rugs. The 28€ ($41) table d'hôte dinner offers soup, a fish course, a meat dish, vegetables, and dessert. The cuisine is plain but good. After dinner, you might want to retire to the sitting room to watch the embers of the evening's fire die down. The 33 guest rooms contain private bathrooms and phones. Doubles cost from 106€ to 177€ ($154–$257), including breakfast. Amenities include an outdoor swimming pool, laundry service, and room service (until 10pm). Parking is free, and most major credit cards are accepted.

VILA REAL DE SANT ANTÓNIO/MONTE GORDO

Twenty years after the Marquês de Pombal rebuilt Lisbon, which had been destroyed in the great 1755 earthquake, he sent architects and builders to Vila Real de Santo António. They reestablished this frontier town on the bank opposite Spain in only 5 months. Pombal's motivation was jealousy of Spain. Much has changed, but **Praça de Pombal** remains. An obelisk stands in the center of the square, which is paved with inlays of black-and-white tiles radiating like sun rays and is filled with orange trees. Separated from its Iberian neighbor by the Guadiana River, Vila Real de Santo António has car-ferry service between Portugal and Ayamonte, Spain.

Today, Vila Real is a mostly residential and industrial community that prides itself on its royal and antique associations as a border town. Southeast of Vila Real is **Monte Gordo,** a town whose buildings mostly date from the 1920s and later. Set 3km (1¾ miles) to the east, it's the site of most of the region's tourist facilities and hotels, with easier access to the sandy beaches that attract tourists every summer from as far away as northern Europe.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **By Train** The bus (see below) is a better option for travelers from Faro. Eighteen trains per day arrive from Faro. The trip takes 1 hour and 20 minutes and costs 4.40€ ($6.40) one-way. Four trains make the 4½-hour trip from Lagos; a one-way ticket costs 7.30€ ($11). The station is located on Rua dos Caminho de Serro; for information and schedules, call ✆ **808/208-208** (www.cp.pt). To make connections with trains from Spain (1 hr. ahead of Portuguese time in summer), take a ferry from Vila Real de Santo António to Ayamonte (for ferry information, see below). From Ayamonte, buses from the main square will deliver you to the station at Huelva or Sevilla.

By Bus From Faro to Vila Real, the bus is better than the train. Buses run each day to the Vila Real bus station on Avenida da República. They take 1 hour and 45 minutes and cost 4.60€ ($6.70) one-way. Eight buses make the 4-hour journey from Lagos, which costs 5.50€ ($8) one-way. For information and schedules, call ✆ **28/151-18-07.**

By Ferry In summer, ferries run between Ayamonte, Spain, and Vila Real daily from 9am to 7pm. The fare is 2€ ($2.90) per passenger or 5.50€ ($8) per car. Ferries depart from the station on Avenida da República; call ☎ **28/154-31-52** for more information.

VISITOR INFORMATION The **tourist office** is on Rua Teófilo Braga, 8900 Monte Gordo (☎ **28/154-21-00**). It's open Monday to Friday 9:30am to 5:30pm October to April, and Tuesday to Thursday 9:30am to 7pm and Friday to Monday 9:30am to 5:30pm May to September.

WHERE TO STAY

In Vila Real

Hotel Apolo This hotel on the western edge of town is not the classiest stopover on the Algarve, but it's certainly adequate for an overnight stay. Near the beach and the river, it attracts vacationers as well as travelers who don't want to cross the Spanish border at night. The hotel has a spacious marble-floored lobby leading into a large bar scattered with comfortable sofas and flooded with sunlight. Each small, simply furnished guest room has a private balcony and a neatly kept bathroom equipped with a tub/shower combination.

Av. dos Bombeiros Portugueses, 8900-209 Vila Real de Santo António. ☎ **28/151-24-48.** Fax 28/151-24-50. www.apolo-hotel.com. 45 units. 80€ ($116) double. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. **Amenities:** Bar; outdoor pool; laundry service. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer, safe.

In Monte Gordo

Casablanca Inn ★ *Finds* Casablanca Inn is not directly on the beach, but its location on a flower-dotted downtown park makes up for it. The owner designed it to look like something you might find in a wealthy part of Morocco. There's a lush flower garden and a series of recessed arched balconies, and the design might be suitable for an updated version of the film classic *Casablanca.* The lobby bar is called Rick's and is covered with movie photos. Each midsize guest room contains a terrace and neatly kept bathrooms with tub/shower combinations.

Rua 7, Monte Gordo, 8900-474 Vila Real de Santo António. ☎ **28/151-14-44.** Fax 28/151-19-99. www.casablancainn.pt. 42 units. 50€–110€ ($73–$160) double. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Limited free parking on street. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; 2 pools (1 indoor); laundry service. *In room:* A/C, TV, safe.

Hotel dos Navegadores The sign in front of this large hotel is so discreet that you might mistake it for an apartment house. The establishment is popular with vacationing Portuguese and British families, who congregate under the dome covering the atrium's swimming pool, near the reception desk. You'll find a bar that serves fruit-laden drinks, and semitropical plants throughout the public rooms. About three-quarters of the guest rooms have private balconies. The hotel remains a group tour favorite. Rooms are comfortable but standard, without any flair. All units are equipped with well-maintained bathrooms containing tub/shower combinations. The beach is a 5-minute walk away.

Monte Gordo, 8900-474 Vila Real de Santo António. ☎ **28/151-08-60.** Fax 28/151-08-79. www.navotel.pt. 347 units. 74€ ($107) double; 85€ ($123) suite. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. **Amenities:** Restaurant; 3 bars; indoor pool; gym; sauna; salon; room service; laundry service. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe (in suite).

Hotel Vasco da Gama The entrepreneurs here know what their northern guests seek: lots of sunbathing and swimming. Although the hotel sits on a long, wide sandy beach, it also offers an Olympic-size pool with a high-dive board and about .5 hectares

(1¼ acres) of flagstone sun terrace. All the spartan, rather small guest rooms are furnished conservatively and come equipped with balconies and neatly kept bathrooms containing tub/shower combinations.

Av. Infante Dom Henríque, Monte Gordo, 8900-412 Vila Real de Santo António. ✆ **28/151-09-00.** Fax 28/151-09-01. www.vascodagamahotel.com. 170 units. 38€–75€ ($55–$109) per person double. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; snack bar; outdoor pool; tennis court; room service; babysitting; laundry service. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

WHERE TO DINE

The Restaurant at the Hotel Alcazar/The 19th Hole PORTUGUESE/INTERNATIONAL This hotel restaurant is a magnet for local residents as well as for guests of the hotel. Its evening buffet is copious and varied. Expect lavish spreads that focus on salads, fresh fish, meat, pastries, fruits, and cheeses, all of them laid out like a cornucopia. Views within this ground-floor restaurant overlook the hotel's swimming pool and garden area, and the beach lies only about 278m (303 ft.) away. Lunches are served within a separate dining room, "The 19th Hole," and are a la carte, mostly salads, sandwiches, platters of grilled fish, chicken, beef, and pastas.

Rua de Ceuta 9. ✆ **28/151-01-49.** Reservations not necessary. Lunch is a la carte main courses 7.50€–14€ ($11–$20); dinner access to the all-you-can-eat buffet costs 14€ ($20). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily noon–2pm and 6:30–9pm.

EXPLORING VILA REAL

Vila Real de Santo António is a great example of 18th-century town planning. A long esplanade, Avenida da República, follows the river, and from its northern extremity you can view the Spanish town across the way. Gaily painted horse-drawn carriages take you sightseeing past the shipyards and the lighthouse.

A 5km (3-mile) drive north on the road to Mertola (N122) will take you to the gull-gray castle-fortress of **Castro Marim.** This formidable structure is a legacy of the border wars between Spain and Portugal. The ramparts and walls stand watch over the territory across the river. Afonso III, who expelled the Moors from this region, founded the original fortress, which was razed by the 1755 earthquake. Inside the walls are the ruins of the Igreja de São Tiago, dedicated to St. James.

Southwest of Vila Real is the emerging resort of **Monte Gordo,** which has the second-greatest concentration of hotels in the eastern Algarve (after Faro). Monte Gordo, 4km (2½ miles) southwest of Vila Real at the mouth of the Guadiana River, is the last in a long line of Algarvian resorts. Its wide, steep beach, **Praia de Monte Gordo,** is one of the finest on Portugal's southern coast. This beach, backed by pine-studded lowlands, has the highest average water temperature in Portugal.

Sadly, what was once a sleepy little fishing village has succumbed to high-rises. Nowadays the *varinas* (fishermen's wives) urge their sons to work in the hotels instead of the sea, fishing for tips instead of tuna.

16

Scotland

by Darwin Porter & Danforth Prince

Whether you go to Scotland to seek out your ancestral roots, explore ancient castles, drive the Malt Whisky Trail, or partake in the internationally acclaimed Edinburgh Festival, you'll find a country rich in history, legend, and romance. If it's the outdoors you love, Scotland offers great salmon fishing, peaceful walks in heather-covered Highland hills, and some of the best (and oldest) golf courses.

1 Edinburgh & Environs

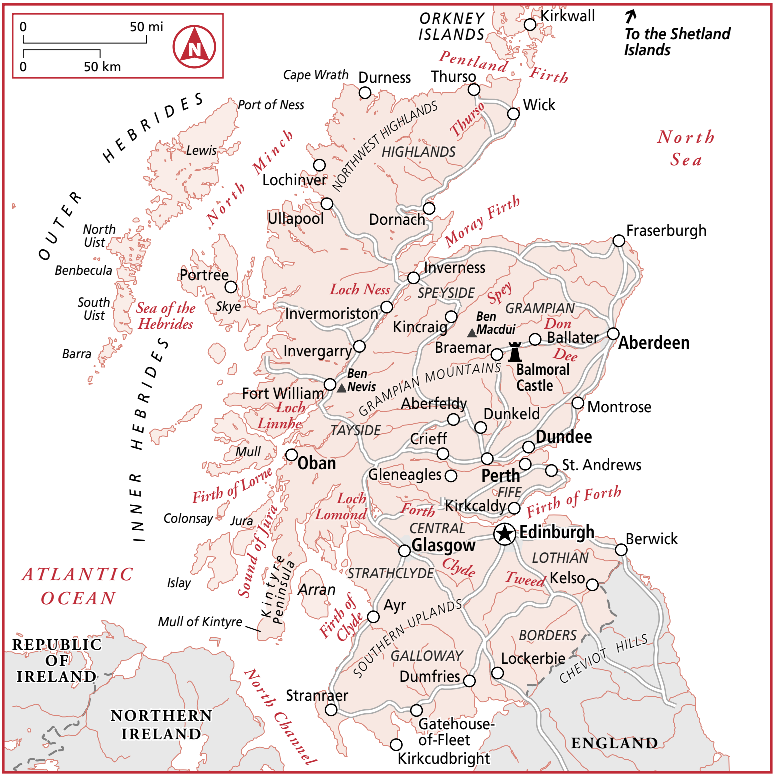
Called one of Europe's fairest cities, the "Athens of the North" is the second-most-visited city in Britain after London. In contrast to industrialized bastions like Aberdeen and Glasgow, it's a white-collar city. Home of the Royal Mile, Princes Street, and the popular Edinburgh Festival, with its action-packed list of cultural events, Edinburgh is both hip and historic. John Knox; Mary, Queen of Scots; Robert Louis Stevenson; Sir Arthur Conan Doyle; Alexander Graham Bell; Sir Walter Scott; Bonnie Prince Charlie; and Deacon Brodie are all part of the city's past. You can walk in their footsteps and explore sights associated with them.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **By Plane** Edinburgh is about an hour's flying time from London, 633km (393 miles) south. **Edinburgh Airport** (✆ **0870/040-0007;** www.edinburghairport.com) is 10km (6¼ miles) west of the center, receiving flights from within the British Isles and the rest of Europe. Before heading into town, you might want to stop at the **information and accommodation desk** (✆ **0131/344-3295**); it's open Monday to Saturday 8am to 8pm and Sunday 9am to 4:30pm. A double-decker Airlink bus makes the trip from the airport to the city center every 10 minutes, letting you off near Waverley Bridge, between the Old Town and the New Town; the fare is £3 ($6) one-way or £5 ($10) round-trip, and the trip takes about 25 minutes. A **mini bus** (✆ **0845/500-5000**) also runs between the airport and the center of Edinburgh, costing £8 ($16). For more information, search www.edinburghshuttle.com. A **taxi** (✆ **0131/344-3344**) into the city will cost £20 ($40) or more, depending on traffic, and the ride will be about 25 minutes.

By Train InterCity trains link London with Edinburgh and are fast and efficient, providing both restaurant and bar service as well as air-conditioning. Trains from London's Kings Cross Station arrive in Edinburgh at **Waverley Station,** at the east end of Princes Street (✆ **08457/484950** in London for rail info). Trains depart London every hour or so, taking about 4½ hours and costing £102 to £126 ($204–$252) one-way. Overnight trains have a sleeper berth, which you can rent for an extra £45 ($90). Taxis and buses are right outside the station in Edinburgh.

Scotland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Kincraig
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HEBRIDES
Ben Nevis
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Lockerbie
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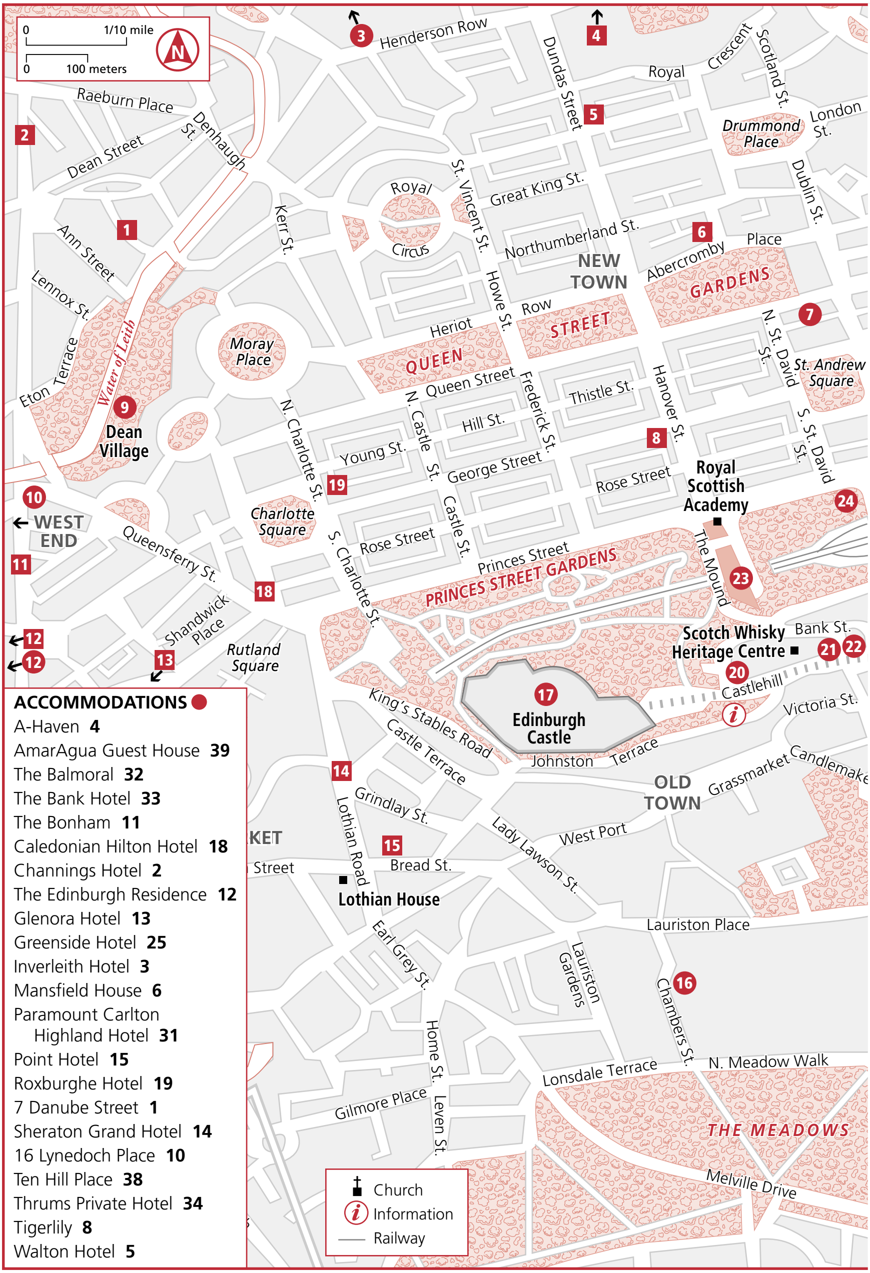
Dumfries
North Channel
Stranraer
NORTHERN IRELAND
Gatehouse-of-Fleet
Kirkcudbright
ENGLAND

By Bus The least expensive way to go from London to Edinburgh is by bus, but it's an 8-hour journey. Nevertheless, it'll get you there for only about £28 ($56) one-way or £47 ($94) round-trip. Coaches depart from London's Victoria Coach Station, delivering you to Edinburgh's **St. Andrew Square Bus Station,** St. Andrew Square (✆ **08705/505050** in London, or 0181/663-9233 in Edinburgh). Service across both countries is provided by **National Express** (✆ **087/05-8080;** www.nationalexpress.com) or **Megabus** (✆ **0900/160-0900;** www.megabus.com).

By Car Edinburgh is 74km (46 miles) east of Glasgow and 169km (105 miles) north of Newcastle-upon-Tyne in England. No express motorway links London and Edinburgh. The M1 from London takes you part of the way north, but you'll have to come into Edinburgh along secondary roads: A68 or A7 from the southeast, A1 from the east, or A702 from the north. The A71 or A8 comes in from the west, A8 connecting with M8 just west of Edinburgh; A90 comes down from the north over the Forth Road Bridge. Allow 8 hours or more for the drive north from London.

VISITOR INFORMATION **Edinburgh & Scotland Information Centre,** 3 Princes Mall, at the corner of Princes Street and Waverley Bridge (✆ **0131/473-3800;** www.edinburgh.org; bus no. 3, 331, or 69), can give you sightseeing information and also help find lodgings. The center sells bus tours, theater tickets, and souvenirs of

Edinburgh



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Henderson Row
Dundas Street
Royal Crescent
Scotland St.
London St.
Drummond Place
Dublin St.
Raeburn Place
Dean Street
Denhaugh St.
Ann Street
Lennox St.
Eton Terrace
Water of Leith
Dean Village
Kerr St.
Royal Circus
St. Vincent St.
Great King St.
Northumberland St.
NEW TOWN
Abercromby Place
GARDENS
Howe St.
Heriot Row
QUEEN STREET
Moray Place
Queen Street
N. Castle St.
Frederick St.
Thistle St.
Hanover St.
N. St. David St.
St. Andrew Square
S. St. David St.
Hill St.
Young St.
George Street
Rose Street
Royal Scottish Academy
N. Charlotte St.
Charlotte Square
S. Charlotte St.
Castle St.
Princes Street
PRINCES STREET GARDENS
The Mound
WEST END
Queensferry St.
Shandwick Place
Rutland Square
Scotch Whisky Heritage Centre
Bank St.
Castlehill
Victoria St.
Edinburgh Castle
King's Stables Road
Castle Terrace
Johnston Terrace
OLD TOWN
Grassmarket
Candlemaker
Grindlay St.
Lothian Road
Lady Lawson St.
West Port
KET
Street
Bread St.
Lothian House
Earl Grey St.
Lauriston Place
Lauriston Gardens
Chambers St.
Home St.
Gilmore Place
Leven St.
Lonsdale Terrace
N. Meadow Walk
THE MEADOWS
Melville Drive
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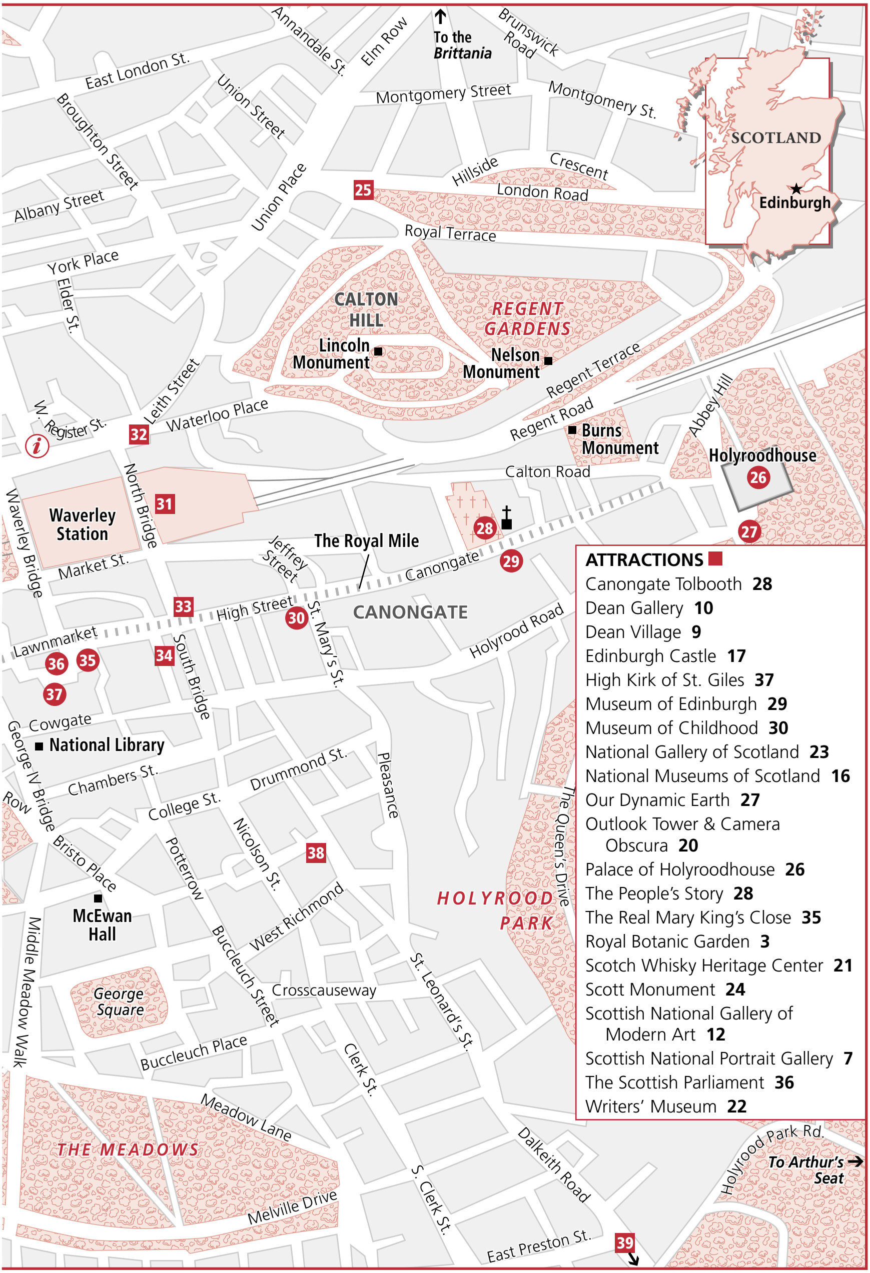
To the Brittania
East London St.
Annandale St.
Elm Row
Brunswick Road
Union Street
Broughton Street
Montgomery Street
Montgomery St.
SCOTLAND
Edinburgh
Hillside
Crescent
London Road
Albany Street
Union Place
25
Royal Terrace
York Place
Elder St.
CALTON HILL
REGENT GARDENS
Lincoln Monument
Nelson Monument
Regent Terrace
Leith Street
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Regent Road
W. Register St.
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Burns Monument
Abbey Hill
Holyroodhouse
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St. Mary's St.
Holyrood Road
Lawnmarket
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35
34
South Bridge
37
Cowgate
National Library
George IV Bridge
Chambers St.
Drummond St.
Pleasance
Row
College St.
Nicolson St.
38
Bristo Place
Potterrow
The Queen's Drive
McEwan Hall
West Richmond
HOLYROOD PARK
Middle Meadow Walk
Buccleuch Street
St. Leonard's St.
George Square
Crosscauseway
Buccleuch Place
Clerk St.
Meadow Lane
THE MEADOWS
Dalkeith Road
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Edinburgh. It's open year-round, Monday to Saturday 9am to 8pm. There's also an information and accommodations desk (✆ **0870/040-0007**) at Edinburgh Airport.

Websites The official site of the **Scottish Tourist Board** (**www.travelscotland.co.uk**) is an excellent source for events, lodging, getting around, and outdoor activities. However, the "Special Offers" section requires a lot of clicks for little payoff. The **Edinburgh and Lothians Tourist Board** (**www.edinburgh.org**) discusses what's new, travel tips, and events and festivals for city, coast, and country; they include a page about what to do with kids, written *by* kids.

Scotland Holiday Net (**www.aboutscotland.co.uk**) combines information on dining, lodging, and sightseeing with personal accounts. Curious about Scotland's top 20 free attractions? Interested in restaurant reviews from other diners? Try **www.travelscotland.co.uk**. Listing locations and greens fees, **www.uk-golfguide.com** will help you find a course wherever you plan to be.

CITY LAYOUT Edinburgh is divided into an **Old Town** and a **New Town.** Chances are, you'll find lodgings in New Town and visit Old Town for dining, drinking, shopping, and sightseeing.

New Town, with its world-famous **Princes Street,** came about in the 18th century in the "Golden Age" of Edinburgh. The first building went up in New Town in 1767, and by the end of the century, classical squares, streets, and town houses had been added. Princes Street runs straight for about a mile; it's known for its shopping and for its beauty, as it opens onto the **Princes Street Gardens** with stunning views of Old Town.

North of Princes Street, and running parallel to it, is the second great street of New Town, **George Street.** It begins at Charlotte Square and runs east to St. Andrew Square. Directly north of George Street is another impressive thoroughfare, **Queen Street,** opening onto Queen Street Gardens on its north side.

You'll also hear a lot about **Rose Street,** directly north of Princes Street. It has more pubs per square block than any other place in Scotland, and is also filled with shops and restaurants.

Everyone seems to have heard of the **Royal Mile,** the main thoroughfare of Old Town, beginning at Edinburgh Castle and running all the way to the Palace of Holyroodhouse. A famous street to the south of the castle (you have to descend to it) is **Grassmarket,** where convicted criminals were hanged on the dreaded gallows that once stood here.

GETTING AROUND **Walking** is the best way to explore Edinburgh, particularly Old Town, with its narrow lanes, wynds, and closes. Most attractions are along the Royal Mile, along Princes Street, or on one of the major streets of New Town.

By Bus The bus will probably be your chief method of transport. The fare is £1 ($2) for one journey, any distance. Children ages 5 to 15 are charged a flat rate of 60p ($1.20), but teenagers ages 16 to 18 must carry a **teen card** (available where bus tickets are sold—see below) as proof of age and their fare is 65p ($1.30), children 4 and under ride free. Exact change is required if you're paying your fare on the bus.

The **Edinburgh Day Saver Ticket** allows 1 day of unlimited travel on city buses at a cost of £2.50 ($5) adults and £2 ($4) children.

For daily commuters or die-hard Scottish enthusiasts, a **RidaCard** season ticket allows unlimited travel on all buses. For adults, the price is £13 ($26) for 1 week and

£37 ($74) for 4 weeks; tickets for children cost £9 ($18) for 1 week and £25 ($50) for 4 weeks. Travel must begin on Sunday.

You can get these tickets and further information in the city center at the **Waverley Bridge Transport Office,** Waverley Bridge (✆ **0131/554-4494;** bus no. 3 or 31), open Monday to Saturday 8:30am to 5pm and Sunday 9:30am to 5pm; or at the Hanover Street office (bus no. 3 or 31), open Monday to Saturday 8:30am to 6pm. For details on timetables, call ✆ **0131/555-6363.**

By Taxi You can hail a taxi or pick one up at a taxi stand. Meters begin at £2 ($4) and increase £2 ($4) every 1km (⅔ mile). Taxi stands are at Hanover Street, North St. Andrew Street, Waverley Station, Haymarket Station, and Lauriston Place. Fares are displayed in the front of the taxi and charges posted, including extra charges for night drivers or destinations outside the city limits, and a call-out is charged at 60p ($1.20). You can also call a taxi. Try **City Cabs** at ✆ **0131/228-1211;** www.citycabs.co.uk or **Central Radio Taxis** at ✆ **0131/229-2468;** www.taxis-edinburgh.co.uk.

By Car Car rentals are relatively expensive, and driving in Edinburgh is a tricky business. The city is a warren of one-way streets, with parking spots at a premium. A car is convenient, however, and sometimes a must, for touring the countryside. Most companies will accept your U.S. or Canadian driver's license, provided you have held it for more than a year and are over 21. At the Edinburgh airport, try **Avis** (✆ **0870/608-6335**), **Hertz** (✆ **0131/333-1019**), or **Europcar** (✆ **0131/333-2588**).

By Bicycle Biking isn't a good idea for most visitors because the city is constructed on a series of high ridges and terraces. You may, however, want to rent a bike for exploring the flatter countryside around the city. Try **Central Cycle Hire,** 13 Lochrin Place (✆ **0131/228-6633;** bus no. 10), off Home Street in Tollcross, near the Cameo Cinema. Depending on the type of bike, charges average around £20 ($40) per day. A deposit of £100 ($200) is imposed. June to September, the shop is open Monday to Saturday 9:30am to 6pm and Sunday noon to 7pm; October to May, hours are Monday to Saturday 10am to 5:30pm.

FAST FACTS: Edinburgh

American Express The office is at 69 George St. (✆ **0131/718-2501**). It's open Monday to Friday 9am to 5:30pm and Saturday 9am to 4pm; on Thursday, the office opens at 9:30am.

Business Hours In Edinburgh, banks are usually open Monday to Wednesday 9:30am to 3:45pm and Thursday and Friday 9:30am to 5 or 5:30pm. Shops are generally open Monday to Saturday 10am to 5:30 or 6pm; on Thursday, stores stay open to 8pm. Offices are open Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm.

Currency The basic unit of currency is the **pound sterling** (£), which is divided into 100 **pence** (p). The exchange rate at press time is £1 = $2. Note that though the United Kingdom is part of the E.U., it does not plan to switch to the euro at this time.

Currency Exchange There's a **Bureau de Change** of the Clydesdale Bank at 20 Hanover St. (✆ **0131/4564560**).

Dentists & Doctors For a dental emergency, go to the **Edinburgh Dental Institute,** 39 Lauriston Place (✆ **0131/536-4900**), open Monday to Friday 9am to 3pm. In a medical emergency, you can seek help from the **Edinburgh Royal Infirmary,** 51 Royal Infirmary, Old Dalkeitl Rd. (✆ **0131/536-1000**). Medical attention is available 24 hours.

Drugstores There are no 24-hour drugstores ("chemists" or "pharmacies") in Edinburgh. The major drugstore is **Boots,** 48 Shandwick Place (✆ **0131/225-6757;** bus no. 3 or 31), open Monday to Friday 8am to 8pm, Saturday 8am to 6pm, and Sunday 10am to 4pm.

Embassies & Consulates The consulate of the **United States** is at 3 Regent Terrace (✆ **0131/556-8315;** bus no. 26, 85, or 86), which is an extension of Princes Street beyond Nelson's Monument. All the other embassies are in London.

Emergencies Call ✆ **999** in an emergency to summon the police, an ambulance, or firefighters.

Hospital The best and most convenient is the **Edinburgh Royal Infirmary,** 1 Lauriston Place (✆ **0131/536-1000;** bus no. 23 or 41).

Internet Access You can check your e-mail or send messages at the **International Telecom Centre,** 52 High St. (✆ **0131/559-7114;** bus no. 1 or 6), along the Royal Mile. The rate is £1 ($2) for 15 minutes. The center is open daily from 9am to 10pm.

Post Office The Edinburgh Branch Post Office, St. James's Centre, is open Monday to Friday 9am to 5:30pm and Saturday 8:30am to noon. For postal information and customer service, call ✆ **0845/222-3344.**

Telephones The United Kingdom's **country code** is **44**. The city code for **Edinburgh** is **0131.** If you're calling from inside the United Kingdom but outside the city code area, dial the complete area code; if you're calling from outside the United Kingdom, drop the zero. If you're calling from inside the code area, dial just the seven-digit number.

Public phones cost 40p (80¢) for the first 20 minutes and accept coins of various denominations. You can also buy a phone card for use in special phones at post offices and newsstands.

To charge a call to your calling card, dial **AT&T** (✆ **0800/89-0011**); **MCI** (✆ **0800/279-5088**); **Sprint** (✆ **0800/890-877**); **Canada Direct** (✆ **0800/822-83525**); or **Telecom New Zealand** (✆ **0800/890-064**).

Tipping In most restaurants, tax and service charge are included, so it's unnecessary to leave a tip. If a service charge hasn't been included in the bill, the standard tip is 10%. Taxi drivers also expect a 10% tip.

WHERE TO STAY

IN THE CENTER

Very Expensive

The Balmoral ★★★ This legendary establishment was opened in 1902 as the largest, grandest, and most impressive hotel in the north of Britain. Its soaring clock tower is a city landmark. Rooms are distinguished, conservative, and large, a graceful reminder of Edwardian sprawl with a contemporary twist. Many benefit from rounded or oversize windows and the various Victorian/Edwardian quirks that were originally designed as part of its charm.

1 Princes St., Edinburgh EH2 2EQ. ✆ **800/223-6800** in the U.S., or 0131/556-2414. Fax 0131/557-3747. www.thebalmoralhotel.com. 188 units. £345–£510 ($690–$1,020) double; from £670 ($1,340) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Valet parking £25 ($50). Bus: 50. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; 2 bars; indoor pool; health club; spa; sauna; business center; room service; laundry/dry cleaning service. *In room:* A/C, TV, fax, minibar, hair dryer, trouser press, safe, Wi-Fi.

Caledonian Hilton Edinburgh ★★★ "The Caley," built in 1903, is Edinburgh's most visible hotel, with commanding views over Edinburgh Castle and the Princes Street Gardens. The pastel-colored public areas are reminiscent of Edwardian splendor. Rooms are conservatively but individually styled, and are often exceptionally spacious. Fifth-floor rooms are the smallest. Although the accommodations are comparable to other first-class hotels in Edinburgh, the Caledonian lacks the leisure facilities of its major competitor, the Balmoral.

Princes St., Edinburgh EH1 2AB. ✆ **0131/222-8888.** Fax 0131/222-8889. www.caledonian.hilton.com. 249 units. £170–£250 ($340–$500) double; from £290 ($580) suite. Children 15 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking £12 ($24). Bus: 33. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; bar; indoor pool; exercise room; room service; laundry/dry cleaning service; rooms for those w/limited mobility; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer, trouser press, iron, Wi-Fi.

Expensive

The Bonham ★★ One of Edinburgh's most stylish hotels occupies a trio of Regency town houses. Rooms are outfitted in an urban and very hip blend of old and new. The decor combines ancient vases, Art Nouveau objects, marble busts, contemporary art—an eclectic but tasteful mix. Each unit has a TV with a keyboard hooked up to a barrage of facilities on the Internet, the first setup of its kind in Scotland.

35 Drumsheugh Gardens, Edinburgh EH3 7RN. ✆ **0131/226-6050.** Fax 0131/226-6080. www.thebonham.com. 48 units. £175–£225 ($350–$450) small double; £210–£240 ($420–$480) superior double; £280–£410 ($560–$820) suite. Rates include continental breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. Bus: 23 or 27. **Amenities:** Restaurant; room service; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV, minibar, coffeemaker, hair dryer, trouser press, iron, Wi-Fi.

Channings Hotel ★★ Five Edwardian terrace houses were combined to create this hotel 7 blocks north of Dean Village in a tranquil residential area. It maintains the atmosphere of a Scottish country house. Rooms are outfitted in a modern yet elegant style. Front units have views of a cobblestone street. Back rooms are quieter, and standard accommodations are a bit cheaper but are much smaller. The most desirable rooms are labeled "Executive," and have bay windows and wingback chairs.

South Learmonth Gardens 15, Edinburgh EH4 1EZ. ✆ **0131/315-2226.** Fax 0131/332-9631. www.channings.co.uk. 46 units. £150–£250 ($300–$500) double; £300 ($600) suite. Rates include breakfast. Children 14 and under £30 ($60) extra. AE, DC, MC, V. No parking. Bus: 18, 19, 41, or 81. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; 2 bars; room service; laundry/dry cleaning service. *In room:* TV, coffeemaker, hair dryer, trouser press, iron, Wi-Fi.

The Edinburgh Residence ★★★ If Robert Burns, who liked his luxuries, were checking into a hotel in Edinburgh today, he no doubt would be booked in here. It's one of the finest luxury hotels in Scotland, a series of elegant town-house suites installed in a trio of architecturally beautiful and sensitively restored Georgian buildings. As you enter, grand staircases and classic wood paneling greet you. A stay here is like finding lodging in an elegant town house from long ago, albeit with all the modern conveniences. This hotel is as good as or better than its siblings, the Howard, Bonham, and Channings. Accommodations are the ultimate in local comfort. A trio of classic suites have private entrances. All units are spacious—even the smallest is the size of a tennis court—and all are nonsmoking.

7 Rothesay Terrace, Edinburgh EH3 7RY. ✆ **0131/226-3380.** Fax 0131/274-7405. www.theedinburghresidence.com. 29 units. £175–£285 ($350–$570) suite; £300–£450 ($600–$900) apt. AE, MC, V. Free parking. Bus: 19 or 37. Rates include continental breakfast. **Amenities:** Bar; room service; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer, iron, Wi-Fi.

Paramount Carlton Highland Hotel ★★ The Victorian turrets, Flemish gables, and severe gray stonework rise imposingly from a street corner on the Royal Mile, a few steps from Waverley Station. The former department store has been converted into a bright and airy milieu full of modern conveniences. Rooms have a kind of Scandinavian simplicity. Bathrooms tend to be small. Although the hotel doesn't have the style and grandeur of the Caledonian, it has more facilities.

19 North Bridge, Edinburgh, Lothian EH1 1SD. ✆ **0131/472-3000.** Fax 0131/556-2691. www.paramount-hotels.co.uk. 189 units. £180–£304 ($360–$608) executive double. Children 14 and under stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking £18 ($36). Bus: 55 or 80. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; indoor pool; squash courts; health club; Jacuzzi; sauna; room service; babysitting; rooms for those w/limited mobility; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV, minibar, coffeemaker, hair dryer, iron, safe, Wi-Fi.

Point Hotel ★ With one of the most dramatic contemporary interiors of any hotel in Edinburgh, this is a stylish place in the shadow of Edinburgh Castle. The decor has appeared in a book detailing the 50 premier hotel designs in the world, with a great emphasis on color and innovation, including a black stone floor at the front that's marked by "dusty footprints." In one area, an optical fantasy is created when blue walls are brilliantly lighted by red neon. For a dramatic minimalist effect, a lone armchair and sofa occupy 93 sq. m (1,000 sq. ft.) of space. Guest rooms are spacious and attractively furnished. Most of the guest rooms open onto views of the castle; however, those in the rear do not, so be duly warned. If you like stainless steel, laser projections, and chrome instead of Scottish antiques, this might be an address for you. Standard rooms are a bit small, the premium rooms more comfortable and spacious.

34 Bread St., Edinburgh EH3 9AF. ✆ **0131/221-5555.** Fax 0131/221-9929. www.point-hotel.co.uk. 140 units. £125–£150 ($250–$300) double; £250 ($500) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. No parking. Bus: 4 or 31. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; room service; laundry/dry cleaning service. *In room:* TV, hair dryer, iron, Wi-Fi.

Roxburghe Hotel ★ Originally a stately Robert Adam town house, the hotel stands on a tree-filled square a short walk from Princes Street. In 1999, it opened another wing, more than doubling the original size of the hotel. The old wing maintains a traditional atmosphere with ornate ceilings and woodwork, antique furnishings, and tall, arched windows. The more modern wing offers government-rated four-star hotel comfort, completely contemporary styling, and up-to-date furnishings.

38 Charlotte Sq. (at George St.), Edinburgh EH2 4HQ. ✆ **0844/879-9063**. Fax 0131/240-5555. www.macdonaldhotels.co.uk/roxburge. 197 units. £140–£233 ($280–$466) double; from £250 ($500) suite. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking £19 ($38). Bus: 100. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; indoor pool; health club; sauna; steam room; room service; massage; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV, minibar, coffeemaker, hair dryer, trouser press, iron.

Sheraton Grand Hotel ★★ This elegant hotel, in a postmodern complex on a former railway siding a short walk from Princes Street, is the most appealing modern hotel in the capital. If you seek Victorian grandeur, make it the Caledonian. But if you'd like to be situated in the "new Edinburgh" (a financial center called The Exchange), then make it the Sheraton Grand. The hotel has more of international flavor than its rival, the Balmoral. Rooms may lack character, but they are exceedingly comfortable. The best units are called "Castle View," and they are on the top three floors.

1 Festival Sq., Edinburgh, Lothian EH3 9SR. ✆ **800/325-3535** in the U.S. and Canada, or 0131/229-9131. Fax 0131/228-4510. www.starwoodhotels.com. 260 units. June–Sept £219–£285 ($438–$570) double, from £329 ($658) suite; off season £149 ($298) double, £319 ($638) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking £20 ($40). Bus: 4, 15, or 44. **Amenities:** 4 restaurants; 2 bars; indoor and outdoor pools; exercise room; spa; sauna; room service; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service; rooms for those w/limited mobility; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, coffeemaker, hair dryer, trouser press, iron, safe, Wi-Fi.

Tigerlily ★ *Finds* This hot new boutique hotel address is a good choice for those seeking a hip alternative to a traditional Edinburgh B&B. It's even popular with locals who crowd its bars and stylish lounge areas every evening. From its minisuites to its Georgian-style rooms, the hotel is the latest word in modernity. Thoughtful extras abound—iPods are regularly updated with the latest tunes; an umbrella is in the stand for rainy days, and a dressing gown and slippers await you after a hard day of sightseeing. There is access to a gym and pool at The Roxburghe right across the street, and the personal service here is the best in town.

125 George St., Edinburgh EH2 4JN. ✆ **0131/225-5005.** Fax 0131/225-7046. www.tigerlilyedinburgh.co.uk. 33 rooms. £195 ($390) double; from £245 ($490) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Rates include breakfast. Bus: 3, 8, 22, 25, 30. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; laundry service; babysitting; room service. *In room:* TV, minibar, iron, hair dryer, Wi-Fi.

Moderate

The Bank Hotel *Value* This modest hotel in a 1923 building offers better value than many of its competitors in this congested neighborhood beside the Royal Mile. Until around 1990 it was a branch of the Royal Bank of Scotland, and the past is still evident in its bulky, no-nonsense design. Upstairs, high ceilings, simple furnishings, and king-size beds provide comfort in the clean guest rooms.

Royal Mile at 1 S. Bridge St., Edinburgh EH1 1LL. ✆ **0131/622-6800.** Fax 0131/622-6822. www.festival-inns.co.uk. 9 units. £85–£150 ($170–$300) double. Rates include breakfast. AE, MC, V. Nearby parking £4 ($8). Bus: 4, 15, 31, or 100. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; laundry service. *In room:* TV, coffeemaker, hair dryer, trouser press.

Glenora Hotel Only a 10-minute walk from Princes Street and the city center is this refurbished bed-and-breakfast. Its convenient location and comfortable rooms make this a favorite among visitors and business clients alike. The reception area's white walls, potted plants, and hanging paintings evoke a doctor's office waiting room rather than a hotel reception area, but the rest of the hotel is much nicer in decor. Everywhere you look there are Victorian touches, such as brass servant's bells and speaking tubes. The rooms—all nonsmoking—are nothing special, just clean and cozy. Each unit has a small bathroom with a shower. The kitchen serves a vegetarian breakfast, plus a traditional Scottish breakfast.

14 Rosebury Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 5JY. ✆ **0131/337-1186.** Fax 0131/337-1119. www.glenorahotel.co.uk. 11 units. £134–£145 ($268–$290) double; £120–£156 ($240–$312) triple. Rates include Scottish breakfast. MC, V. No parking. Bus: 12, 26, or 31. **Amenities:** Dining room; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV, coffeemaker, hair dryer, Wi-Fi.

Inverleith Hotel Across from the Royal Botantic Gardens, on the street that Robert Louis Stevenson once called home, is a charming, family-run bed-and-breakfast. Steve and Adriene Case, the hotel owners, are congenial and helpful people who run the place with great care. The small to midsize rooms are comfortable, with basic British decor and direct-dial telephones. A large Scottish breakfast is served. There is a lounge that specializes in malt whisky.

5 Inverleith Terrace, Edinburgh EH3 4NS. ✆ **0131/556-2745.** Fax 070/751-58-401. www.inverleithhotel.co.uk. 10 units. £60–£109 ($120–$218) double; £89–£159 ($178–$318) apt. Rates include Scottish breakfast. Free parking. AE, MC, V. Bus: 8, 23, or 27. **Amenities:** Dining room; room service; nonsmoking rooms.

7 Danube Street ★ This B&B is in Stockbridge, a quiet, stylish residential neighborhood a 10-minute walk north of the center. It's the 1825 home of Fiona Mitchell-Rose and her husband, Colin. The establishment is proud of its charmingly decorated rooms that reflect Fiona's experience as a decorator in London. Rooms look out onto the sloping garden. The most desirable has a four-poster bed and direct garden access. Bathrooms are shower-only. You're likely to meet your hosts and other guests in the formal dining room in the morning, where the breakfast is inspired by Scotland's old-fashioned agrarian tradition. All rooms are nonsmoking.

7 Danube St., Edinburgh EH4 1NN. ☎ **0131/332-2755.** Fax 0131/343-3648. www.aboutedinburgh.com/danube.html. 3 units. £110–£145 ($220–$290) double. Rates include breakfast. MC, V. Free parking nearby. Bus: 28. **Amenities:** Laundry; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV, coffeemaker, hair dryer.

16 Lynedoch Place This stone-fronted 1821 Georgian row house, run by affable hosts Andrew and Susie Hamilton, has a flower-filled front garden, unusual for a house of this type. Inside are high ceilings with deep cove moldings, a cantilevered staircase illuminated by a glassed-in cupola, and family antiques. The midsize guest rooms are cozy and decorated with charm (three with shower only and one with bathtub only). The elaborate breakfasts are served in a formal dining room. Andrew is an expert in planning itineraries through the Highlands, thanks to the time he spent there as a member of the elite Black Watch Infantry.

16 Lynedoch Place, Edinburgh EH3 7PY. ☎ **0131/225-5507.** Fax 0131/226-4185. www.16lynedochplace.co.uk. 4 units. £80–£120 ($160–$240) double. Rates include breakfast. MC, V. Bus: 19. No parking. *In room:* TV, beverage maker, no phone.

Ten Hill Place ★ *Finds* This chic new address was created by merging a modern building with a traditional Georgian stone terrace house. Many of its elegant bedrooms open onto views of the landmark Arthur's Seat with the Firth of Forth in the distance. The rooms are spacious and furnished with a velvety decor, and the bathrooms are large and luxurious. Although you wouldn't know it, the hotel is actually owned by a charitable institution set up by the Royal College of Surgeons. It lies about a 10-minute walk from Edinburgh Castle and in the heart of Old Town.

10 Hill Place, Edinburgh EH8 9DS. ☎ **0131/662-2080.** Fax 0131/662-2082. www.tenhillplace.com. 78 units. £132–£152 ($264–$304) double. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: 47. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; room service; laundry service. *In room:* TV, beverage maker, hair dryer, iron, safe, Wi-Fi.

Inexpensive

A-Haven This semidetached 1862 Victorian house is a 15-minute walk or 5-minute bus ride north of the rail station. Rooms are of various sizes, with the biggest on the second floor, although most rooms are much smaller and less expensive. Some in back overlook the Firth of Forth, and those in the front open onto views of Arthur's Seat. David Kay extends a Scottish welcome in this family-type place, and often advises guests about sightseeing.

180 Ferry Rd., Edinburgh EH6 4NS. ☎ **0131/554-6559.** Fax 0131/554-5252. www.a-haven.co.uk. 16 units. £80–£120 ($160–$240) double. Rates include breakfast. AE, MC, V. Free parking. Bus: 7, 11, 14, or 21. **Amenities:** Bar; children's playground. *In room:* TV, coffeemaker, hair dryer, trouser press, Wi-Fi.

AmarAgua Guest House This bed-and-breakfast, a favorite of the Scottish Tourist board, is located in an 1880s Victorian residential 1.6km (1 mile) from Princes Street. The quaint rooms are not for those who seek modern accommodations, but are well kept. After a good night's sleep in the small to midsize rooms, visitors can head downstairs for breakfast in the light-flooded dining room. Guest choose their meals "a la carte" style, a rarity for a small bed-and-breakfast. Before you leave for the day, owners Dawn-Ann and Tony will give suggestions as to where you should visit, and avoid, to have the best vacation you can.

10 Kilmaurs Terrace, Edinburgh EH16 5DR. ☎ **0131/667-6775.** Fax 0131/667-7687. www.amaragua.co.uk. 7 units. £70 ($140) double. Rates include breakfast. MC, V. Free parking. Bus: 30 or 33. **Amenities:** Dining room; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV, beverage maker, hair dryer.

Greenside Hotel This 1820 Georgian house is furnished with antiques to give it the right spirit. There are singles, doubles, twins, and three family rooms, all centrally heated and all with private bathrooms with showers. Rooms open onto views of a private garden or the Firth of Forth and are so large that 10 of them contain a double bed and two singles.

9 Royal Terrace, Edinburgh EH7 5AB. ☎ **0131/557-0121.** Fax **0131/557-0022.** www.townhousehotels.co.uk. 16 units. £46–£130 ($92–$260) double. Rates include breakfast. AE, MC, V. No parking. Bus: 4, 15, or 44. **Amenities:** Bar; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV, coffeemaker, hair dryer.

Mansfield House Well located in the New Town, this gay-friendly guesthouse offers individually decorated rooms of reasonable size. The best rooms, nos. 9 and 10, are superior king-size units with sumptuous beds. Bathrooms contain showers only. The hotel is within walking distance of all the gay bars, clubs, and restaurants. It's always busy, so early booking is advised.

57 Dublin St., Edinburgh EH3 6NL. ☎ **0131/556-7980.** Fax 0131/466-1315. 9 units, 6 with private bathroom. £60 ($120) double without bathroom; £65–£75 ($130–$150) double with bathroom. Rates include continental breakfast. MC, V. No parking. Bus: 19 or 39. *In room:* TV, fridge (in some), coffeemaker, iron, no phone.

Walton Hotel ★ *Finds* This little hotel lies right in the heart of Edinburgh in a restored 200-year-old town house. A complete refurbishment and renovation have maintained the essential Georgian character and elegant features, but have revitalized and modernized the entire hotel. Guest rooms are midsize, cozy, comfortable, and tranquil. The location is only a few minutes' walk to Princes Street. All rooms are nonsmoking. Don't expect much here in the way of service.

79 Dundas St., Edinburgh EH3 6SD. ☎ **0131/556-1137.** Fax 0131/557-8367. www.waltonhotel.com. 10 units. Summer £97–£139 ($194–$278) double; off season £79–£115 ($158–$230) double. Rates include breakfast. MC, V. Free parking. Bus: 23 or 27. **Amenities:** Nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV, hair dryer, iron, Wi-Fi.

SOUTH OF THE CENTER

Thrums Private Hotel Situated 1.6km (1 mile) south of Princes Street, Thrums is a pair of connected antique buildings, one a two-story 1820 Georgian and the other a small inn from around 1900. The hotel contains recently refurbished high-ceilinged rooms with contemporary furnishings (in the inn) or reproduction antique furnishings (in the Georgian). Each unit comes with a tidy midsize private bathroom with shower. The bistro-inspired Thrums restaurant serves set-price menus of British food, and there's also a bar and a peaceful garden.

14–15 Minto St., Edinburgh EH9 1RQ. ☎ **0131/667-5545.** Fax 0131/667-8707. www.thrumshotel.com. 5 units. £65–£110 ($130–$220) double; £180–£230 ($360–$460) family room. Rates include breakfast. MC, V. Free parking. Bus: 3, 7, 8, 31, 81, or 87. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; laundry service; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* TV, coffeemaker, hair dryer.

Native Behavior

The quickest way to brand yourself a tourist is to ask a kilt-wearing Scotsman what he wears underneath the kilt. A true Scotsman—and, of course, many a Scottish lass—already knows the answer to that one (nothing). A guard at Edinburgh Castle told us, "I must get asked that question at least 10 times a day."

It takes more than the swirl of tartan to make you blend in with the Scots. It also helps to perk up your ears at the skirl of pipes and to claim membership in a clan, the more ancient the better. If you're a big man, the ability to toss a giant caber (tree trunk) will get you a free round of brew at the local pub.

When talking with Scots, it helps if you express a firm belief in the existence of the Loch Ness monster and refer to her as "Nessie." If you really want to show your familiarity with the creature, call her "Beastie," as the locals do who actually live on the loch. To report an actual sighting will endear you even more to the Scots.

If you're invited to a Scottish home, you'll immediately be offered tea no matter what time of day. As a local told us, "It's always teatime in Scotland." In the Lowlands it's called "a fly cup"—that is, a quick cup between meals. In the Highlands, it's called "a wee strupach," which means the same thing.

And finally, on the subject of drink, it's wise to drink only Scottish whisky (spelled without the "e") and to express your loathing of such "hogwash" as American, Canadian, or Irish whiskey with an "e."

WHERE TO DINE

IN THE CENTER—NEW TOWN

Expensive

The Atrium ★ MODERN SCOTTISH/INTERNATIONAL Since 1993, this has been one of the most emulated restaurants in Edinburgh. No more than 60 diners can be accommodated in the "deliberately moody" atmosphere that's a fusion of Argentine hacienda and stylish Beverly Hills bistro. Flickering oil lamps create shadows on the dark-colored walls while patrons enjoy dishes prepared with taste and flair. Although offerings vary according to the inspiration of the chef, our favorites include grilled salmon and roasted sea bass, the latter with Dauphinois potatoes, baby spinach, charcoal-grilled eggplant, and baby fennel. The desserts are equally superb, especially the lemon tart with berry soulis and crème fraîche.

10 Cambridge St. (beneath Saltire Court in City Center, a 10-min. walk from Waverly Train Station). ✆ **0131/228-8882.** Reservations recommended. Fixed-price lunch menu £20 ($40); main courses lunch £11–£23 ($22–$46). Fixed-price dinner menu £27 ($54); main courses dinner £7–£25 ($14–$50). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri noon–2pm and 6–10pm; Sat 6–10pm. Closed for 1 week at Christmas. Bus: 11 or 15.

No. 1 ★ SCOTTISH/CONTINENTAL This intimate, crimson-colored enclave is the premier restaurant in the Balmoral Hotel. The walls are studded with Scottish memorabilia in formal yet sporting patterns. You can sample the likes of pan-seared Isle of Skye monkfish with saffron mussel broth; roulade of Dover sole with langoustine, oyster, and scallop garnish; or grilled filet of Scottish beef served with bourguignon sauce. For dessert you can have a variety of sorbets or British cheeses, or something more exotic such as mulled wine parfait with a cinnamon sauce. The restaurant also has a separate vegetarian menu and a wide-ranging wine list with celestial tariffs.

In the Balmoral Hotel, 1 Princes St. ✆ **0131/557-6727.** Reservations recommended. Main courses £25–£35 ($50–$70); tasting menu £69 ($138). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 6:30–10pm.

Moderate

Café Saint-Honoré FRENCH/SCOTTISH Between Frederick and Hanover streets, this is a French-inspired bistro with a dinner format that's much more formal and expensive than its deliberately rapid lunchtime venue. An upbeat and usually enthusiastic staff serves a combination of Scottish and French cuisine that includes venison with juniper berries and wild mushrooms, local pheasant in wine and garlic sauce, and lamb kidneys with broad beans. The fish is very fresh.

34 NW Thistle St. Lane. ✆ **0131/226-2211.** Reservations recommended. Fixed-price lunch £5–£24 ($10–$48); main courses £12–£28 ($24–$56); fixed-price dinner £14–£30 ($28–$60); fixed-price pretheater meal £22 ($44) 2 courses. AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri noon–2:15pm; Mon–Fri (pretheater meal) 5–7pm; Mon–Fri 7–10pm, Sat 6-10pm. Bus: 3, 16, 17, 23, 27, or 31.

Duck's at Le Marché Noir ★ SCOTTISH/FRENCH The cuisine here is more stylish and more tuned to the culinary sophistication of London than the cuisine at many other restaurants in Edinburgh. Set within a wood house whose outside and inside are decorated in dark green, it honors the traditions of Scotland with a handful of dishes. (An example is their baked haggis in phyllo pastry on a bed of turnip purée and red-wine sauce.) More modern dishes include a boudin of chicken and foie gras served with wilted spinach and applesauce; seared salmon with leeks, asparagus, zucchini, and a pickled ginger and sesame salad; roasted rack of lamb with thyme juice and roasted vegetables; and grilled red snapper with wild rice and lime-marinated sweet-potato pickles.

2–4 Eyre Place. ✆ **0131/558-1608.** Reservations recommended. Set-price lunch £9.95–£17 ($20–$34) for 1–3 courses; dinner main courses £14–£25 ($28–$50). AE, DC, MC, V. Tues–Fri noon–2:30pm; daily 7–10:30pm. Bus: 23 or 27.

Haldanes Restaurant ★ SCOTTISH Set in the cellar of the Albany Hotel building, within a pair of royal blue and gold-tinted dining rooms, Haldanes features the cuisine of George Kelso. During clement weather, the venue moves out to the building's verdant garden. Our recent party of Scottish friends dug into such delights as braised shank of Scottish lamb with Puy lentils; pan-fried breast of guinea fowl stuffed with a leek mousse; and baked filet of Scottish salmon topped with a chive crème fraîche. If you want to go truly local, order the Highland venison with black pudding and beets in a rosemary sauce.

39A Albany St. ✆ **0131/556-8407.** Reservations required. Dinner main courses £16–£23 ($32–$46); set-price lunch £6 ($12) for 1 course. DC, MC, V. Tues–Fri noon–1:45pm; Tues–Sat 6–9pm. Bus: 15.

Hewat's ★ SCOTTISH/INTERNATIONAL Hewat's is ideally located for the theater and offers reasonably priced pre- and post-theater dinners. Owned by Lara Kearney, John Rutter, and Glyn Stevens, all formerly of The Atrium (reviewed above), this is a fast-growing, popular place. The bold yellow walls and black-and-white floor give this converted antiques shop a unique, contemporary look. The cuisine is ambitious and seductive. Main courses include sea bass roasted in olive oil, char-grilled tuna, and chicken and foie gras terrine with onion jam. The rhubarb crumble with tamarind ice cream is a great way to end an enjoyable meal.

19–21 Causewayside. ✆ **0131/466-6660.** Reservations recommended. Main courses £12–£18 ($24–$36); set-price lunch £15 ($30) 3 courses; pre- and post-theater dinner £18 ($36) 3 courses. AE, MC, V. Wed–Sat noon–2pm; Sun 12:30–2:30pm; Sun–Thurs 6–9pm; Fri–Sat 6–10:30pm. Bus: 42.

Olorosa ★★★ MODERN BRITISH At the end of Princes Street, this citadel of fine food sits atop the landmark Basil Spencer Building, opening onto a roof terrace, with views to Edinburgh Castle and Fife in the distance. The restaurant is a high-fashion setting that would be at home in Los Angeles instead of Edinburgh. Chef Tony Singh doesn't follow trends—so "expect the unexpected," as the staff says.

Creative cookery with quality ingredients characterize this hyper-über restaurant. Expect the best of Highland beef, venison, and freshly caught salmon. The meat, including all forms of steak, comes with a wide choice of accompaniments, ranging from anchovy butter to red-wine *jus.* The selection of starters is the capital's finest. We love those mozzarella and herb croissants and the smoked haddock and chive cakes. For dessert, you can hardly go wrong with passion fruit parfait with sambuca sabayon or the banana tart tatin with coconut ice cream and rum and raisin sauce.

33 Castle St. ✆ **0131/226-7614.** Reservations required. Main courses £17–£24 ($34–$48). AE, MC, V. Daily noon–2:30pm and 7–10:30pm. Bus: 33.

The Tower ★★ SEAFOOD/MODERN BRITISH This is a hot dining ticket set at the top of the Museum of Scotland. The inventive kitchen will regale you with hearty portions of some of the finest steaks and roast beef, along with excellent and freshly caught seafood. Dig into an array of oysters or lobsters, or try a platter of mixed seafood. We still remember fondly the smoked haddock risotto with a poached egg and shavings of Parmesan cheese. Sea bass is perfectly seasoned and grilled, and there's even sushi on the menu. Scottish loin of lamb is given a modern twist with a side dish of minted couscous.

In the Museum of Scotland, Chambers St. ✆ **0131/225-3003.** Reservations required. 2-course lunch £13 ($26); dinner main courses £17–£29 ($34–$58). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily noon–11pm. Bus: 3, 7, 21, 30, 31, 53, 69, or 80.

Inexpensive

Henderson's Salad Table ★ *Value* VEGETARIAN This is a Shangri-La for health-food lovers. Hot dishes such as peppers stuffed with rice and pimiento are served on request, and a vegetarian twist on the national dish of Scotland, haggis, is usually available. Other well-prepared dishes filled with flavor include cheese and onion potato croquette, vegetable lasagna, and a broccoli and cheese crumble. The homemade desserts include a fresh fruit salad and a cake with double-whipped cream and chocolate sauce. The wine cellar offers 30 wines. Live music, ranging from classical to jazz to folk, is played every evening.

94 Hanover St. ✆ **0131/225-2131.** Main courses £8–£11 ($16–$22); fixed-price lunch £9 ($18); fixed-price dinner £10 ($20). AE, MC, V. Mon–Sat 8am–10:30pm. Bus: 23 or 27.

IN THE CENTER—OLD TOWN

Moderate

Dubh Prais SCOTTISH Dubh Prais (Gaelic for "The Black Pot") conjures up an image of an old-fashioned Scottish recipe bubbling away in a stewpot above a fireplace. Menu items are time-tested and not at all experimental, but flavorful nonetheless. Examples include smoked salmon; ragout of wild mushrooms and Ayrshire bacon served with garlic sauce; saddle of venison with juniper sauce; and a supreme of salmon with grapefruit-flavored butter sauce.

123B High St., Royal Mile. ☎ **0131/557-5732.** Reservations recommended. Fixed-price lunch £20 ($40) 3 courses; dinner main courses £13–£19 ($26–$38). AE, MC, V. Tues–Sat noon–4pm and 6:30–10:30pm. Bus: 11.

Gusto ★ ITALIAN A shining culinary star on Edinburgh's Restaurant Row, this restaurant offers some of the best Italian food in the city. It's a marvelous change of pace from traditional Scottish fare. The location is in the very heart of town along George Street, near St. Andrew Square and Charlotte Square. Chefs are highly skilled, using market-fresh ingredients to turn out such delights as salt-baked sea bass with orange and fennel or slow-braised lamb shoulder with polenta. The kitchen is open to view, and you can watch as the cooks toss pizzas, rather theatrically we might add. Both contemporary and traditional Italian dishes appear on the menu.

135 George St. ☎ **0131/225-2555.** Reservations required. Main courses £11–£19 ($22–$38); pizzas £5.95–£7.95 ($12–$16). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Thurs noon–11pm; Fri–Sat noon–midnight. Bus: 3, 8, 22, 25, or 30.

Inexpensive

Baked Potato Shop *Value* VEGETARIAN/WHOLE FOOD This is the least expensive restaurant in a very glamorous neighborhood, and it attracts mobs of office workers every day. Many carry their food away. Only free-range eggs, whole foods, and vegetarian cheeses are used. Vegan cakes are a specialty.

56 Cockburn St. ☎ **0131/225-7572.** Reservations not accepted. Food items £1–£9 ($2–$18). No credit cards. Daily 9am–9pm (to 10pm in summer). Bus: 5.

LEITH

In the northern regions of Edinburgh, Leith is the old port town, opening onto the Firth of Forth. Once it was a city in its own right until it was slowly absorbed into Edinburgh.

Expensive

Martin Wishart ★★★ MODERN FRENCH Several gourmet associations rate this as one of the finest restaurants in all of Scotland. The owner-chef Martin Wishart takes it all in stride and continues to improve the quality of his cuisine in a fashionable part of the Leith docklands. With white walls and modern art, the decor is minimalist. The menu is short but sweet and ever changing. Many dishes are simply prepared, the natural flavors coming through. Others show a touch of elegance and fantasy, including partridge breast with black truffle and foie gras, and lobster ravioli with a light shellfish cream. After you eat the glazed lemon tart with praline ice cream on which white raspberry coulis has been dribbled, the day is yours.

54 The Shore, Leith. ☎ **0131/553-3557.** Reservations required. Set lunch £23 ($46) 3 courses; tasting menu £60 ($120). MC, V. Tues–Fri noon–2pm; Tues–Sat 7–10pm. Bus: 7 or 10.

Moderate

Vintner's Room ★ *Finds* FRENCH/SCOTTISH Join locals and visitors down by the waterfront in Leith. Chances are they are heading to this restaurant. Near the entrance, beneath a venerable ceiling of oaken beams, a wine bar serves platters and drinks beside a large stone fireplace. Most diners, however, head for the small but elegant dining room, illuminated by flickering candles. Fresh ingredients are used in a vast array of specialties. You might begin with such appetizers as pear-and-watercress soup or pigeon-and-juniper terrine. The baked halibut with lobster bisque makes a tasty main course, as does the saddle of hare with brandy and grapes. Game delights are the thyme-flavored roast partridge with Marsala or the noisettes of venison with heather honey and red currants. Finish off with grilled apricots flavored with Amaretto and served with a basil-flavored ice.

The Vaults, 87 Giles St., Leith. ☎ **0131/554-6767.** Reservations recommended. Main courses £17–£20 ($34–$40) at lunch; dinner main courses £15–£25 ($30–$50). AE, MC, V. Mon–Sat noon–2pm and 7–10:30pm. Closed 2 weeks at Christmas. Bus: 7 or 10.

SEEING THE SIGHTS

SIGHTSEEING SUGGESTIONS FOR FIRST-TIME VISITORS

If You Have 1 Day Visit **Edinburgh Castle** as soon as it opens in the morning; then walk the **Royal Mile** to the Palace of **Holyroodhouse,** former abode of Mary, Queen of Scots. Look out over the city from the vantage point of **Arthur's Seat.** Stroll through **Princes Street Gardens,** capping your day with a walk along the major shopping thoroughfare, **Princes Street.**

If You Have 2 Days In the morning of your second day, head for Old Town again, but this time explore its narrow streets, wynds, and closes, and visit the **John Knox House,** the **High Kirk of St. Giles,** and the small museums. After lunch, climb the **Scott Monument** for a good view of Old Town and the Princes Street Gardens. Spend the rest of the afternoon exploring the **National Gallery of Scotland.**

If You Have 3 Days Spend day 3 getting acquainted with the major attractions of New Town, including the **National Museum of Scotland, National Portrait Gallery, Georgian House,** and **Royal Botanic Garden.**

If You Have 4 or 5 Days On the fourth day, take a trip west to **Stirling Castle** and see some of the dramatic scenery of the **Trossachs.** On the fifth day you'll feel like a native, so seek out some of the city's minor but interesting attractions, such as the **Camera Obscura,** the **Scotch Whisky Heritage Centre,** and **Dean Village.**

THE ROYAL MILE ★★

The Royal Mile (bus no. 1, 6, 23, 27, 30, 34, 35, or 36) stretches from Edinburgh Castle all the way to the Palace of Holyroodhouse. Walking along it, you'll see some of the most interesting old structures in Edinburgh, with turrets, gables, and towering chimneys.

High Kirk of St. Giles Built in 1120, a short walk downhill from Edinburgh Castle, this church is one of the most important architectural landmarks along the Royal Mile. It combines a dark and brooding stone exterior with surprisingly graceful and delicate flying buttresses. One of its outstanding features is its **Thistle Chapel,** housing beautiful stalls and notable heraldic stained-glass windows. Cathedral guides are available at all times to conduct tours.

High St. ☎ **0131/225-9442.** www.stgilescathedral.org.uk. Free admission, but £3 ($6) donation suggested. Easter–Sept Mon–Sat 9am–5pm. Sun services at 8, 10, and 11:30am and 6 and 8pm. Bus: 23 or 27.

Museum of Childhood *Kids* The world's first museum devoted solely to the history of childhood stands just opposite John Knox's House. Contents of its four floors range from antique toys to games to exhibits on health, education, and costumes, plus video presentations and an activity area. Because of the youthful crowd it naturally attracts, it ranks as the noisiest museum in town.

42 High St. ☎ **0131/529-4142.** www.cac.org.uk. Free admission. Mon–Sat 10am–5pm; during the Edinburgh Festival, also Sun noon–5pm. Bus: 23 or 27.

Museum of Edinburgh Across from the Canongate Tolbooth is this fine example of a restored 16th-century mansion, whose builders preferred a bulky, relatively simple design that suited its role as a secular, rather than an ecclesiastical, building. Today, it functions as Edinburgh's principal museum of local history. Inside are faithfully crafted reproductions of rooms inspired by the city's traditional industries, including glassmaking, pottery, wool processing, and cabinetry.

142 Canongate. ☎ **0131/529-4143.** Free admission. June–Sept Mon–Sat 10am–6pm; Oct–May Mon–Sat 10am–5pm; Aug also open Sun 2–5pm. Bus: 35.

The People's Story If you continue walking downhill along Canongate toward Holyroodhouse, you'll see one of the handsomest buildings on the Royal Mile. Built in 1591, the **Canongate Tolbooth** was once the courthouse, prison, and center of municipal affairs for the burgh of Canongate. Now it contains a museum celebrating the social history of the inhabitants of Edinburgh from the late 18th century to the present, with lots of emphasis on the cultural displacements of the Industrial Revolution.

163 Canongate. ☎ **0131/529-4057.** Free admission. Mon–Sat 10am–5pm. Bus: 1.

The Real Mary King's Close *Finds* Beneath the City Chambers on the Royal Mile lies Old Town's deepest secret, a warren of hidden streets where people lived and worked for centuries. This attraction allows you to go back into the turbulent days of plague-ridden Edinburgh in the 17th century. Today's visitors can see a number of underground "closes," originally very narrow walkways with houses on either side, some dating back centuries. When the Royal Exchange (now the City Chambers) was constructed in 1753, the top floors of the buildings of the close were torn down, although the lower sections were used as the foundations of the new building, leaving a number of dark and mysterious passages intact. In April 2003, guided parties were allowed to visit these dwellings for the first time. Subtle lighting and audio effects add to the experience. You can visit everything from a gravedigger's family stricken with the plague to a grand 16th-century town house. The haunted **Shrine Room** is the best surviving 17th-century house in Scotland.

Writers' Court, off the Royal Mile. ☎ **0870/243-0160.** www.realmarykingsclose.com. Admission £9.50 ($19) adults, £8.50 ($17) students and seniors, £6 ($12) children. Nov–Mar daily 10am–4pm; Apr–Oct daily 10am–9pm. Closed Dec 25. Bus: 1 or 6.

Scotch Whisky Heritage Centre This center is privately funded by a conglomeration of Scotland's biggest distillers. It highlights the economic effect of whisky on both Scotland and the world, and illuminates the centuries-old traditions associated with whisky making. You get to see a 7-minute audiovisual show and ride an electric car past 13 sets showing historic moments in the whisky industry. A tour entitling you to sample five whiskies and take away a miniature bottle costs £14 ($28) per person.

354 Castlehill (10-min. walk from Waverley Train Station). ☎ **0131/220-0441.** www.whisky-heritage.co.uk. Admission £9.50 ($19) adults, £7.25 ($15) seniors and students with ID, £4.95 ($9.90) children 13–17, free for children 12 and under. Daily 10am–5pm. Closed Dec 25.

The Scottish Parliament Modern architecture has come to Edinburgh thanks to the late Spanish architect Enric Miralles, who died in 2000 and never got to see his vision completely materialize. After years of delay the first Scottish parliament in nearly 300 years was opened to much controversy over the high price and the design. Some called it a "granite monstrosity," whereas others felt it that is was just what Scotland needed to shed the stereotype of tartan and bagpipes. The London *Times* and

Guardian newspapers called the building a masterpiece, but some traditionalists have likened it to a "collection of coffins, bananas, and boomerangs." There is one thing that everyone can agree on, however: It is unique. That feature is what has made the buildings one of Edinburgh's top attractions. Guided tours are the best way to go here, and you get colorful anecdotes along the way. If you can go when Parliament is in session you'll often hear heated debates about Scotland's relationship with England.

Cannongate and Holyrood Rd. ✆ **0131/348-5200.** www.scottish.parliament.uk. Free admission. Guided tours £6 ($12) adults; £3.60 ($7.20) children 6–16, students, and seniors; free for children 5 and under. Parliament in session Mon–Fri 10am–6pm (to 4pm Nov–Mar); Sat–Sun 10am–4pm. Bus: 1 or 6.

Writers' Museum This 1622 house takes its name, Lady Stair's House, from a former owner, Elizabeth, the dowager countess of Stair. Today it's a treasure trove of portraits, relics, and manuscripts relating to three of Scotland's greatest men of letters. The Robert Burns collection includes his writing desk, rare manuscripts, portraits, and many other items. Also on display are some of Sir Walter Scott's possessions, including his pipe, chess set, and original manuscripts. The museum holds one of the most significant Robert Louis Stevenson collections anywhere, including personal belongings, paintings, photographs, and early editions.

In Lady Stair's House, off Lawnmarket (10-min. walk from Waverley Train Station). ✆ **0131/529-4901.** Free admission. Mon–Sat 10am–5pm; Sun noon–5pm Aug only.

HISTORIC SITES

Edinburgh Castle ★★ Although its early history is vague, it's believed that Edinburgh was built on the dead volcano Castle Rock. It's known that in the 11th century Malcolm III (Canmore) and his Saxon queen, later venerated as St. Margaret, founded a castle on this same spot. The only fragment left of their original castle—in fact the oldest structure in Edinburgh—is **St. Margaret's Chapel.** Built in the Norman style, the oblong structure dates principally from the 12th century.

Inside the castle you can visit the **State Apartments,** particularly Queen Mary's bedroom, where Mary, Queen of Scots, gave birth to James VI of Scotland (later James I of England). The highlight is the Crown Chamber, which houses the Honours of Scotland (Scottish Crown Jewels), used at the coronation of James VI, along with the scepter and the sword of state of Scotland.

You can also view the **Stone of Scone,** or "Stone of Destiny," on which Scottish kings had been crowned since time immemorial. Edward I of England carried the stone off to Westminster Abbey in 1296, where it rested under the British coronation chair. It was finally returned to its rightful home in Scotland in November 1996, where it was welcomed with much pomp and circumstance.

Castlehill. ✆ **0131/225-9846.** www.edinburghcastle.biz. Admission £11 ($22) adults, £9 ($18) seniors, £5.50 ($11) children 15 and under. Apr–Sept daily 9:30am–5:15pm; Oct–Mar daily 9:30am–4:15pm. Bus: 1 or 6.

Palace of Holyroodhouse ★★ This palace was built adjacent to an Augustinian abbey established by David I in the 12th century. The nave, now in ruins, remains today. James IV founded the palace nearby in the early part of the 16th century, but only the north tower is left. Much of what you see today was ordered built by Charles II.

The most dramatic incident in the history of Holyroodhouse occurred in the old wing when Mary, Queen of Scots, was in residence. Her Italian secretary, David Rizzio, was murdered (with 56 stab wounds) in the audience chamber by Mary's husband, Lord Darnley, and his accomplices. The palace suffered long periods of neglect, although it basked in glory at the ball thrown by Bonnie Prince Charlie in the

Moments For Mr. Hyde Fans

Near Gladstone's Land, a 17th-century mansion still standing on the Royal Mile near Edinburgh Castle, is **Brodie's Close,** a stone-floored alleyway. You can wander into the alley for a view of old stone houses that'll make you think you've stepped into a scene from a BBC production of a Dickens novel. It was named in honor of the notorious Deacon Brodie, a respectable councilor by day and a thief by night (he was the inspiration for Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde,* though Stevenson set his story in foggy London town, not in Edinburgh). Brodie was hanged in 1788, and the mechanism used for the hangman's scaffolding had previously been improved by Brodie himself—for use on others, of course. Across the street is the most famous pub along the Royal Mile: **Deacon Brodie's Tavern** (see later in this chapter).

mid–18th century. The present queen and Prince Philip live at Holyroodhouse whenever they visit Edinburgh. When they're not in residence, the palace is open to visitors.

Canongate, at the eastern end of the Royal Mile. ✆ **0131/556-5100.** www.royal-gov.uk. Admission £9 ($18) adults, £7.50 ($15) seniors, £5 ($10) children 15 and under, £25 ($50) families (up to 2 adults and 2 children). Daily 9:30am–5:15pm. Closed 2 weeks in May and 3 weeks in late June and early July (dates vary). Bus: 1 or 6.

MORE ATTRACTIONS

Dean Gallery ★ *Finds* Across from the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Dean Gallery houses the Modern Art's extensive collections of dada and surrealism. For those of us who are fascinated by these art movements, there's nothing better in Scotland. All of our favorite artists—and maybe yours too—are here, from Max Ernst to Joan Miró and, of course, Salvador Dalí. The major exhibit here consists of a large part of the works of Sir Eduardo Paolozzi, a hip modern Scottish sculptor. The collection of prints, drawings, plaster maquettes (models), molds, and contents of his studio are housed in the gallery.

73 Belford Rd. ✆ **0131/624-6200.** www.nationalgalleries.org. Free admission to permanent collection; variable prices to special exhibitions. Daily 10am–5pm. Closed Dec 25–26. Bus: 13.

National Gallery of Scotland ★★★ This museum is located in the center of Princes Street Gardens. The gallery is rather small, but the collection was chosen with great care. The duke of Sutherland has lent the museum some paintings, including two Raphaels, Titian's two Diana canvases and his *Venus Rising from the Sea,* and the *Seven Sacraments,* a work of the great 17th-century Frenchman Nicolas Poussin. The Spanish masters are represented as well. You can also see excellent examples of English painting: Gainsborough's *The Hon. Mrs. Graham* and Constable's *Dedham Vale,* along with works by Turner, Reynolds, and Hogarth. Naturally, the work of Scottish painters is prominent, including Alexander Naysmith and Henry Raeburn, whose most famous work, *The Reverend Walker,* can be seen here.

2 The Mound. ✆ **0131/624-6200.** www.nationalgalleries.org. Free admission. Daily 10am–5pm (to 7pm Thurs; extended hours daily during the festival). Closed Dec 25–26. Bus: 3, 21, or 26.

National Museums of Scotland (NMS) ★★★ In 1998, two long-established museums, the Royal Museum of Scotland and the National Museum of Antiquities, were united into this single institution 2 blocks south of the Royal Mile. The museum showcases exhibits in the decorative arts, ethnography, natural history, geology, archaeology, technology, and science. Six modern galleries distill billions of years of Scottish history, a total of 12,000 items ranging from rocks found on the island of South Uist dating back 2.9 billion years to a Hillman Imp, one of the last 500 cars manufactured at the Linwood plant near Glasgow before it closed in 1981. One gallery is devoted to Scotland's role as an independent nation before it merged with the United Kingdom in 1707. Another gallery, devoted to industry and empire from 1707 to 1914, includes exhibits on shipbuilding, whisky distilling, the railways, and such textiles as the tartan and paisley.

Chambers St. ✆ **0131/247-4422.** www.nms.ac.uk. Free admission. Mon and Wed–Sat 10am–5pm; Tues 10am–8pm; Sun noon–5pm. Walk south from Waverley Station for 10 min. to reach Chambers St. or take bus 3, 7, 21, 30, 31, 53, 69, or 80.

Our Dynamic Earth ★ Kids The Millennium Dome at Greenwich outside London may have been a bust, but the millennium museum for Scotland is still packing in the crowds. Not far from the Palace of Holyroodhouse, Our Dynamic Earth tells the story of Earth in all its diversity. You can push buttons to simulate earthquakes, meteor showers, and views of outer space. You can see replicas of the slimy green primordial soup where life began. Time capsules wind their way back through the eons, and a series of specialized aquariums re-create primordial life forms. That's not all; there is so much more, ranging from simulated terrains of polar ice caps to tropical rainforests with plenty of creepy-crawlies. All 11 galleries have stunning special effects.

Holyrood Rd. (10-min. walk from Waverley Train Station.) ✆ **0131/550-7800.** www.dynamicearth.co.uk. Admission £9.50 ($19) adults, £7.50 ($15) students, seniors and children 4–14, family ticket £32 ($64). Nov–Mar Wed–Sun 10am–5pm; Apr–June and Sept–Oct daily 10am–5pm; July–Aug daily 10am–6pm.

Outlook Tower & Camera Obscura The 1853 periscope is at the top of the Outlook Tower, from which you can view a panorama of the surrounding city. Trained guides point out the landmarks and talk about Edinburgh's fascinating history. In addition, there are several entertaining exhibits, all with an optical theme, and a well-stocked shop selling books, crafts, and compact discs.

Castlehill. ✆ **0131/226-3709.** www.camera-obscura.co.uk. Admission £7.50 ($15) adults, £6 ($12) seniors, and £5 ($10) students and children. Apr–June and Sept–Oct daily 9:30am–6pm (until 7pm July–Aug); Nov–Mar daily 10am–5pm. Bus: 1 or 6.

Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art ★★ Scotland's national collection of 20th-century art is set on 5.5 hectares (14 acres) of grounds, just a 15-minute walk from the west end of Princes Street. The collection is international in scope and high in quality despite its modest size. Major sculptures outside the building include pieces by Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth. Inside, the collection ranges from a fauve Derain and cubist Braque and Picasso to recent works by Paolozzi. There's a strong representation of English and Scottish artists—William Turner, John Constable, Henry Raeburn, and David Wilkie, to name a few. Works by Matisse, Miró, Kirchner, Kokoschka, Ernst, Ben Nicholson, Nevelson, Balthus, Lichtenstein, Kitaj, and Hockney are also on view.

75 Belford Rd. ✆ **0131/556-8921.** www.nationalgalleries.org. Free admission, except for some temporary exhibits. Fri–Wed 10am–5pm; Thurs 10am–7pm. Closed Dec 25–26. Bus: 13 stops by the gallery but is infrequent; 18, 20, and 41 pass along Queensferry Rd., a 5-min. walk up Queensferry Terrace and Belford Rd. from the gallery.

Scottish National Portrait Gallery Housed in a red stone Victorian Gothic building by Rowand Anderson, this portrait gallery gives you a chance to see what the

Britannia: The People's Yacht

In case the queen never invited you for a sail on her 125m (410-ft.) yacht, there's still a chance to go aboard this world-famous vessel. Launched on April 16, 1953, the luxury yacht was decommissioned December 11, 1997. Today, the yacht—technically a Royal Navy ship—which has sailed more than a million miles, rests at anchor in the port of Leith, 3km (1¾ miles) from the center of Edinburgh. The gangplank is now lowered for the public, whereas it once was lowered for such world leaders as Tony Blair and Nelson Mandela.

British taxpayers spent £160 million ($320 million) maintaining the yacht throughout most of the 1990s. Even a major refit would have prolonged the vessel's life for only a few more years. Because of budgetary constraints, a decision was made to put it in dry dock. The public reaches the vessel by going through a visitor center designed by Sir Terence Conran. At its centerpiece is the yacht's 12m (39-ft.) tender floating in a pool.

Once onboard, you're guided around all five decks by an audio tour. You can also visit the drawing room and the Royal Apartments, once occupied by the likes of not only the queen, but Prince Philip and princes William, Harry, Edward, and Andrew, as well as princesses Anne and Margaret. Even the engine room, the galleys, and the captain's cabin can be visited.

All tickets should be booked as far in advance as possible by calling ☎ **0131/555-5566** or logging onto www.royalyachtbritannia.co.uk. The yacht is open daily except Christmas, with the first tour beginning at 10am, the last tour at 3:30pm. Lasting 90 to 120 minutes, each tour is self-guided with the use of a headset lent to participants. Adults pay £9.75 ($20), seniors and children ages 6 to 17 £5.75 ($12); those age 5 and under visit for free. A family ticket, good for two adults and up to two children, is £28 ($56). From Waverley Bridge, take either city bus (Lothian Transport) X50, or else the Guide Friday tour bus, which is marked all over its sides with the words BRITANNIA.

famous people of Scottish history looked like. The portraits, several by Ramsay and Raeburn, include everybody from Mary, Queen of Scots, to Sean Connery, and from Flora Macdonald to Irvine Welsh.

1 Queen St. ☎ **0131/624-6200.** www.nationalgalleries.org. Free admission, except for some temporary exhibits. Daily 10am–5pm (to 7pm Thurs). Closed Dec 25–26. Bus: 18, 20, or 41.

Scott Monument ★ Completed in the mid–19th century, the Gothic-inspired Scott Monument is the most famous landmark of Edinburgh. Sir Walter Scott's heroes are carved as small figures in the monument, and you can climb to the top. You can also see the first-ever **floral clock,** which was constructed in 1904, in the West Princes Street Gardens.

In the E. Princes St. Gardens. ☎ **0131/529-4068.** www.cac.org.uk. Admission £3 ($6). Apr–Sept Mon–Sat 9am–6pm, Sun 10am–6pm; Oct–Mar Mon–Sat 9am–3pm, Sun 10am–3pm. Bus: 1 or 6.

Moments A Step Back in Time at Historic Dean Village

The village is one of the most photographed sights in the city. Set in a valley about 30m (100 ft.) below the level of the rest of Edinburgh, it's full of nostalgic charm. The settlement dates from the 12th century, and for many centuries it was a grain-milling center. The current residents worked hard to restore the old buildings—many of which were converted into flats and houses—and managed to maintain all of the original Brigadoon-like charm. A few minutes from the West End, it's located at the end of Bell's Brae, off Queensferry Street, on the Water of Leith. You can enjoy a celebrated view by looking downstream under the high arches of Dean Bridge, designed by Telford in 1833. The most scenic walk is along the water in the direction of St. Bernard's Well.

A GARDEN

Gardeners and nature lovers will be attracted to the **Royal Botanic Garden,** Inverleith Row (✆ **0131/552-7171**). Main areas of interest are the Exhibition Hall, Alpine House, Demonstration Garden, annual and herbaceous borders (summer only), copse, Woodland Garden, Wild Garden, Arboretum, Peat Garden, Rock Garden, Heath Garden, and pond. Admission is £4.50 ($9). It is open daily November to February 10am to 4pm, March and October 10am to 6pm, and April to September 10am to 7pm.

ORGANIZED TOURS

For a quick introduction to the principal attractions in and around Edinburgh, consider the tours offered from April to late October by **Lothian Region Transport,** 14 Queen St. (✆ **0131/555-6363**). You can see most of the major sights of Edinburgh, including the Royal Mile, the Palace of Holyroodhouse, Princes Street, and Edinburgh Castle, by double-deck motorcoach for £9 ($18) for adults, £8 ($16) for seniors and students, and £3 ($6) for children. This ticket is valid all day on any **LRT Edinburgh Classic Tour bus,** which allows passengers to get on and off at any of the 15 stops along its routes. Buses start from Waverley Bridge every day beginning at 9:40am, departing every 15 minutes in summer and about every 30 minutes in winter, and then embark on a circuit of Edinburgh, which if you remain on the bus without ever getting off will take about 1 hour. Commentary is offered along the way.

Tickets for any of these tours can be bought at LRT offices at Waverley Bridge, or at 14 Queen St., or at the tourist information center in Waverley Market. Advance reservations are a good idea. For more information, call ✆ **0131/555-6363,** 24 hours a day.

McEwan's Literary Pub Tour (✆ **0131/226-6665**) follows in the footsteps of such literary greats as Robert Burns, Robert Louis Stevenson, and Sir Walter Scott. The *Edinburgh Evening News* has hailed this tour (and we concur) as "vivid, erudite, and entertaining." The tour goes into the city's famous or infamous taverns and *howffs* (Scottish pubs) highlighting such literary events as tales of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde or the erotic love poetry of Burns. Tours depart from the Beehive Pub on Grassmarket in the Old Town, going along the Royal Mile. The 2-hour tour costs £9 ($18) for adults or £7 ($14) for children. From June to September tours leave nightly at 7:30pm;

March, April, May, October, and November, Thursday to Sunday at 7:30pm; and December to February, Friday at 7:30pm. Reservations are recommended.

The Witchery Tours (✆ **0131/225-6745**) are filled with ghosts, gore, and witchcraft, enlivened by "jumper-outers"—actors who jump out to scare you. Two tours—Ghost & Gore, and Murder & Mystery—are a bit similar and overlap in parts. Scenes of many horrific tortures, murders, and supernatural happenings in the historic Old Town are visited, all under the cloak of darkness. The ghost tour departs daily at 7pm and 7:30pm, with the murder tour leaving daily at 9pm and again at 10pm year-round. Tours last 1 hour and 15 minutes, costing £7.50 ($15) or £4.50 ($9) for children. Departures are from outside The Witchery Restaurant on Castlehill. Reserve early for the tour.

Mercat Tours (✆ **0131/557-6464**) conducts the best walking tours of Edinburgh, covering a wide range of interests from "Secrets of the Royal Mile" to a "Haunted Underground Experience." Tours meet outside the Tourist Office on Princes Street. The Secrets of the Royal Mile Tour leaves daily at 10:30am with a Grand Tour departing at 10am daily. The Hidden Vaults Tour runs hourly from May to September noon to 4pm; off season daily at 2 and 4pm. The cost of these tours begins at £7 ($14) for adults or £4 ($8) for children. Reservations are recommended for these 1-hour tours.

Guide Friday (✆ **0131/556-2244**) is good for a quick overview. You can later follow up with more in-depth visits. You're taken around the city in one of the company's fleet of open-top, double-decker buses, with informed and often amusing running commentaries. Highlights include the Royal Mile, Princes Street, Holyrood Palace, and Edinburgh Castle, as well as the New Town. Tours run between 9:20am and dusk, costing £9 ($18) for adults or £3 ($6) for kids ages 5 to 15. Reservations are recommended. Departures are from Waverly Bridge, with tours lasting 1 hour.

THE SHOPPING SCENE

The best buys are tartans and woolens, along with bone china and Scottish crystal. Princes Street, George Street, and the Royal Mile are the major shopping arteries. Here are a few suggestions.

Looking for a knitted memento? Moira-Anne Leask, owner of the **Shetland Connection,** 491 Lawnmarket (✆ **0131/225-3525;** bus no. 28), promotes the skills of the Shetland knitter, and her shop is packed with sweaters, hats, and gloves in colorful Fair Isle designs. She also offers hand-knitted mohair, Aran, and Icelandic sweaters. Items range from fine-ply cobweb shawls to chunky ski sweaters handcrafted by skilled knitters in top-quality wool.

If you've ever suspected that you might be Scottish, **Tartan Gift Shops,** 54 High St. (✆ **0131/558-3187;** bus no. 1), has a chart indicating the place of origin, in Scotland, of your family name. You'll then be faced with a bewildering array of hunt-and-dress tartans. The high-quality wool is sold by the yard as well as in the form of kilts for both men and women.

Clan Tartan Centre, 70–74 Bangor Rd., Leith (✆ **0131/553-5161;** bus no. 7 or 10), is one of the leading tartan specialists in Edinburgh, regardless of which clan you claim as your own. If you want help in identifying a particular tartan, the staff at this shop will assist you. At the same location is the **James Pringle Woollen Mill** (✆ **0131/553-5161**), which produces a large variety of top-quality wool items, including a range of Scottish knitwear—cashmere sweaters, tartan and tweed ties, travel rugs, tweed hats, and tam-o'-shanters. In addition, the mill has the only Clan Tartan Centre in

Scotland, where more than 2,500 sets and trade designs are accessible through their research facilities.

The two best department stores in Edinburgh are **Debenhams,** 109–112 Princes St. (✆ **0131/225-1320;** www.debenhams.com; bus no. 3, 31, or 69), and **Jenners,** 48 Princes St. (✆ **0131/225-2442;** www.jenners.com; bus no. 3, 31, or 69). Both stock Scottish and international merchandise.

Established in 1866, **Hamilton & Inches,** 87 George St. (✆ **0131/225-4898;** bus no. 41 or 42), is a gold- and silversmith with both modern and antique designs. It has a stunning late-Georgian interior as well.

EDINBURGH AFTER DARK

For a thorough list of entertainment options during your stay, pick up a copy of ***The List,*** a biweekly entertainment paper available free at the Edinburgh & Scotland Information Centre.

FESTIVALS

The highlight of Edinburgh's year—some would say the only time the real Edinburgh emerges—comes in the last weeks of August during the **Edinburgh International Festival.** Since 1947, the festival has attracted artists and companies of the highest international standard in all fields of the arts, including music, opera, dance, theater, exhibition, poetry, and prose, and "Auld Reekie" takes on a cosmopolitan air.

During the festival, one of the most exciting spectacles is the Military Tattoo on the floodlit esplanade in front of Edinburgh Castle, high on its rock above the city. Vast audiences watch the precision marching of Scottish regiments and military units from all parts of the world, and of course the stirring skirl of the bagpipes and the swirl of the kilt.

Less predictable in quality but greater in quantity is the **Edinburgh Festival Fringe** (180 High St., Edinburgh EH1 1BW; ✆ **0131/226-0026;** www.edfringe.com), an opportunity for anybody—professional or nonprofessional, an individual, a group of friends, or a whole company of performers—to put on a show wherever they can find an empty stage or street corner. Late-night reviews, outrageous and irreverent contemporary drama, university theater presentations, maybe even a full-length opera—Edinburgh gives them all free rein. A **Film Festival, Jazz Festival, Television Festival,** and **Book Festival** (every second year) overlap in August.

Ticket prices vary from £5 to £10 ($10–$20). You can get information from **Edinburgh International Festival,** The Hub, Castle Hill, Edinburgh EH1 7ND (✆ **0131/473-2000;** fax 0131/473-2002), open Monday to Friday from 9:30am to 5:30pm. Other sources of information are the **Edinburgh Festival Fringe,** 180 High St., Edinburgh EH1 1BW (✆ **0131/226-0026**); **Edinburgh Book Festival,** Scottish Book Centre, 137 Dundee St., Edinburgh EH11 1BG (✆ **0131/228-6866**); and **Edinburgh Film Festival,** 88 Lothian Rd., Edinburgh EH3 9BZ (✆ **0131/228-4051**).

The most convenient but slightly more expensive way to order tickets for the festival is to purchase them before you leave home from **Global Tickets, Inc.,** 234 W. 44th St., Ste. 100, New York, NY 10036 (✆ **800/223-6108**).

THEATER

Edinburgh has a lively theater scene. In 1994, the **Festival Theatre,** 13–29 Nicolson St. (✆ **0131/662-1112** for administration, 0131/529-6000 for tickets during festival times with an additional phone line, 0131/473-2000, that's operational during the Aug festival; bus no. 3, 31, or 33), opened in time for some aspects of the Edinburgh

Moments A Wee Dram for Fans of Malt Whisky

It requires a bit of an effort to reach it (take bus no. 10A, 16, or 17 from Princes St. to Leith), but for fans of malt whisky, the **Scotch Malt Whisky Society** has been called "The Top of the Whisky Pyramid" by distillery-industry magazines in Britain. It's on the second floor of a 16th-century warehouse at 87 Giles St., Leith (✆ **0131/554-3451**), and was originally designed to store Bordeaux and port wines from France and Portugal. All you can order are single-malt whiskies, served neat, usually in a dram (unless you want yours watered down with branch water), and selected from a staggering choice of whiskies from more than 100 distilleries throughout Scotland. Hours are Monday and Tuesday 10am to 5pm, Thursday to Saturday 10am to 11pm, and Sunday 11am to 10pm.

Festival. Set on the eastern edge of Edinburgh, near the old campus of the University of Edinburgh, it has since been called "Britain's de facto Dance House" because of its sprung floor, its enormous stage (the largest in Britain), and its suitability for opera presentations of all kinds. Tickets are £7 to £80 ($14–$160).

Another major theater is the **King's Theatre,** 2 Leven St. (✆ **0131/529-6000;** bus no. 10 or 11), a 1,600-seat Victorian venue offering a wide repertoire of classical entertainment, including ballet, opera, and West End productions. The **Netherbow Arts Centre,** 43 High St. (✆ **0131/556-9579;** bus no. 1), has been called "informal," and productions here are often experimental and delightful—new Scottish theater at its best.

The resident company of **Royal Lyceum Theatre,** Grindlay Street (✆ **0131/248-4848;** bus no. 11 or 15), also has an enviable reputation; its presentations range from the works of Shakespeare to new Scottish playwrights. The **Traverse Theatre,** Cambridge Street (✆ **0131/228-1404;** bus no. 11 or 15), is one of the few theaters in Britain funded solely to present new plays by British writers and first translations into English of international works. In a modern location, it now offers two theaters under one roof: Traverse 1 seats 250 and Traverse 2 seats 100.

BALLET, OPERA & CLASSICAL MUSIC

The **Scottish Ballet** and the **Scottish Opera** perform at the **Playhouse Theatre,** 18–22 Greenside Place (✆ **0870/606-3424;** bus no. 7 or 14), which, with 3,100 seats, is the town's largest theater. The **Scottish Chamber Orchestra** makes its home at the **Queen's Hall,** Clerk Street (✆ **0131/668-2019;** bus no. 3, 33, or 31), also a major venue for the Edinburgh International Festival.

FOLK MUSIC & CEILIDHS

Folk music is presented in many clubs and pubs in Edinburgh, but these strolling players tend to be somewhat erratic or irregular in their appearances. It's best to read notices in pubs and talk to the tourist office to see where the ceilidhs will be on the night of your visit.

Some hotels regularly feature traditional Scottish music in the evenings. You might check with the **George Hotel,** 19–21 George St. (✆ **0131/225-1251;** bus no. 3, 31, or 33). **Jamie's Scottish Evening** is presented daily at the King James Hotel on Leith Street (✆ **0131/556-0111;** bus no. 7 or 14) Tuesday to Sunday at 7pm, costing £55 ($110) for a four-course dinner, wine, and show.

PUBS & BARS

Edinburgh's most famous pub, **Café Royal Circle Bar,** 17 W. Register St. (✆ **0131/556-4124;** bus no. 3, 31, or 33), is a long-enduring favorite. Part of it is now occupied by the Oyster Bar of the Café Royal, but life in the Circle Bar continues at its old pace. The opulent trappings of the Victorian era are still to be seen. Go up to the serving counter, which stands like an island in a sea of drinkers, and place your order.

The Abbotsford, 3 Rose St. (✆ **0131/225-5276;** bus no. 3, 31, or 33), is near the eastern end of Rose Street, a short walk from Princes Street. This pub has served stiff drinks and oceans of beer since it was founded in 1887. Inside, the gaslight era is alive and thriving, thanks to a careful preservation of the original dark paneling, long battered tables, and ornate plaster ceiling. The inventories of beer on tap change about once a week, supplementing a roster of single-malt Scotches. Established in 1806, **Deacon Brodie's Tavern,** 435 Lawnmarket (✆ **0131/225-6531;** bus no. 1), is the neighborhood pub along the Royal Mile. It perpetuates the memory of Deacon Brodie, good citizen by day, robber by night (see "For Mr. Hyde Fans" sidebar, p. 849). The tavern and wine cellars contain a restaurant and lounge bar.

DAY TRIPS FROM EDINBURGH

LINLITHGOW In this royal burgh, a county town in West Lothian, 29km (18 miles) west of Edinburgh, Mary, Queen of Scots, was born in 1542. Her birthplace, the roofless Linlithgow Palace (✆ **01506/842-896**), can still be explored today, even if it's but a shell of its former self. The queen's suite was in the north quarter but was rebuilt for the homecoming of James VI (James I of England) in 1620. The palace burned to the ground in 1746. The Great Hall is on the first floor, and a small display shows some of the more interesting architectural relics. The ruined palace is 1km (⅔ mile) from Linlithgow Station. Admission is £3 ($6) adults, £2.30 ($4.60) seniors, £1 ($2) children. It is open April to September, daily 9:30am to 6:30pm; October to March, Monday to Saturday 9:30am to 4:30pm, Sunday 2:30 to 4:30pm.

South of the palace stands the medieval kirk of **St. Michael's Parish Church** (✆ **01506/842-188**), open only May through September daily from 10am to 4:30pm. Many a Scottish monarch has worshiped here since its consecration in 1242. Despite being ravaged by the disciples of John Knox and transformed into a stable by Cromwell, it's one of Scotland's best examples of a parish church.

In the midst of beautifully landscaped grounds, laid out along the lines of Versailles, sits **Hopetoun House** (✆ **0131/331-2451**), 16km (10 miles) from Edinburgh. This is Scotland's greatest Adam mansion, and a fine example of 18th-century architecture. The splendid reception rooms are filled with 18th-century furniture, paintings, statuary, and other artworks. From a rooftop platform you see a panoramic view of the Firth of Forth. You can take the nature trail, explore the deer parks, investigate the Stables Museum, or stroll through the formal gardens, all on the grounds. The house is 3km (1¾ miles) from the Forth Road Bridge near South Queensferry, off A-904. If you don't have a car, take a cab from the rail station in Dalmeny for £5 ($10). Admission is £8 ($16) adults, £7 ($14) seniors, £4.25 ($8.50) children, £22 ($44) family (up to six). Hours are from 10am to 5:30pm (last admission 4:30pm) daily April 9 to September 26.

Getting There From Edinburgh, direct **trains** (✆ **0345/484950**) run every 15 minutes during the day to Linlithgow (trip time: 20 min.). Round-trip fare is £8 ($16) adults, £4 ($8) children. **Buses** also leave from St. Andrew's Square in Edinburgh

(☎ **01324/613-777** for schedules) every 20 minutes (trip time: 1 hr.). Round-trip fare is £6 ($12) adults, £4 ($8) children. **Motorists** can take A902 to Corstorphine, and then A8 to M9, getting off at the signposted junction (no. 3) to Linlithgow.

DIRLETON This little town, a preservation village, vies for the title of "prettiest village in Scotland." The town plan, drafted in the early 16th century, is essentially unchanged today. Dirleton has two greens shaped like triangles, with a pub opposite Dirleton Castle, placed at right angles to a group of cottages.

A rose-tinted 13th-century castle with surrounding gardens, once the seat of the wealthy Anglo-Norman de Vaux family, **Dirleton Castle** (☎ **01620/850-330**) looks like a fairy-tale fortification, with its towers, arched entries, and oak ramp. Ruins of the Great Hall and kitchen can be seen, as well as what's left of the lord's chamber where the de Vaux family lived. The 16th-century main gate has a hole through which boiling tar or water could be poured to discourage unwanted visitors. The castle's country garden and bowling green are still in use. Admission is £5 ($10) adults, £3 ($6) seniors, £1 ($2) children. You can tour the castle April to September, daily 9:30am to 6:30pm; October to March, Monday to Saturday 9:30am to 4:30pm, Sunday 2:30 to 4:30pm.

Getting There Dirleton is on the Edinburgh–North Berwick road (A198); North Berwick is 8km (5 miles) east and Edinburgh 31km (19 miles) west. There's no train service. Buses, including nos. 124 and 125, depart from the St. Andrews Square station in Edinburgh (☎ **0800/50-50-50** for information). They take 25 minutes and cost £5 ($10) one-way. If you're driving, take A1 in the direction marked THE SOUTH and DUNBAR; then turn onto A198, following the signs to Dirleton.

2 Glasgow ★★★

Glasgow is just 65km (40 miles) west of Edinburgh, but the contrast between the two cities is striking. Scotland's economic powerhouse and its largest city (Britain's third-largest), up-and-coming Glasgow is now the country's cultural capital and home to half its population. It has long been famous for ironworks and steelworks; the local shipbuilding industry produced the *Queen Mary,* the *Queen Elizabeth,* and other ocean liners.

Once polluted by industry and plagued with some of the worst slums in Europe, Glasgow has been transformed. Urban development and the decision to locate the Scottish Exhibition and Conference Centre here have brought great changes: Industrial grime is being sandblasted away, overcrowding has been reduced, and more open space and less traffic congestion mean cleaner air. Glasgow also boasts a vibrant and even edgy arts scene; it's now one of the cultural capitals of Europe.

In the process, the splendor of the city has reemerged. The planners of the 19th century thought on a grand scale when they designed the terraces and villas west and south of the center, and John Betjeman and other critics have hailed Glasgow as "the greatest surviving example of a Victorian city."

Glasgow's origins are ancient, making Edinburgh, for all its wealth of history, seem comparatively young. The village that grew up beside a fjord 32km (20 miles) from the mouth of the River Clyde as a medieval ecclesiastical center began its commercial prosperity in the 17th century. As it grew, the city engulfed the smaller medieval towns of Ardrie, Renfrew, Rutherglen, and Paisley.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **By Plane** The **Glasgow Airport** is at Abbotsinch (✆ **0870/40008;** www.glasgowairport.com), 16km (10 miles) west of the city via M8. You can use the regular Glasgow CityLink bus service to get to the city center. From bus stop no. 1 or 2, take bus no. 905 to the Buchanan Street Bus Station in the center of town. The ride takes about 25 minutes and costs £7 ($14). A taxi to the city center costs about £25 ($50). You can reach Edinburgh by taking a bus from Glasgow Airport to Queens Station and then changing to a bus for Edinburgh. The entire journey, including the change, should take about 2 hours and costs £12 ($24) one-way or £18 ($36) round-trip.

Monday to Friday, British Airways (www.ba.com) runs almost hourly shuttle service from London's Heathrow Airport to Glasgow. The first flight departs London at 7:15am and the last at 8:25pm; service is reduced on weekends, depending on volume. For flight schedules and fares, call British Airways in London at ✆ **0845/779-9977.**

British Midland (✆ **0818/365-000;** www.flybmi.com) flies from Heathrow to Glasgow. **Aer Lingus** (✆ **800/223-6537,** or 01/844-4711 in Ireland; www.aerlingus.ie) flies daily from Dublin to Glasgow. Most visitors fly first to London on one of the major airlines such as **American** (✆ **800/433-7300**), then take one of the shuttle flights into Glasgow or Edinburgh to begin their Scotland adventure.

By Train Headquarters for British Rail is at Glasgow's Central Station and Queen Street Station. For **National Rail Enquiries,** call ✆ **08457/484-950;** www.nationalrail.co.uk. The **Queen Street Station** serves the north and east of Scotland, with trains arriving from Edinburgh every 30 minutes during the day; the one-way trip between the two cities costs £15 ($30) and takes 50 minutes. You'll also be able to travel to such Highland destinations as Inverness and Fort William from here.

The **Central Station** serves southern Scotland, England, and Wales, with trains arriving from London's Euston and King's Cross Stations (call ✆ **08457/484-950** in London for schedules) frequently throughout the day (trip time is about 5½ hr.). The trains leave Euston Monday to Saturday from 6:20am until 6:25pm, and then the night train departs at 11:40pm, getting into Glasgow at 7:16am. From Glasgow, trains leave for London every hour from 6:15am to 5pm. The night train leaves at 11:55pm. Try to avoid Sunday travel—the frequency of trains is considerably reduced and the duration of the trip lengthened to at least 7 hours because of more stopovers en route.

By Bus The **Buchanan Street Bus Station** is 2 blocks north of the Queen Street Station on Killermont Street (✆ **0141/333-3708**). **National Express** runs daily coaches from London's Victoria Coach Station to Buchanan frequently throughout the day. Buses from London take approximately 8½ hours to reach Glasgow, though trip time varies depending on the number of stops en route. Scottish CityLink (✆ **08705/505-050**) also has frequent bus service to and from Edinburgh, with a one-way ticket costing £5 to £10 ($10–$20).

Contact National Express Enquiries at ✆ **0990/808-080** for more information.

By Car Glasgow is 65km (40 miles) west of Edinburgh, 356km (221 miles) north of Manchester, and 625km (388 miles) north of London. From England in the south, Glasgow is reached by M74, a continuation of M8 that goes right into the city, making an S curve. Call your hotel and find out what exit you should take. M8, another express motorway, links Glasgow and Edinburgh.

Tips A Bargain Ticket for First-Day Touring

For only £1.90 ($3.80), you can buy a Discovery Ticket allowing you to hop on and off buses and to be granted discounts for such select attractions as the House for an Art Lover. A pocket-size city map is also provided. The ticket is valid daily from 9:30am to midnight. It's available at tourist information centers, underground or bus stations, and certain attractions. For more information, check www.seeglasgow.com.

Other major routes into the city are A77 northeast from Prestwick and Ayr and A8 from the west (this becomes M8 around the port of Glasgow). A82 comes in from the northwest (the Highlands) on the north bank of the Clyde, and A80 also goes into the city. (This route is the southwestern section of M80 and M9 from Stirling.)

VISITOR INFORMATION

The **Greater Glasgow and Clyde Valley Tourist Board,** 11 George Sq. (✆ **0141/566-0800;** Underground: Buchanan St.), is the country's most helpful office. October to May, it's open Monday to Saturday 9am to 6pm; June, July, and September hours are daily 9am to 6pm; August daily 9am to 8pm.

GETTING AROUND The best way to explore Glasgow in on foot. The center is laid out on a grid system, which makes map reading relatively easy. However, many of the major attractions, such as the Burrell Collection, are in the surrounding environs, and for those you'll need to rely on public transportation. ***Remember:*** Cars drive on the left, so when you cross streets make certain to look both ways.

By Bus Glasgow is serviced by **First Glasgow Bus Company** (✆ **0141/423-6600**). The buses come in a variety of colors, the lighter ones (blue and yellow) tending to serve the Kelvin Central and Strathclyde rural areas, with the darker ones covering the urban zones. Service is frequent throughout the day, but after 11pm service is greatly curtailed. The major bus station is the **Buchanan Street Bus Station,** Killermont Street (call ✆ **0141/333-3708** for schedules), 2 blocks north of the Queen Station. Fares are £3 ($6), but you must have exact change. A special round-trip bus ticket for £2.50 ($5) operates after 9:30am.

By Underground Called the "Clockwork Orange" (from the vivid orange of the trains) by Glaswegians, a 15-stop subway services the city. Most Underground trains operate from these stops every 5 minutes, with longer intervals between trains on Sunday and at night. The fare is £1 ($2). Service is Monday to Saturday 6:30am to 10pm and Sunday 11am to 6pm. For more information, call ✆ **0141/332-6811.**

The **Travel Centre** at St. Enoch Square (✆ **0141/226-4826**), 2 blocks from the Central Station, is open Monday to Saturday 6:30am to 9:30pm and Sunday 7am to 9:30pm. Here you can buy a £10 ($20) **7-day season ticket,** valid for a week's access to all the tube lines of Glasgow, as well as access to all the trains serving routes between Central Station and the southern suburbs, or a £2.50 ($5) **discovery ticket,** covering unlimited rides for 1 day. For details, call ✆ **0141/332-7133.**

By Taxi Taxis are the same excellent ones found in Edinburgh or London. You can hail them on the street or call **TOA Taxis** at ✆ **0141/762-1011.** Fares are displayed on a meter next to the driver. When a taxi is available on the street, a taxi sign on the roof is lit a bright yellow. Most taxi trips within the city cost £5 to £7 ($10–$14). The taxi meter starts at £2 ($4) and increases by 25p (50¢) every 61m (200 ft.), with an extra 15p (30¢) assessed for each additional passenger after the first two. A £1.50 ($3) surcharge is imposed midnight to 6am. Tip at least 10% of the fare shown on the meter.

By Car Driving around Glasgow is a tricky business, even for locals. You're better off with public transportation. The city is a warren of one-way streets, and parking is expensive and difficult to find. Metered parking is available, but you'll need 20p (40¢) coins, entitling you to only 20 minutes. Be on the lookout for zealous traffic wardens issuing tickets. Some zones are marked PERMIT HOLDERS ONLY—your vehicle will be towed if you have no permit. A yellow line along the curb indicates no parking. Multistory parking lots (car parks), open 24 hours a day, are found at Anderston Cross and Cambridge, George, Mitchell, Oswald, and Waterloo streets.

If you want to rent a car to explore the countryside, it's best to arrange the rental before leaving home. But if you want to rent a car locally, most companies will accept your American or Canadian driver's license. All the major rental agencies are represented at the airport. In addition, **Avis Rent-a-Car** is at 64-80 Lancefield St. (✆ **870/608-6339;** bus no. 6 or 6A), and **Europcar** is at Kingston Bridge (✆ **0141/418-0040**; bus no. 38, 45, 48, or 57).

By Bicycle Parts of Glasgow are fine for biking, or you might want to rent a bike and explore the surrounding countryside. For what the Scots call cycle hire, go to a well-recommended shop about a kilometer (½ mile) west of the town center, just off Great Western Road: **West End Cycles,** 16–18 Chancellor St., in the Hillhead district (✆ **0141/357-1344;** Underground: Kelvin Bridge or Hillhead). It rents 21-speed trail and mountain bikes that conform well to the hilly terrain of Glasgow and its surroundings. The cost of £15 ($30) per day must be accompanied by a cash deposit of £100 ($200) or the imprint of a valid credit card. You can also rent weekly for £55 ($110).

FAST FACTS: Glasgow

American Express The office is at 115 Hope St. (✆ **0141/222-1401**; bus no. 38, 45, 48, or 57), open Monday to Friday 8:30am to 5:30pm and Saturday 9am to noon (June–July to 4pm Sat).

Business Hours Most **offices** are open Monday to Friday 9am to 5 or 5:30pm. Most **banks** are open Monday to Wednesday and Friday 9:30am to 4pm, Thursday 9:30am to 5:30pm, and Saturday 10am to 7pm. Opening times can vary slightly from bank to bank. **Shops** are generally open Monday to Saturday 10am to 5:30 or 6pm. On Thursday, stores remain open until 7pm.

Currency Exchange The tourist office and the American Express office (see above) will exchange most major foreign currencies. City-center banks operate *bureaux de change,* and nearly all will cash traveler's checks if you have the proper ID.

Dentists If you have an emergency, go to the Accident and Emergency Department of **Glasgow Dental Hospital & School NHS Trust,** 378 Sauchiehall St.

(✆ **0141/211-9600;** bus no. 57). Its hours are Monday to Friday 9:15am to 3:15pm and Sunday and public holidays 10:30am to noon.

Doctors The major hospital is the **Royal Infirmary,** 82–86 Castle St. (✆ **0141/211-4000;** bus no. 2 or 2A).

Emergencies Call ✆ **999** in an emergency to summon the police, an ambulance, or firefighters.

Internet Access You can send or read e-mail and surf the Net at **Yeeha Internet Café,** 48 West George St. (✆ **0141/332-6543**). The cost is £2.30 ($4.60) per hour.

Pharmacies The best is **Boots,** 200 Sauchiehall St. (✆ **0141/332-1925;** bus no. 57), open Monday to Saturday 8:30am to 6pm, and Sunday 11am to 5pm.

Post Office The main branch is at 47 St. Vincent's St. (✆ **0845/722-3344;** Underground: Buchanan St.; bus no. 6, 8, or 16). It's open Monday to Friday 8:30am to 5:45pm and Saturday 9am to 5pm.

WHERE TO STAY

It's important to reserve your room well in advance (say, 2 months beforehand), especially in late July and August. Glasgow's rates are generally higher than those in Edinburgh, but many business hotels offer bargains on weekends. The airport and the downtown branches of Glasgow's tourist office offer an **Advance Reservations Service**—with 2 weeks' notice, you can book your hotel by calling ✆ **0845/225-5121;** www.visitscotland.com. The cost for this service is £4 ($8).

CENTRAL GLASGOW

Very Expensive

Hilton Glasgow Hotel ★★★ Kids Glasgow's only government-rated five-star hotel occupies Scotland's tallest building (20 floors). Dignified and modern, it rises in the heart of the city's business district, near the northern end of Argyle Street and exit 18 (Charing Cross) of M8. The good-size guest rooms—plush and conservative, popular with both vacationers and business travelers—offer fine views as far as the Clyde dockyards. The executive floors enjoy the enhanced facilities of a semiprivate club. The youthful staff is alert and helpful.

1 William St., Glasgow G3 8HT. ✆ **800/445-8667** in the U.S. and Canada, or 0141/204-5555. Fax 0141/204-5004. www.glasgow.hilton.com. 331 units. £105–£190 ($210–$380) double; £280 ($560) suite. Weekend discounts often available. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking £5 ($10). Bus: 62. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; bar; indoor heated pool; exercise room; sauna; business center; salon; room service; massage; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, coffeemaker, hair dryer, trouser press, iron, safe, Wi-Fi.

Millennium Hotel Glasgow ★★★ Following a $5-million upgrade, this striking landmark, the original Copthorne from 1810, is now better than ever. It stands near Queen Street Station where trains depart for the north of Scotland. When its high-ceilinged public rooms were renovated, designers searched out antiques and glistening marble panels to give it the aura of the Victorian era.

Even though the building is old, it has been completely modernized with all the amenities and services you'd expect of such a highly rated hotel. The decor is lighter and more comfortable than ever before. Bedrooms are among the finest in Glasgow, with tasteful furnishings and first-class bathrooms with tub and shower. The best accommodations are at the front of the building facing George Square; the less desirable ones are those in the rear with no view.

George Sq., Glasgow G2 1DS. ✆ **0141/332-6711.** Fax 0141/332-4264. www.millenniumhotels.com. 117 units. £103–£315 ($206–$630) double; £215–£450 ($430–$900) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking £6.40 ($13). Underground: Buchanan St. **Amenities:** Restaurant; 2 bars; car rental; business center; room service; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, coffeemaker, hair dryer, trouser press, iron, safe, Wi-Fi.

Expensive

The ArtHouse (ABode Hotel Glasgow) ★★ *Finds* Acclaimed for its contemporary interior, this 1911 Edwardian building, 6 blocks northwest of Central Station, originally housed school board offices. Today, its conversion to a hotel is one of the most striking in Glasgow, with dramatic colors and textures blending in perfectly with the structure's older features. Commissioned art and period pieces evoke some of the original Edwardian splendor, although everything has been given a modern overlay with rich, bold tones. Sleek furniture and state-of-the-art bathrooms with a combination tub/shower are grace notes. **Michael Caines Restaurant** is one of the city's finest.

129 Bath St., Glasgow G2 2SY. ✆ **0141/221-6789.** Fax 0141/221-6777. www.abodehotels.co.uk. 65 units. £125–£225 ($250–$450) double. AE, MC, V. No parking. Underground: St. Enoch. **Amenities:** Restaurant; cafe; bar; salon; room service; laundry/dry cleaning service. *In room:* TV, beverage maker, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

Malmaison ★★ *Finds* This place beats out all competitors in having the best contemporary interior. The hip Malmaison opened in 1994 in a historically important building constructed in the 1830s as a Greek Orthodox church. In 1997, an annex with additional bedrooms was added, designed to preserve the architectural character of the church's exterior. Inside, few of the original details remain—the decor is sleek and ultramodern. Bedrooms vary in size from smallish to average but are chic and appointed with extras like CD players, specially commissioned art, and top-of-the-line toiletries.

278 W. George St., Glasgow G2 4LL. ✆ **0141/572-1000.** Fax 0141/572-1002. www.malmaison.com. 72 units. £75–£125 ($150–$250) double; from £290 ($580) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking nearby £10 ($20). Bus: 11. **Amenities:** Restaurant; 2 bars; indoor heated pool; exercise room; room service; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, coffeemaker, hair dryer, iron, safe, Wi-Fi.

Park Inn ★ *Finds* If you're looking for Victorian Glasgow, head elsewhere—nothing here is evocative of the city in any way. But if you gravitate to a minimalist Japanese style, check in at this trendy and exceedingly contemporary hotel close to the Buchanan Galleries Shopping Mall and the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall. A diverse medley of bedrooms in various shapes, sizes, and configurations awaits you, each with a certain flair. Nothing is overly adorned here, yet comfort and style, along with a mix of colors and textures, make every unit a winner. The smallest are the studios, but you can also rent a duplex, a theme suite, or a very large suite. Beautifully kept bathrooms contain such extras as power showers with body jets, with flowing and curving interiors. To emphasize the Asian theme all the more, Japanese body treatments are offered in the on-site **Oshi Spa.** Of the two on-site restaurants, one serves Mediterranean cuisine, the other an array of light fusion foods, including sushi.

2 Port Dundas Place, Glasgow G2 3LD. ✆ **0141/333-1500.** Fax 0141/333-5700. www.parkinn.com. 100 units. £89–£159 ($178–$318) double; £189–£220 ($378–$440) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. No parking. Underground: Queen St. Station. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; exercise room; spa; sauna; room service; laundry/dry cleaning service. *In room:* TV, minibar, coffeemaker, hair dryer, iron, Wi-Fi.

Moderate

Brunswick Hotel ★ In the Merchant City area, this structure stands in dramatic contrast between two old warehouses, each 5 centuries old. A trendy, minimalist design prevails, from the leather-walled restaurant to the sleek-looking bedrooms. The rooms are soothing and inviting with neutral tones, comfortable furnishings, and tiny but adequate bathrooms (most with both tub and shower). The most stunning accommodation is a three-bedroom penthouse nesting under a copper curved roof.

106–108 Brunswick St., Glasgow G1 1TF. ✆ **0141/552-0001.** Fax 0141/552-1551. www.brunswickhotel.co.uk. 18 units. £60–£100 ($120–$200) double. Rates include continental breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. No parking. Underground: Central or Queen St. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; room service; laundry/dry cleaning service; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* TV, coffeemaker, hair dryer, Wi-Fi.

The Kelvingrove Hotel This family-run hotel gives off a certain air of sophistication. All of their midsize rooms are well kept and decorated in an urbane fashion. Clean white is the color scheme for rooms, while the reception area is a little more adventurous with leather couches and hanging paintings. Being close to the city center, guests can easily get to top attractions like Kelvingrove Park and the Glasgow Museum of Transport. Staff members here are especially helpful when it comes to giving directions and will arrange for a taxi to take you wherever you're going.

944 Sauchiehall St., Glasgow G3 7TH. ✆ **0141/339-5011.** Fax 0141/339-6566. www.kelvingrove-hotel.co.uk. 22 units. £60–£80 ($120–$160) double; £75–£90 ($150–$180) triple; £85–£100 ($170–$200) quad. Rates include breakfast. MC, V. Free parking. Underground: Queen St. Station. **Amenities:** Dining room; business services; laundry/dry cleaning service. *In room:* TV, beverage maker, hair dryer, iron.

Inexpensive

Babbity Bowster *Value* In Merchant City, this small but delightful Robert Adam–designed hotel doubles as an art gallery. The guest rooms vary in size but are all attractive, with Victorian reproductions and white-lace bedding (some with shower only). The hotel attracts students and faculty from Strathclyde University and displays the work of Glaswegian artists (most are for sale). In summer, there's an outdoor barbecue area.

16–18 Blackfriars St., Glasgow G1 1PE. ✆ **0141/552-5055.** Fax 0141/552-7774. www.pubutopia.com. 5 units. £85 ($170) double. Rates include Scottish breakfast. AE, MC, V. Free parking. Underground: Buchanan St. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; room service. *In room:* TV, coffeemaker, hair dryer, no phone.

Kirkland House On a quiet street about a 10-minute walk from the Glasgow Art Gallery and Museum, the university, and the Scottish Exhibition Centre, the Kirkland is an impeccably maintained 1832 Victorian crescent house. A mix of antiques and reproductions is used in the large guest rooms, each equipped with a shower bathroom. The owners are keen admirers of American swing music and display a collection of 78 rpm gramophone records, old photographs, and pictures. All rooms are nonsmoking.

42 St. Vincent Crescent, Glasgow G3 8NG. ✆ **0141/248-3458.** Fax 0141/221-5174. www.kirkland.net43.co.uk. 5 units. £65 ($130) double. Rates include continental breakfast. No credit cards. Free parking. Underground: Exhibition Centre. *In room:* TV, coffeemaker, iron, hair dryer, no phone.

The Premier Inn Hotel *Value* Location, location, location is what sells this property. Two blocks west of the central rail depot, this contemporary seven-story hotel is surrounded by dreary commercial buildings but is a viable option in the center of Glasgow. Upstairs, the rooms are inviting—although they are small. Massively renovated, it is better than ever.

377 Argyle St. (opposite Cadogan Sq.), Glasgow G2 8LL. ✆ **0141/248-2355.** Fax 0141/221-1014. www.premierinn.com. 121 units. £112–£118 ($224–$236) double. AE, DC, MC, V. No parking. Underground: St. Enoch. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; room service; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* TV, hair dryer, iron.

THE WEST END

Very Expensive

Hotel du Vin ★★★ This hotel tops even perfection, beating out the Hilton and all others as the most glamorous, most elegant, and most tranquil hotel in Scotland. It also boasts a restaurant, **The Bistro,** that serves a finer cuisine than that found in any other major Glasgow restaurant. In the Hyndland district just west of the center, the house at no. 1 was built in 1880 and is now even more elegant than it was in its heyday. At the ring of the doorbell, a pair of Edwardian chambermaids with frilly aprons and dust bonnets appear to welcome you. Each of the eight guest rooms in this building is furnished in period style, with lots of luxurious accessories. The success of no. 1 led to the acquisition of nos. 2 and 3. The newer rooms have the same elegant touches and high price tags.

1 Devonshire Gardens, Glasgow G12 0UX. ✆ **0141/339-2001.** Fax 0141/337-1663. www.hotelduvin.co.uk. 38 units. £150–£265 ($300–$530) double; £315–£950 ($630–$1900) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. Underground: Hillhead. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; exercise room; room service; laundry/dry cleaning service. *In room:* TV, minibar, beverage maker, hair dryer, iron, safe.

Moderate

Manor Park Hotel This impressive West End town house was a private home when built in 1895, near the end of Victoria's reign. In 1947 it was converted into a hotel, and has been much improved and upgraded since that time. Owners Angus and Catherine MacDonald—true Scots to the core, both of whom speak Gaelic—offer grand Scottish hospitality. Naturally, they freely use the tartan when decorating. Their home is a blend of modern and traditional furnishings, including beechwood pieces set against a background of floral wallpaper. Each guest room comes with a neat little bathroom with either tub or shower.

28 Balshagray Dr., Glasgow G11 7DD. ✆ **0141/339-2143.** Fax 0141/339-5842. www.manorparkhotel.com. 10 units. £60 ($120) double. Rates include full breakfast. AE, MC, V. Free parking. Underground: Patrick Station. **Amenities:** Nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* TV, coffeemaker, hair dryer, trouser press.

The Town House ★★ *Value* This is one of the most upmarket and charming of the B&Bs of Glasgow. The stone-built Victorian terraced house has been successfully converted to receive guests to its tranquil little cul-de-sac tucked away in the West End, with a tennis club in the back and a rugby club to the front. As a curiosity note, there remains an air-raid shelter in the garden. The place justifiably wins praise from its many repeat visitors. The hospitality, the comfort level, and the atmosphere are first-rate. All the large bedrooms have been faithfully restored and fitted with very good furnishings, along with top-notch private bathrooms with showers. Each room is individually decorated, often with many traditional wooden pieces against a palette of blue or yellow. Guests meet in the living room, with its many books and coal-burning fireplace.

4 Hughenden Terrace, Glasgow G12 9XR. ✆ **0141/357-0862.** Fax 0141/339-9605. www.thetownhouseglasgow.com. 10 units. £75 ($150) double. Rates include Scottish breakfast. MC, V. Free parking. Underground: Hillhead. **Amenities:** Bar; room service; laundry. *In room:* TV, coffeemaker, hair dryer, iron, Wi-Fi.

Inexpensive

Albion Hotel This unpretentious hotel was formed by connecting two nearly identical beige-sandstone row houses in the heart of Glasgow's West End. It offers high-ceilinged guest rooms with modern furniture, some with both tub and shower. If your hotel needs are simple, you'll likely be happy here.

405 N. Woodside Rd., Glasgow G20 6NN. ☎ **0141/339-8620.** Fax 0141/334-8159. www.glasgowhotelsandapartments.co.uk. 20 units. £72 ($144) double without breakfast, £80 ($160) double with breakfast; £84 ($168) triple without breakfast, £100 ($200) triple with breakfast; £104 ($208) quad without breakfast, £120 ($240) quad with breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. Underground: Kelvin Bridge. **Amenities:** Bar; laundry service. *In room:* TV, fridge, coffeemaker, hair dryer, trouser press, iron, safe, Wi-Fi.

Ambassador Hotel ★ *Value* Across from the Botanic Garden, this small hotel in an Edwardian town house (ca. 1900) is one of the better B&Bs in Glasgow. The good-size guest rooms are furnished with modern pieces, each with a combination tub/shower. The hotel is well situated for exploring the West End, with several galleries and many good local restaurants nearby.

7 Kelvin Dr., Glasgow G20 8QJ. ☎ **01419/461018.** Fax 01419/455377. www.glasgowhotelsandapartments.co.uk. 16 units. £72 ($144) double without breakfast, £80 ($160) double with breakfast; £84 ($168) triple without breakfast, £96 ($192) triple with breakfast; £104 ($208) quad without breakfast, £120 ($240) quad with breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. Underground: Hillhead. **Amenities:** Bar; laundry service; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV, coffeemaker, hair dryer, trouser press, iron, safe, Wi-Fi.

WHERE TO DINE

CENTRAL GLASGOW

Expensive

Brian Maule at Chardon d'Or ★★★ FRENCH/SCOTTISH Ayr-born Brian Maule is hailed as one of the finest chefs in Scotland. He's earned that praise, having been elevated to head chef at the age of 24 at Le Gavroche, still hailed as London's best restaurant. Returning to his native roots north of the Border, he brought all the skill and finesse that has earned him fame in his homeland. In Glasgow he prepares his cuisine with a passionate commitment, searching everywhere to find the best possible regional ingredients. Each dish is a creation of his own original style, beginning with such starters as pressed chicken, ham, and foie gras terrine with roast beet and a shallot salsa, or warm wood pigeon salad with celeriac and apple rémoulade with a Madeira-laced dressing. We are dazzled by his light, full-flavored, and impertinently inventive mains, especially his roast filet of duck with a cabbage and potato cake or his chump of Scottish lamb with asparagus tips, and Puy green lentils flavored with sherry vinegar.

176 W. Regent St. ☎ **0141/248-3801.** Reservations required. Main courses £22–£25 ($44–$50). AE, MC, V. Mon–Fri noon–2:30pm and Mon–Sat 6–10pm. Underground: Buchanan St.

Buttery and Belfry ★ SCOTTISH/FRENCH The pews, pulpits, and stained glass that adorn this place are from a church in northern England. It's the only restaurant in Glasgow where you can contemplate Christ in Majesty while you enjoy a pint of ale. The kitchen produces daily specials like steak pie with roast potatoes; roast rack of lamb with rosemary, thyme, and caramelized shallots; and the Belfry mussel bowl with shallots. The cook is well known for making clever use of fresh Scottish produce.

In the basement of the Buttery, 652 Argyle St. ☎ **0141/221-8188.** Reservations recommended. Main courses £32–£39 ($64–$78). AE, MC, V. Mon–Fri noon–2pm and 6–10:30pm; Sat 6–10:30pm. Underground: St. Enoch.

Cameron's ★★ MODERN SCOTTISH This is the most glamorous restaurant in one of Glasgow's best hotels, outfitted like a baronial hunting lodge in the wilds of the

Highlands. The chef's conservative menu holds few surprises but is a deftly prepared celebration of market-fresh ingredients. Small slip-ups sometimes mar the effect of a dish or two, but we have always come away pleased. Your best bet when ordering is to stay Scottish. Go with whisky-cured Isle of Arran salmon, confit of Highland duck, or Firth of Lorne sea scallops—and that's only the appetizers. For a main course, try rack of Scottish lamb with a crust of whisky-steeped oatmeal and Arran mustard.

In the Glasgow Hilton Hotel, 1 William St. ✆ **0141/204-5511**. Reservations recommended. Main courses £17–£24 ($34–$48). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri noon–10pm; Sat 7–10pm. Bus: 6A, 16, or 62.

Rogano ★★ SEAFOOD Rogano boasts a perfectly preserved Art Deco interior from 1935, when Messrs. Rogers and Anderson combined their talents and names to create a restaurant that has hosted virtually every star of the British film industry. You can enjoy dinner amid lapis-lazuli clocks, etched mirrors, ceiling fans, semicircular banquettes, and potted palms. The menu always emphasizes seafood, such as halibut in champagne-and-oyster sauce and lobster grilled or thermidor.

A less expensive menu is offered down in the **Cafe Rogano,** where main courses begin at £8.95 ($18).

11 Exchange Place. ✆ **0141/248-4055.** Reservations recommended. Main courses £8.95–£30 ($18–$60); fixed-price lunch £18–£23 ($36–$46). AE, DC, MC, V. Restaurant daily noon–2:30pm and 6:30–10:30pm; cafe Mon–Thurs noon–11pm, Fri–Sat noon–midnight, Sun noon–11pm. Underground: Buchanan St.

Moderate

City Merchant SCOTTISH/INTERNATIONAL This cozy restaurant in the heart of the city offers friendly service and an extensive menu, and serves throughout the day. The cuisine is more reliable than stunning, but it delivers quite an array of well-prepared fresh food at a good price. Try the roast breast of duck, rack of lamb, or escalope of venison. Also tempting are the fast-seared scallops and classic smoked haddock. Some of the desserts evoke old-time Scotland, such as the clootie dumpling, made with flour, spices, and fried fruit and served with home-churned butter.

97–99 Candlebiggs. ✆ **0141/553-1577.** Reservations recommended. Main courses £8–£26 ($16–$52). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat noon–11pm; Sun 5–11pm. Underground: St. Enoch.

Ho Wong Restaurant ★ CANTONESE Jimmy Ho and David Wong opened this remote outpost of their Hong Kong establishment 2 blocks from the Central Station. It's now one of the city's finest Chinese restaurants. The menu features at least eight duck dishes, along with four types of fresh lobster and some sizzling platters.

82 York St. ✆ **0141/221-3550.** Reservations required. Main courses £11–£19 ($22–$38); fixed-price 2-course lunch £9.50 ($19); fixed-price 5-course banquet £29 ($58). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat noon–2pm and 6–11:30pm; Sun 6–11:30pm. Underground: Central Station.

Two Fat Ladies ★ MODERN BRITISH/SEAFOOD This ranks high on the list of everybody's favorite restaurants, especially for irreverent diners who appreciate the unexpected. The "Two Fat Ladies" are its street number—a nickname for the number 88 in Scotland's church-sponsored bingo games. The restaurant packs in crowds for specialties like pan-fried squid salad with coriander-flavored yogurt sauce, grilled chicken salad with apple chutney, and charcoal-grilled king scallops with tomato-basil sauce. The best dessert is the Pavlova (a chewy meringue) with summer berries and Drambuie sauce.

88 Dumbarton Rd. ✆ **0141/339-1944.** Reservations recommended. Fixed-price lunch £13 ($26) 3-courses; fixed-price pretheater supper (6–7pm) £11–£13 ($22–$26); main courses £12–£18 ($24–$36). MC, V. Tues–Thurs noon–2pm; Fri–Sat 6–10pm. Bus: 16, 42, or 57.

Inexpensive

Cafe Gandolfi Kids SCOTTISH/FRENCH Many students and young professionals will tell you this popular place in Merchant City is their favorite "caff" (British slang for a small cafe)—you may sometimes have to wait for a table. A remake of a Victorian pub, it boasts rustic wooden floors, benches, and stools. If you don't fill up on soups and salads, try smoked venison with gratin dauphinois or smoked pheasant with an onion tartlet in winter. Vegetarians will also find solace here.

64 Albion St. ✆ **0141/552-6813.** Reservations recommended on weekends. Main courses £8–£13 ($16–$26). MC, V. Mon–Sat 11am–midnight; Sun noon–11pm. Underground: St. Enoch/Cannon St.

Sloans SCOTTISH The city's oldest bar and restaurant, just off Argyll Street and Buchanan Street, reopened for business in 2007 after a complete restoration. The new four-story landmark building contains a bistro downstairs and a more formal restaurant upstairs. Launched as a coffee house in 1797, Sloans became famous for its courtyard cockfights. Many architectural details remain from its past, including rare acid-etched glass or ceilings decorated with plaster moldings. The Bistro is ideal for lunch, serving good pub grub such as lemon and thyme roast chicken or smoked penne with chicken and roast pine nuts. Steak burgers and fish and chips are always featured. The more formal restaurant features roast rump of lamb with butternut squash or confit of duck leg with parsnip puree. Some of the dishes would be familiar to Mary, Queen of Scots.

62 Argyle Arcade, 108 Argyle St. ✆ **0141/221-8886.** Reservations not needed. Restaurant main courses £10–£12 ($20–$24); bistro main courses £6.95–£7.95 ($14–$16). Daily 11am–10pm for food; daily 11am–midnight for drinks. Underground: Eunoch.

THE WEST END

Expensive

Ubiquitous Chip ★ SCOTTISH This restaurant is set inside the rough-textured stone walls of a former stable; its glass-covered courtyard boasts masses of climbing vines. Upstairs is a pub where simple platters are served with pints of lager and drams of whisky; these may include chicken, leek, and white-wine casserole or finnan haddies with bacon (but no fish and chips, as you might think from the name). The bistro-style restaurant might feature free-range chicken, shellfish with crispy seaweed snaps, or wild rabbit. Vegetarians are catered to at both places.

12 Ashton Lane, off Byres Rd. ✆ **0141/334-5007.** Reservations recommended. Restaurant fixed-price lunch £23 ($46) for 2 courses, £29 ($58) for 3 courses; fixed-price dinner £35 ($70) for 2 courses, £40 ($80) for 3 courses; bar meals £6–£15 ($12–$30) at lunch, £8–£17 ($16–$34) at dinner. AE, DC, MC, V. Restaurant Mon–Sat noon–2:30pm, daily 5:30–11pm; bar Sun 1–11pm. Underground: Hillhead.

Moderate

Stravaigin ★★ GLOBAL We've never seen any restaurant like this in Glasgow. The chef-owner truly roams the globe for inspiration. Although some of his ideas might come from as far away as China or the Caribbean, he also knows how to use the finest of the regional bounty of Scotland. Expect concoctions such as marinated venison filet, served with butter-bean and parsley mash, roast baby eggplant, and pomegranate sauce. Rabbit is perfectly cooked and served with tomato essence, while mullet is roasted and served with crisp Parmesan polenta, caponata, and roast pimento sauce. Many locals finish with a selection of Scottish cheeses with red-grape and hazelnut chutney.

28 Gibson St., Hillhead. ✆ **0141/334-2665.** Reservations required. Fixed-price menus (lunch or dinner) £24–£30 ($48–$60). AE, DC, MC, V. Fri–Sat noon–2:30pm; Tues–Sun 5–11:30pm. Underground: Kelvinbridge.

Inexpensive

Ashoka West End ★ INDIAN/PUNJABI This is a culinary landmark in Glasgow, serving the finest cuisine of the subcontinent. Many generations of Glaswegians learned to "eat Indian" at this very restaurant. The eclectic decor features rugs, brass objects, murals, and greenery. The dishes are full of flavor and arrive at your table with fragrant and most pleasing aromas. You might launch your repast with *pakora,* deep-fried chicken, mushrooms, or fish fritters. From here you can order *jalandhri,* a potent fusion of ginger, garlic, onions, peppers, coconut cream, and fresh herbs that can be served with a choice of chicken, lamb, or mixed vegetables. Most dishes are priced at the lower end of the scale.

1284 Argyle St. ✆ **0141/389-3371.** Reservations required. Main courses £8–£15 ($16–$30). AE, DC, MC, V. Sun–Thurs 4pm–12:30am; Fri noon–1am; Sat 5pm–1am; Wed–Thurs noon–2pm. Underground: Kelvin Hall.

SEEING THE SIGHTS

Burrell Collection ★★★ This museum houses the mind-boggling treasures left to Glasgow by Sir William Burrell, a wealthy ship owner who had a lifelong passion for art. Burrell started collecting when he was 14, his passion continuing until 1958 when he died at the age of 96. His tastes were eclectic: Chinese ceramics, French paintings from the 1800s, tapestries, stained-glass windows from churches, even stone doorways from the Middle Ages. It is said that the collector "liked about everything," including one of the very few original bronze casts of Rodin's *Thinker.* He did find some art to his distaste, including avant-garde works ("Monet was just too impressionistic"). You can see a vast aggregation of furniture, textiles, ceramics, stained glass, silver, art objects, and pictures in the dining room, hall, and drawing room reconstructed from Sir William's home, Hutton Castle at Berwick-upon-Tweed. Ancient artifacts, Asian art, and European decorative arts and paintings are featured. There is a restaurant on-site, and you can roam through the surrounding park, 5km (3 miles) south of Glasgow Bridge.

Pollok Country Park, 2060 Pollokshaws Rd. ✆ **0141/287-2550.** www.glasgowmuseums.com. Free admission. Mon and Wed–Sat 10am–5pm; Sun 11am–5pm. Closed Jan 1 and Dec 25. Bus: 45, 48, or 57.

Cathedral of St. Kentigern ★★★ Also known as St. Mungo's, this cathedral was consecrated in 1136, burned down in 1192, and was rebuilt soon after; the Laigh Kirk (lower church), whose vaulted crypt is said to be the finest in Europe, remains to this day. Visit the tomb of St. Mungo in the crypt, where a light always burns. The edifice is mainland Scotland's only complete medieval cathedral from the 12th and 13th centuries. It was once a place of pilgrimage, but 16th-century zeal purged it of all monuments of idolatry.

Highlights of the interior include the 1400s nave, with a stone screen (unique in Scotland) showing the seven deadly sins. Both the choir and the lower church are in the mid-1200s First Pointed style. The church, though a bit austere, is filled with intricate details left by long-ago craftspeople—note the tinctured bosses of the ambulatory vaulting in the back of the main altar. The lower church, reached via a set of steps north of the pulpit, is where Gothic reigns supreme, with an array of pointed arches and piers. Seek out, in particular, the **Chapel of the Knights,** with its intricate net vaulting and bosses carved with fine detailing. The **Blacader Aisle** projecting from the south transept was the latest addition, a two-story extension of which only the lower part was completed in the late Gothic style.

For the best view of the cathedral, cross the Bridge of Sighs into the **Glasgow Necropolis** (✆ **0141/552-3145;** bus no. 2 or 27), the graveyard containing almost every type of architecture in the world. Built on a rocky hill and dominated by a statue of John Knox, this fascinating graveyard was opened in 1832. It is open daily from 8am to 4:30pm.

Cathedral Sq., Castle St. ✆ **0141/552-6891.** Free admission. Apr–Sept Mon–Sat 9:30am–6pm, Sun 2–5pm; Oct–Mar Mon–Sat 9:30am–4pm, Sun 1–4pm. Sun services at 11am and 6:30pm. Underground: Queen St. Station.

Glasgow Science Centre ★★★ *Kids* Opened in 2001, this is Britain's most successful millennium project. It lies in the heart of the city, on the banks of the River Clyde and opposite the Scottish Exhibition and Conference Centre. The center is the focal point of Glasgow's drive to become one of Europe's major high-tech locales. Situated in three landmark buildings, the center features the first titanium-clad structures in the United Kingdom, including Scotland's only Space Theatre. Other features include innovative laboratories, multimedia and science theaters, interactive exhibits, and the only 360-degree rotating tower in the world. The overall theme is that of the challenges facing Scotland in the 21st century. The center is also a showcase depicting Glasgow's contribution to science and technology in the past, present, and future.

Children will love the hands-on activities. They'll be able to make their own soundtrack and animation, do a 3-D head scan and rearrange their own features, or star in their own digital video. At special shows and workshops, you'll see a glass smashed by sound, "catch" shadows, experience a million volts of indoor lighting, see liquid nitrogen, view bacteria that lurk on you, and build a lie detector.

The IMAX Theatre, a first for Glasgow and Scotland, uses a film with a frame size 10 times larger than the standard 35mm film. It projects a picture that's the size of a five-story tenement building onto the screen. There are some 150 films currently available that take viewers into all kinds of experiences—perhaps to explore the hidden secrets of natural wonders like the Grand Canyon or even the inside of an atom, and certainly the magic of space. The theater charges separate admission: £6.95 ($14) for adults or £4.95 ($9.90) for students and children. It's open daily; call ahead or check website for film times.

50 P50 Pacific Quay. ✆ **0871/540-1000.** www.gsc.org.uk. Admission £7 ($14) adults, £5 ($10) students and seniors, £22 ($44) family pass (2 adults and 2 children). Nov–Mar Tues–Sun 10am–6pm (open on some Mon during this period; check the website); Apr–Oct daily 10am–6pm. Underground: Buchan St. Station to Cessnock, from which there's a 10-min. walk.

Hunterian Art Gallery ★★ This gallery owns the artistic estate of James McNeill Whistler, with some 60 of his paintings bestowed by his sister-in-law. It also boasts a Charles Rennie Mackintosh collection, including the architect's home (with his own furniture) on three levels, decorated in the original style. The main gallery exhibits 17th- and 18th-century paintings (Rembrandt to Rubens) and 19th- and 20th-century Scottish works. Temporary exhibits, selected from Scotland's largest collection of prints, are presented in the print gallery, which also houses a permanent display of printmaking techniques.

University of Glasgow, 22 Hillhead St. ✆ **0141/330-5431.** www.hunterian.gla.ac.uk. Free admission. Mon–Sat 9:30am–5pm (Mackintosh House closed 12:30–1:30pm). Closed Jan 1, July 21, Sept 29, and Dec 25. Underground: Hillhead.

Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum ★★★ Neil MacGregor, director of London's National Gallery, hailed this Glasgow landmark "one of the greatest civic collections in Europe." Long closed for restoration, the galleries traditionally attract one million visitors annually, making it the most visited museum in the United Kingdom outside London. You can view a wide range of exhibits, not only fine and decorative arts but 300-million-year-old fossils of marine life as well as one of the world's greatest collections of arms and armour.

The museum displays such important works as Salvador Dalí's controversial painting, *Christ of St. John of the Cross.* Also on view is a superb collection of Dutch and Italian Old Masters and French 19th-century paintings, including Giorgione's *Adultress Brought Before Christ,* Rembrandt's *Man in Armor,* Millet's *Going to Work,* and Derain's *Blackfriars.* Scottish painting is well represented from the 17th century to the present. One of the gallery's major paintings is *Whistler's Arrangement in Grey and Black no. 2: Portrait of Thomas Carlyle,* the first Whistler to be hung in a British gallery. The artist took great pride in his Scottish background. The James McNeill Whistler collection includes the contents of his studio.

The museum also displays outstanding ethnography collections featuring artifacts of the Eskimo and North Indian Americans, Africa, and Oceania, as well as a large section devoted to natural history. Furniture and other decorative items created by Charles Rennie Mackintosh are also on display.

Argyle St. and Byros Rd. ☎ **0141/276-9599.** www.glasgowmuseums.com. Free admission. Mon–Thurs and Sat 10am–5pm; Fri–Sun 11am–5pm. Underground: Kelvin Hall.

McLellan Galleries ★ *Finds* The McLellan is the repository of an impressive collection of Italian works from the 16th and 17th centuries, and it is also a showcase for modern art. Many of its temporary exhibits on loan from the Glasgow Art Gallery include a superb collection of Dutch and Italian Old Masters, featuring Giorgione and Rembrandt. Such international artists as Botticelli are also represented. Expect a rotating series of art.

270 Sauchiehall St. ☎ **0141/353-4500.** www.glasgowmuseums.com. Free admission. Mon–Thurs and Sat 10am–5pm; Fri and Sun 11am–5pm. Underground: Cowcaddens and Buchanan St.

Museum of Transport ★★ This museum contains a fascinating collection of all forms of transportation and related technology. Displays include a simulated 1938 Glasgow street with period shop fronts, appropriate vehicles, and a reconstruction of one of the Glasgow Underground stations. The superb and varied ship models in the Clyde Room reflect the significance of Glasgow and the River Clyde as one of the world's foremost areas of shipbuilding and engineering.

1 Bunhouse Rd., Kelvin Hall. ☎ **0141/287-2720.** www.glasgowmuseums.com. Free admission. Mon–Thurs and Sat 10am–5pm; Sun and Fri 11am–5pm. Closed Jan 1 and Dec 25. Underground: Kelvin Hall.

St. Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art ★ *Finds* Opened in 1993, this eclectic and often controversial museum lies close to the Cathedral of St. Kentigern. It embraces a collection that spans the centuries and highlights various religious groups that have lived in Glasgow and the surrounding area over the years. The museum is hailed as unique in the world in that Buddha, Ganesha, Shiva, and all the "gang" are represented. Also on display is the Chinese robe worn in the film *The Last Emperor,* by Bernardo Bertolucci. In back of the museum is the U.K.'s only Japanese Zen garden.

2 Castle St. ☎ **141/553-2557.** Free admission. Mon–Thurs and Sat 10am–5pm; Fri and Sun 11am–5pm. Bus: 11, 36, 37, 38, 42, 89, or 138.

The Tall Ship at Glasgow Harbour Here's a rare chance to explore one of the last remaining Clyde-built tall ships, the SV *Glenlee,* built in 1896, a vessel that circumnavigated Cape Horn 15 times. Restored in 1999, *Glenlee* is one of only five Clyde-built sailing ships that remain afloat. You can explore the ship and take in an onboard exhibition detailing the vessel's cargo-trading history. On the dock, the **Victorian Pumphouse Centre** contains a restaurant and a nautical gift shop along with exhibition galleries.

100 Stobcross Rd. ✆ **0141/222-2513.** www.thetallship.com. Admission £4.95 ($9.90) adults, £3.75 ($7.50) seniors, students, and children. 1 free child admission with paying adult. Mar–Oct daily 10am–5pm; Nov–Feb daily 10am–4pm. Take the low-level train from Glasgow Central to Finnieston/SECC.

ORGANIZED TOURS

The ***Waverley*** is the world's last seagoing paddle steamer, and from the last week of June to the end of August (depending on weather conditions), the Paddle Steamer Preservation Society conducts 1-day trips from Anderston Quay in Glasgow to historic and scenic places beyond the Firth of Clyde. As you sail along, you can take in what were once vast shipyards, turning out more than half the earth's tonnage of oceangoing liners. You're welcome to bring your own sandwiches for a picnic aboard, or you can enjoy lunch in the Waverley Restaurant. Boat tours cost £8.95 to £35 ($18–$70). For details, contact **Waverley Excursions,** Waverley Terminal, Anderston Quay, Broomielaw (✆ **0141/243-2224;** www.waverleyexcursions.co.uk).

There's also regular ferry service run by **Caledonian MacBrayne** (✆ **0870/565-0000**) in Gourock on the banks of the Clyde. The ferry stands close to the station in Gourock, connected to Glasgow Central Station by trains that leave every hour and take 30 to 45 minutes. The ferry service, which can take cars, runs every hour to the attractive seaside resort of Dunoon at the mouth of the Clyde. The journey takes about 20 minutes, and ferries run every hour from 6:20am to 8:20pm, April to October 16; in winter the service is less frequent and visitors are advised to check beforehand as it's liable to change. The round-trip costs £5.60 ($11) per person.

The best Glasgow tours are run by **Scotguide Tourist Services (City Sighting Glasgow),** operated from 153 Queen St. at George Square, opposite the City Chambers (✆ **0141/204-0444;** Underground: Buchanan St.). April 1 to October 31, departures are every 15 minutes from 9:30am to 4pm (Nov 1–Mar 31 every 30 min.). The price is £9 ($18) adults, £7 ($14) students and seniors, and £3 ($6) children ages 5 to 14, free 4 and under.

If you prefer to stay on terra firma, **Mercat Walks** (✆ **0141/586-5378**) focus on a ghostly, ghoulish Glasgow. Historians re-create macabre Glasgow—a parade of goons like hangmen, ghosts, murderers, and body snatchers. Tours leave from the tourist information center on George Square at 7 and 8pm daily, costing £9 ($18) for adults, £7 ($14) for seniors, students and children, with a family ticket going for £23 ($46). The tours take 1½ hours.

THE SHOPPING SCENE

A warren of tiny shops stands in a slightly claustrophobic cluster called **Victorian Village,** 93 W. Regent St. (✆ **0141/332-9808;** bus no. 23, 38, 45, 48, or 57). Much of the merchandise isn't particularly noteworthy, but you can find many exceptional pieces if you're willing to go hunting. Several of the owners stock reasonably priced 19th-century articles; others sell old jewelry and clothing, a helter-skelter of artifacts.

The work of some of the finest craftspeople in Scotland is highlighted at **Scottish Craft Centre** ★★, Princes Square Mall, 48 Buchanan St. (✆ **0141/248-2885;** Underground: St. Enoch; bus no. 9, 12, 44, 66, or 75). Most of the items are exquisitely crafted in porcelain, metal, glass, and wood. You can select from such items as metal candle holders, hand-carved wooden boxes, exquisite glasses and china, porcelain vases, and other choice items.

Frasers department store, Buchanan Street (✆ **0141/204-3182;** Underground: St. Enoch), is Glasgow's version of Harrods. A soaring Victorian-era glass arcade rises four stories, and inside you'll find everything from clothing to Oriental rugs, crystal to handmade local artifacts of all kinds.

The tiny **Mackintosh Shop** ★★★, 167 Renfrew St. (✆ **0141/353-4500;** Underground: Queen St.), prides itself on its stock of books, cards, stationery, coffee and beer mugs, glassware, and sterling-and-enamel jewelry created from the original designs of Mackintosh. The Mackintosh Shop is in the foyer of the Glasgow School of Art.

Drop in the **National Trust for Scotland Shop** ★, Hutcheson's Hall, 158 Ingram St. (✆ **0141/552-8391;** Underground: Buchanan St.), for maps, calendars, postcards, pictures, dish towels, and kitchenware. Some of the crockery is in Mackintosh-design styles.

GLASGOW AFTER DARK

OPERA & CLASSICAL MUSIC

The **Theatre Royal,** Hope Street and Cowcaddens Road (✆ **0141/332-9000;** Underground: Cowcaddens; bus no. 23, 48, or 57), is the home of the **Scottish Opera** (✆ **0141/248-4567**) as well as of the **Scottish Ballet** (✆ **0141/331-2931**). The theater also hosts visiting companies from around the world. Called "the most beautiful opera theatre in the kingdom" by the *Daily Telegraph,* it offers splendid Victorian Italian Renaissance plasterwork, glittering chandeliers, and 1,547 comfortable seats, plus spacious bars and buffets on all four levels. However, it's not the decor but the ambitious repertoire that attracts operagoers. Ballet tickets run £14 to £30 ($28–$60) and opera tickets cost £8.50 to £58 ($17–$116). On performance days, the box office is open Monday to Saturday 10am to 8pm; on nonperformance days, hours are Monday to Saturday 10am to 6pm.

In winter, the **Royal Scottish National Orchestra** (✆ **0141/2263-8681**) offers Saturday-evening concerts at the **Glasgow Royal Concert Hall,** 2 Sauchiehall St. (box office ✆ **0141/353-8000;** Underground: Buchanan St.). The **BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra** presents Friday-evening concerts at the **BBC Broadcasting House,** Queen Margaret Drive (Underground: St. Enoch), or at **City Halls,** Albion Street (Underground: St. Enoch). In summer, the Scottish National Orchestra has a short Promenade season (dates and venues are announced in the papers). Tickets can only be purchased at individual venues.

THEATER

Although hardly competition for London, Glasgow's theater scene is certainly the equal of Edinburgh's. Young Scottish playwrights often make their debuts here, and you're likely to see anything from Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* to Wilde's *Salome* to *Romeo and Juliet* done in Edwardian dress.

The prime symbol of Glasgow's verve remains the **Citizens Theatre,** Gorbals and Ballater streets (✆ **0141/429-0022;** www.citz.co.uk; bus no. 12 or 66), founded after World War II by James Bridie, a famous Glaswegian whose plays are still produced on occasion there. It's home to a repertory company, with tickets at £5 to £20 ($10–$40). The box office hours are Monday 10am to 6pm and Tuesday to Saturday 10am to 9pm. The company is usually closed June to the first week in August.

THE CLUB & MUSIC SCENE

Barrowland, Gallowgate 244 (✆ **0141/552-4601;** Underground: St. Enoch; bus no. 61 or 62), seats 2,000 and is open only on nights shows are booked. July and August are the quiet months, as most shows are geared toward a student audience. The cover runs highest when the hall hosts popular bands like the Proclaimers or the Black Rebel Motorcycle Club and ranges from £10 to £25 ($20–$50).

The 13th Note, 50–60 King St. (✆ **0141/553-1638;** bus no. 21, 23, or 38), has moved away from jazz in the past couple of years and now books mainly heavy rock bands on Wednesday and Thursday nights, country on Monday. On Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, the night is dedicated to ambient and alternative music. Open Sunday and Wednesday to Thursday from 11pm to 3am, Friday and Saturday from 9pm to 3am. Cover charge ranges from £5 to £18 ($10–$36).

Most of the crowd at **Fury Murry's,** 96 Maxwell St. (✆ **0141/221-6511;** Underground: St. Enoch), is made up of students looking for nothing more complicated than a good, sometimes rowdy, time listening to disco music that's upbeat but not ultratrendy. It's situated in a cellar, a 2-minute walk from the very central St. Enoch Shopping Centre. It has a very busy bar, a dance floor, and ample opportunities to meet the best and brightest in Scotland's university system. Jeans and T-shirts are the right garb. It's open Thursday to Sunday from 11pm to 3am. Thursday and Friday feature live bands, and other nights are strictly for dancing or can be reserved for private parties. Cover charges range from £5 to £10 ($10–$20).

FAVORITE PUBS

The amiably battered **Bon Accord,** 153 North St. (✆ **0141/248-4427;** bus no. 6, 8, or 16), is a longtime favorite. It has an array of hand-pumps—a dozen devoted to real British ales, the rest to beers and stouts from the Czech Republic, Belgium, Germany, Ireland, and Holland. The pub is likely to satisfy your taste in malt whisky as well, and offers affordable bar snacks. It's open Monday to Saturday from noon to midnight, Sunday from noon to 11pm.

The **Cask and Still,** 154 Hope St. (✆ **0141/333-0980;** bus no. 21, 23, or 38), is the best place for sampling malt whisky. You can taste from a selection of more than 350 single malts, at a variety of strengths (perhaps not on the same night) and maturities. Many prefer the malt whisky that has been aged in a sherry cask. There's good bar food at lunch, including cold-meat salads and sandwiches. It's open Monday to Thursday noon to 11pm, Friday and Saturday noon to midnight.

Opposite the Central Station, the **Corn Exchange,** 88 Gordon St. (✆ **0141/248-5380;** bus no. 21, 23, or 38), was really the Corn Exchange in the mid–19th century but is now one of Glasgow's most popular pubs. Amid dark paneling and high ceilings, you can enjoy a pint of lager until 11pm Sunday to Wednesday and until midnight Thursday to Saturday. Affordable pub grub is served daily noon to 9pm.

3 Tayside & Grampian

Tayside and Grampian, two history-rich sections in northeast Scotland, offer a vast array of sightseeing in what are relatively small areas. Tayside, for example, is about 137km (85 miles) east to west, and some 97km (60 miles) south to north. The two regions share the North Sea coast between the Firth of Tay in the south and the Firth of Moray farther north. The so-called Highland Line separating the Lowlands in the south from the Highlands in the north crosses both regions. The Grampians, the highest mountain range in Scotland, are to the west of this line.

Carved out of the old counties of Perth and Angus, **Tayside** is named for its major river, the 190km (118-mile) Tay. The region is easy to explore, and its tributaries and dozens of lochs and Highland streams are among the best salmon and trout waters in Europe. One of the loveliest regions of Scotland, Tayside is filled with heather-clad Highland hills, long blue lochs under tree-lined banks, and miles and miles of walking trails. Tayside provided the backdrop for many novels by Sir Walter Scott, including *The Fair Maid of Perth, Waverley,* and *The Abbot.* Its golf courses are world famous, especially the trio of 18-hole courses at Gleneagles.

The **Grampian** region has Braemar, site of the most famous of the Highland gatherings. The queen herself comes here to holiday at Balmoral Castle, her private residence, a tradition dating back to the days of Queen Victoria and her consort, Prince Albert. As you journey on the scenic roads of Scotland's northeast, you'll pass heather-covered moorland and peaty lochs, wood glens and salmon-filled rivers, granite-stone villages and ancient castles, and fishing harbors as well as North Sea beach resorts.

GLENEAGLES

This famous golfing center and sports complex is on a moor between Strathearn and Strath Allan. Gleneagles has three **18-hole golf courses:** King's Course, the longest one; Queen's Course, next in length; and the PGA Centenary Course, the newest of the trio. They're among the best in Scotland, and the sports complex is one of the best equipped in Europe.

ESSENTIALS

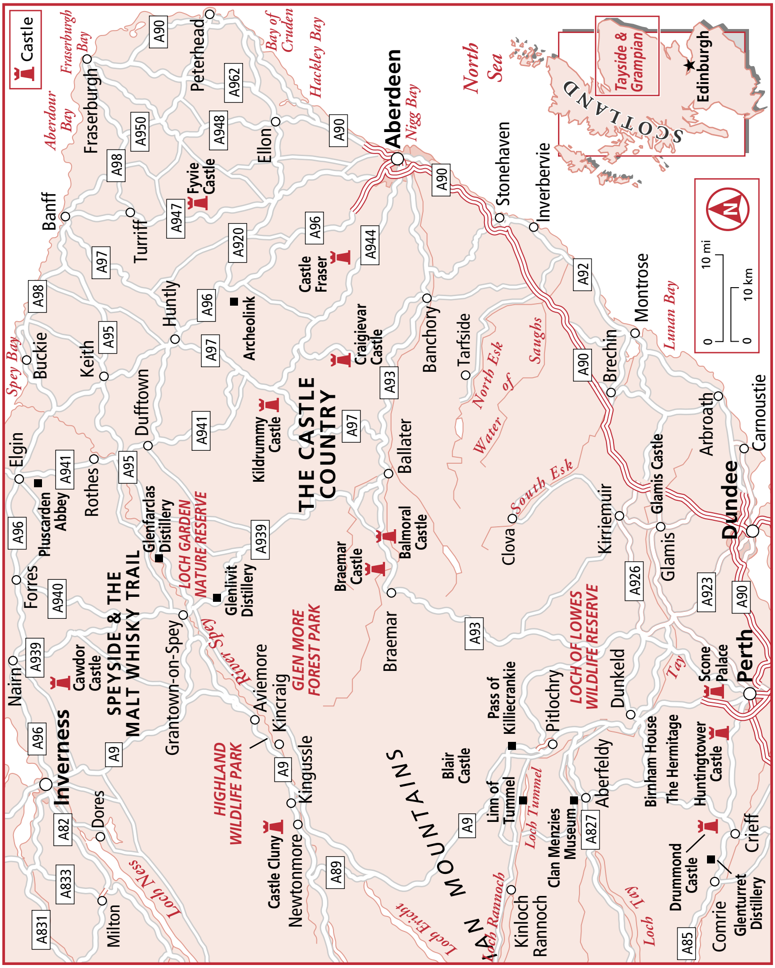
GETTING THERE **By Train** The 15-minute ride from Perth costs £6 ($12). The trip from Edinburgh takes 1 hour and 20 minutes and costs £15 ($30). For information, call ✆ **08457/484-950** or visit **www.nationalrail.co.uk**.

By Bus Frequent buses arrive from both Glasgow, costing £22 to £25 ($44–$50) round-trip, and from Edinburgh, costing £21 to £26 ($42–$52)round-trip. There are also frequent arrivals from Inverness, a round-trip costing £11 to £15 ($22–$30). For bus schedules in Aberdeen, call ✆ **01224/212-266.**

By Car Gleneagles is on A-9, about halfway between Perth and Stirling, a short distance from the village of Auchterarder. It lies 88km (55 miles) from Edinburgh and 72km (45 miles) from Glasgow.

VISITOR INFORMATION The **Aberdeen Tourist Information Centre** is at 24-28 Exchange St., Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire AB11 6PH (✆ **01224/288-828;** www.agtb.org). July and August, it's open Monday to Friday 9am to 7pm, Saturday 9am to 5pm, and Sunday 10am to 4pm; April to June and September to March, hours are Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm and Saturday 10am to 2pm.

Tayside & Grampian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Castle Fraser
Craigievar Castle
Banchory
Tarfside
Stonehaven
Inverbervie
Elgin
Pluscarden Abbey
Rothes
Dufftown
Kildrummy Castle
THE CASTLE COUNTRY
Ballater
North Esk
Water of Saughs
Forres
Glenfarclas Distillery
LOCH GARDEN NATURE RESERVE
Glenlivit Distillery
Braemar Castle
Balmoral Castle
Braemar
Clova
South Esk
Kirriemuir
Glamis Castle
Glamis
Brechin
Montrose
Lunan Bay
Arbroath
Carnoustie
Dundee
Nairn
Cawdor Castle
SPEYSIDE & THE MALT WHISKY TRAIL
Grantown-on-Spey
River Spey
Aviemore
Kincraig
GLEN MORE FOREST PARK
Inverness
Dores
HIGHLAND WILDLIFE PARK
Kingussie
Newtonmore
Castle Cluny
MOUNTAINS
Blair Castle
Pass of Killiecrankie
Pitlochry
LOCH OF LOWES WILDLIFE RESERVE
Dunkeld
Tay
Scone Palace
Perth
Linn of Tummel
Loch Tummel
Clan Menzies Museum
Aberfeldy
Birnham House
The Hermitage
Huntingtower Castle
Drummond Castle
Crieff
Glenturret Distillery
Comrie
Loch Tay
Kinloch Rannoch
Loch Rannoch
Loch Ericht
Milton
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WHERE TO STAY & DINE

Gleneagles Hotel ★★★ Britain's greatest golf hotel stands on its own 344-hectare (850-acre) estate. When it was built in isolated grandeur in 1924, it was Scotland's only five-star hotel. It's a true resort and has tried to keep ahead of the times by offering spa treatments. Rooms vary greatly in size. The best and most spacious choices are in the 60- to 90-block series; these have recently been refurbished. The less desirable rooms, called courtyard units, are a bit small and equipped with shower-only bathrooms. A more modern building has been added, with 54 more rooms. As for cuisine, the golfers rarely complain, but no one dines here to collect recipes.

Auchterarder PH3 1NF. ✆ **1-866-881-9525** in the U.S., or 01764/662-231. Fax 01764/662-134. www.gleneagles.com. 269 units. £385–£540 ($770–$1,080) double; from £900 ($1,800) suite. Rates include Scottish breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. Take A9 2.5km (1½ miles) southwest of Auchterarder. **Amenities:** 4 restaurants; 4 bars;

indoor heated pool; outdoor hot pool; lap pool; 3 golf courses; tennis court; squash court; health club; spa; Jacuzzi; sauna; complimentary bike use; salon; room service; massage; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service; equestrian center; falconry school; hunting and fishing excursions; Turkish bath; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* TV, minibar, coffeemaker, hair dryer, trouser press, iron, safe, Wi-Fi.

CRIEFF

From Perth, 70km (43 miles) north of Edinburgh, head west on A-85 for 29km (18 miles) to Crieff. At the edge of the Perthshire Highlands, with good fishing and golf, Crieff makes a pleasant stopover. This small burgh was the seat of the court of the earls of Strathearn until 1747, and the gallows in its marketplace was once used to execute Highland cattle rustlers.

You can take a "day trail" into **Strathearn,** the valley of the River Earn, the very center of Scotland. Here Highland mountains meet gentle Lowland slopes, and moorland mingles with rich green pastures. North of Crieff, the road to Aberfeldy passes through the narrow pass of the **Sma' Glen,** a famous spot of beauty, with hills rising on either side to 600m (1,970 ft.).

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **By Train** There's no direct service. The nearest rail stations are at Gleneagles, 14km (8⅔ miles) away, and at Perth, 29km (18 miles) away. Call ✆ **08457/484-950** for information and schedules.

By Bus Once you arrive in Perth, you'll find regular connecting bus service hourly during the day. For information and schedules, call **Stagecoach** at ✆ **01738/629-339.** The bus service from Gleneagles is too poor to recommend.

By Taxi A taxi from Gleneagles will cost from £15 to £20 ($30–$40).

VISITOR INFORMATION The year-round **tourist information office** is in the Town Hall on High Street (✆ **01764/652-578**). It's open November to March, Monday to Friday 9:30am to 5pm, Saturday 10am to 2pm; April to June, Monday to Saturday 9:30am to 5:30pm, Sunday 11am to 4pm; July and August, Monday to Saturday 9am to 7pm, Sunday 11am to 6pm; and September and October, Monday to Saturday 9:30am to 5:30pm, Sunday 11am to 4pm.

WHERE TO STAY & DINE

Murraypark Hotel This stone-fronted house lies in a residential neighborhood about a 10-minute walk from Crieff's center and close to a golf course. In 1993, a new wing was opened, enlarging the public areas and the number of well-furnished rooms. Rooms in this 19th-century former sea captain's house vary in size and shape, but most open onto views. Although rooms in the new wing are more comfortable, they're hardly as evocative as those in the older wing, with its traditional Victorian aura.

Connaught Terrace, Crieff PH7 3DJ. ✆ **01764/658-000.** Fax 01764/655-311. www.murraypark.com. 21 units. £70–£105 ($140–$210) double or suite. Rates include Scottish breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. A 10-min. walk from the center of Crieff; the hotel lies northwest of Perth St. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; babysitting. *In room:* TV, coffeemaker, hair dryer, trouser press, iron, Wi-Fi.

SEEING THE SIGHTS

Drummond Castle Gardens ★ The gardens of Drummond Castle, first laid out in the early 17th century by John Drummond, second earl of Perth, are among the finest formal gardens in Europe. There's a panoramic view from the upper terrace, overlooking an example of an early Victorian parterre in the form of St. Andrew's

Cross. The multifaceted sundial by John Mylne, master mason to Charles I, has been the centerpiece since 1630.

Grimsthorpe, Crieff. ☎ **01764/681-257.** www.drummondcastlegardens.co.uk. Admission £4 ($8) adults, £3 ($6) seniors, £1.50 ($3) children. May–Oct daily 2–6pm; Easter weekend 2–6pm. Closed Nov–Apr. Take A822 for 5km (3 miles) south of Crieff.

Glenturret Distillery Ltd Scotland's oldest distillery, Glenturret was established in 1775 on the banks of the River Turret. Visitors can see the milling of malt, mashing, fermentation, distillation, and cask filling, followed by a free "wee dram" dispensed at the end of the tour. Guided tours take about 50 minutes and leave at frequent intervals—sometimes as often as every 10 minutes when there's a demand for it. The tour can be followed or preceded by a 20-minute video, *The Water of Life,* presented adjacent to a small museum devoted to the implements of the whisky trade.

The Hosh, Hwy. A85, Glenturret. ☎ **01764/656-565.** www.scotchwhisky.net. Guided tours £6 ($12) adults, £5 ($10) seniors, £3 ($6) children 12–17, free for children 11 and under. Jan Mon–Fri 11:30am–4pm; Feb Mon–Sat 11:30am–4pm, Sun noon–4pm; Mar–Dec Mon–Sat 9:30am–6pm, Sun noon–6pm. Take A85 toward Comrie; 1.2km (¾ mile) from Crieff, turn right at the crossroads; the distillery is .5km (⅓ mile) up the road.

PLAYING GOLF

Crieff Golf Club (☎ **01764/652909;** www.crieffgold.co.uk) has two courses—both with panoramic views and excellent facilities. The most challenging is the 18-hole Fern Tower, a par-71 course with three par-5 holes. The Dornock is a 64-par, 9-hole course with three par-3 holes. It's not quite as difficult as the Fern Tower, but a test nonetheless. Greens fees for the Fern Tower are £34 ($68) per round Monday to Friday, and £40 ($80) weekends. Greens fees for the Dornock are £12 ($24) for 9 holes and £16 ($32) for 18 holes. April to October, the golf club is open from 8am to 7:30pm; November to March, it's open daily from 9am to 5pm.

DUNDEE & GLAMIS CASTLE ★★

This royal burgh and old seaport is an industrial city on the north shore of the Firth of Tay. When steamers took over the whaling industry from sailing vessels, Dundee became the leading home port for ships from the 1860s until World War I. Long known for its jute and flax operations, we think today of the Dundee fruitcakes, marmalades, and jams. This was also the home of the man who invented stick-on postage stamps, James Chalmers. Dundee has a raffish charm and serves well as a base for a trip to Glamis Castle.

Spanning the Firth of Tay is the **Tay Railway Bridge,** opened in 1888. Constructed over the tidal estuary, the bridge is some 3km (1¾ miles) long, one of the longest in Europe. There's also a road bridge 2km (1¼ miles) long, with four traffic lanes and a walkway in the center.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **By Train** ScotRail offers frequent service between Perth, Dundee, and Aberdeen. One-way fare from Perth to Dundee is £8 ($16); from Aberdeen, £22 ($44). Phone ☎ **08457/484-950** for schedules and departure times.

By Bus CityLink buses offer frequent bus service from Edinburgh and Glasgow. Call ☎ **0990/505-050** for information.

By Car The fastest way to reach Dundee is to cut south back to Perth along A9 and link up with A972 going east.

VISITOR INFORMATION The **tourist information office** is at 21 Castle St. (✆ **01382/527-527;** www.angusanddundee.co.uk). Hours are April to September, Monday to Saturday 9am to 6pm, Sunday 10am to 4pm; October to March, Monday to Saturday 9am to 5pm.

WHERE TO STAY

Hilton Dundee ★ This chain hotel helps rejuvenate the once-seedy waterfront of Dundee. Built in a severe modern style, the five-story block takes its name from a famous English tea, which most often accompanies marmalade and Dundee fruitcakes, the city's two most famous products. Some of the well-furnished rooms overlook the Firth, the river, or the Tay Bridge. Both the business and the leisure traveler will find solace here in rooms with bright floral upholstery and draperies, blond wood furnishings, and small bathrooms.

Earl Grey Place, Dundee DD1 4DE. ✆ **01382/229-271.** Fax 01382/200-072. www.dundee.hilton.com. 129 units. £87–£123 ($174–$246) double; from £150 ($300) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. Bus: 1A, 1B, or 20. From the south, the hotel is on the left-hand side as you come over the Tay Rd. Bridge into town. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; indoor pool; health club; sauna; steam room; business center; room service; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* TV, coffeemaker, hair dryer, trouser press, Wi-Fi (in some).

Invercarse Hotel In landscaped gardens overlooking the River Tay, this privately owned hotel lies 5km (3 miles) west of the heart of Dundee. Many prefer it for its fresh air, tranquil location, and Victorian country-house aura. Well-maintained rooms come in a variety of sizes and open onto views across the Tay to the hills of the Kingdom of Fife.

371 Perth Rd., Dundee DD2 1PG. ✆ **800/528-1234** in the U.S., or 01382/669-231. Fax 01382/644-112. www.bw-invercarsehotel.co.uk. 44 units. £75–£110 ($150–$220) double; £140 ($280) suite. Rates include Scottish breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. Drive 5km (3 miles) west of Dundee on the Perth Rd. The hotel is clearly signposted. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; access to nearby health club; business center; room service; laundry/dry cleaning service. *In room:* TV, coffeemaker, hair dryer, trouser press, iron, Wi-Fi.

WHERE TO DINE

Jahangir Tandoori INDIAN Built around an indoor fishpond in a dining room draped with the soft folds of an embroidered tent, this is one of the most exotic restaurants in the region. Meals are prepared with fresh ingredients and cover the gamut of recipes from both north and south India. Some preparations are slow cooked in clay pots (tandoori) and seasoned to the degree of spiciness you prefer. Both meat and meatless dishes are available.

1 Sessions St. (at the corner of Hawk Hill). ✆ **01382/201-054.** Reservations recommended. Main courses £12–£20 ($24–$40). AE, MC, V. Daily 5pm–midnight.

SEEING THE SIGHTS

For a panoramic view of Dundee, the Tay bridges across to Fife, and mountains to the north, go to **Dundee Law,** a 175m (574-ft.) hill just north of the city. The hill is an ancient volcanic plug.

Broughty Castle This 15th-century estuary fort lies about 6km (3¾ miles) east of the city center on the seafront, at Broughty Ferry, a little fishing hamlet and once the terminus for ferries crossing the Firth of Tay before the bridges were built. Besieged by the English in the 16th century, and attacked by Cromwell's army under General Monk in the 17th century, it was eventually restored as part of Britain's coastal defenses in

1861. Its gun battery was dismantled in 1956, and it's now a museum with displays on local history, arms and armor, and Dundee's whaling story. The observation area at the top of the castle provides fine views of the Tay estuary and northeast Fife.

Castle Green, Broughty Ferry. ✆ **01382/436-916.** Free admission. Apr–Sept Mon–Sat 10am–4pm, Sun 12:30–4pm; Oct–Mar Tues–Sat 10am–4pm, Sun 12:30–4pm. Bus: 75 or 76.

HM Frigate *Unicorn* ★ Kids This 46-gun wooden ship of war commissioned in 1824 by the Royal Navy, now the oldest British-built ship afloat, has been restored and visitors can explore all four decks: the quarterdeck with 32-pound cannonades, the gun deck with its battery of 18-pound cannons and the captain's quarters, the berth deck with officers' cabins and crews' hammocks, and the orlop deck and hold. Displays portraying life in the sailing navy and the history of the *Unicorn* make this a rewarding visit.

Victoria Dock. ✆ **01382/200-900.** www.frigateunicorn.org. Admission £4 ($8) adults, £3 ($6) seniors and children, £9–£11 ($18–$22) family ticket. Easter–Oct daily 10am–5pm; Nov–Easter Wed–Sun noon–4pm. Bus: 6, 23, or 78.

PLAYING GOLF

Cairn Park Golf Club at Dundee (✆ **01382/438-871**) is an 18-hole, par-72 course that presents most golfers with an average challenge. The course is quite flat, but there are more than a few bunkers to navigate. There's also a restaurant and bar on the premises. Greens fees are £22 ($44) for 18 holes, or £28 ($56) for a day ticket. No carts of any sort are allowed on the course, and there's no particular dress code. The park is open April to October daily 7:30am to 8pm.

A DAY TRIP TO GLAMIS

The little village of Glamis (pronounced without the "i") grew up around **Glamis Castle** ★★, Castle Office (✆ **01307/840393;** www.glamis-castle.co.uk). Next to Balmoral Castle, visitors to Scotland most want to see Glamis Castle for its link with the crown. For 6 centuries it has been connected to members of the British royal family. The Queen Mother was brought up here; and Princess Margaret was born here, becoming the first royal princess born in Scotland in 3 centuries. The present owner is the queen's great-nephew. The castle contains Duncan's Hall—the Victorians claimed this was where Macbeth murdered King Duncan, but in the play, the murder takes place at Macbeth's castle near Inverness. In fact, Shakespeare was erroneous as well—he had Macbeth named Thane of Glamis, but Glamis wasn't made a thaneship (a sphere of influence in medieval Scotland) until years after the play takes place.

The present Glamis Castle dates from the early 15th century, but there are records of a castle having been in existence in the 11th century. Glamis Castle has been in the possession of the Lyon family since 1372, and it contains some fine plaster ceilings, furniture, and paintings.

The castle is open to the public, with access to the Royal Apartments and many other rooms, as well as the fine gardens, the end of March to October, Monday to Saturday 10am to 6pm; November and December, Monday to Saturday 11am to 5pm. Admission to the castle and gardens is £8 ($16) adults, £5 ($10) children, family ticket £23 ($46). If you wish to visit the grounds only, the charge is £4 ($8) adults, £3 ($6) children. Buses run between Dundee and Glamis. The 35-minute ride costs £5 ($10) one-way. ***Note:*** Buses don't stop in front of the castle, which lies 1km (⅔ mile) from the bus stop.

Playing the World's Oldest Course

At **St. Andrew's,** 23km (14 miles) southeast of Dundee and 82km (51 miles) northeast of Edinburgh, the rules of golf in Britain and the world were codified and arbitrated. Golf was played for the first time in the 1400s, probably on the site of St. Andrew's Old Course, and enjoyed by Mary, Queen of Scots, there in 1567. All six of St. Andrew's golf courses are open to the public on a more-or-less democratic basis—ballots are polled 1 day in advance. To participate in the balloting, you first must be staying in St. Andrews for a minimum of 2 days, and you must be able to present a current handicap certificate issued by the governing golf body of your home country. If you meet those requirements, you can enter the ballot in person at the golf course, or by phone at ✆ **01334/466-666,** before 1:45pm on the day before the one on which you wish to play. At 2pm each day, the balloting is drawn, and the following day's players are announced at 4pm. Bear in mind that your wait to play will most likely be from 4 to 6 days; however, some lucky players get on the course the next day. Players who call the golf course several weeks in advance to make reservations can often circumvent the balloting system, depending on demand.

The **Old Course,** St. Andrews, Golf Place, St. Andrew's, Fife (✆ **01334/466-666**), is a 6,000m (6,562-yd.) 18-hole course billed as "the Home of Golf." Greens fees are £120 ($240) per round from April to September or £72 ($144) otherwise. A caddy will cost £50 ($100) plus tip. Golf clubs rent for £30 to £35 ($60–$70) per round. Electric carts are not allowed, and you can rent a cart only on afternoons from May to September for £5 ($10). The course is a par 72.

To reach St. Andrews from Edinburgh, travel along the A90 north to Dunfermline. From there, continue northeast along A910, which becomes A915 at Leven. From Leven, drive northeast on A915 directly to St. Andrews (trip time: 1 hr.).

Where to Stay

Castleton House ★ *Finds* This Victorian hotel is run with love and care by its owners, Anthony and Sheila Lilly. In cool weather you're greeted by welcoming coal fires in the public lounge. The youthful staff is the most considerate we've encountered in the area. Rooms of various sizes are furnished with reproductions of antiques. The most superior and most beautiful accommodation is a Regency four-poster bedroom. One of the reasons to stay here is to enjoy the cuisine, among the finest in the area. Some of the produce comes from the hotel's own vegetable garden, including fresh fruits such as strawberries and raspberries. All rooms are nonsmoking.

Eassie by Glamis, Forfar, Tayside DD8 1SJ. ✆ **01307/840-340.** Fax 01307/840-506. www.castletonglamis.co.uk. 6 units. £200–£240 ($400–$480) double. Rates include Scottish breakfast. AE, MC, V. Drive 5km (3 miles) west of Glamis on A94. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; 9-hole putting green; room service; laundry/dry cleaning service. *In room:* TV, coffeemaker, hair dryer.

Where to Dine

Strathmore Arms CONTINENTAL/SCOTTISH Try this place near the castle for one of the best lunches in the area. You might begin with the freshly made soup of the day or the fresh prawns. Some of the dishes regularly featured might include steak pie or venison. For something a little more exotic, go for the Indian chicken breast marinated in yogurt and spices; for vegetarians, phyllo parcels stuffed with asparagus and cauliflower.

The Square, Glamis. ✆ **01307/840-248.** Reservations recommended. Main courses £9–£22 ($18–$44). AE, MC, V. Daily noon–2pm and 6:30–9pm.

BRAEMAR

In the heart of some of Grampian's most beautiful scenery, Braemar not only is known for its own castle, but makes a good center from which to explore Balmoral Castle (see "Ballater & Balmoral Castle," below). In this Highland village, set against a massive backdrop of hills covered with heather in summer, Clunie Water joins the River Dee. The massive **Cairn Toul** towers over Braemar, reaching a height of 1,293m (4,242 ft.).

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **By Train** Take the train to Aberdeen, and then continue the rest of the way by bus. For information and schedules, call ✆ **08457/484-950.**

By Bus Buses run daily from Aberdeen to Braemar six times a day (trip time: 2 hr.). One-way fare is £10 ($20). The bus and train stations in Aberdeen are next to each other on Guild Street (✆ **01224/212-266** for information about schedules).

By Car To reach Braemar from Dundee, return west toward Perth, and then head north along A93, following the signs into Braemar. The 113km (70-mile) drive will take 70 to 90 minutes.

VISITOR INFORMATION The year-round **Braemar Tourist Office** is in The Mews, Mar Road (✆ **01339/741-600**). In June, hours are daily 10am to 6pm; July and August daily 9am to 7pm; and September daily 10am to 1pm and 2 to 6pm. In off season hours are Monday to Saturday 10am to 1pm and 2 to 5pm, Sunday noon to 5pm.

SPECIAL EVENTS The spectacular **Royal Highland Gathering** takes place annually in late August or early September in the Princess Royal and Duke of Fife Memorial Park. The queen herself often attends the gathering. These ancient games are thought to have been originated by King Malcolm Canmore, a chieftain who ruled much of Scotland at the time of the Norman conquest of England. He selected his hardiest warriors from all the clans for a "keen and fair contest."

Call the tourist office (see "Visitor Information," above) for more information. Braemar is overrun with visitors during the gathering—anyone thinking of attending would be wise to reserve accommodations anywhere within a 32km (20-mile) radius of Braemar no later than early April.

WHERE TO STAY & DINE

Braemar Lodge Hotel *Kids* This hotel, popular with skiers who frequent the nearby Glenshee slopes, is set on 1 hectare (2½ acres) of grounds at the head of Glen Clunie. Units vary in shape and size, but each is comfortable and well equipped, containing a well-maintained bathroom with tub and shower. Rooms are bright and airy, with soothing color schemes. Two rooms are large enough for families. On cool evenings, you're greeted by log fires. The hotel is on the road to the Glenshee ski slopes near the cottage where Robert Louis Stevenson wrote *Treasure Island.* On the grounds, three log cabins have been recently built. Fully equipped with all modern conveniences, they can sleep up to six persons.

6 Glenshee Rd., Braemar AB35 5YQ. ✆/fax **01339/741-627.** www.braemarlodge.co.uk. 7 units. £82 ($164) double; £220–£440 ($440–$880) log cabin. Rates include Scottish breakfast. MC, V. Free parking. Closed Nov. Lies a 2-min. walk south from the bus station. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; laundry/dry cleaning service; 1 cabin for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* TV, hair dryer.

Invercauld Arms Thistle Hotel ★ This is the leading inn of the town, with superior amenities and greater comfort than Braemar Lodge. The oldest part of this old granite building dates from the 18th century. In cool weather there's a roaring log fire on the hearth. You can go hill walking and see deer, golden eagles, and other wildlife. Fishing and winter skiing are other pursuits in the nearby area. Rooms are comfortably furnished. Although they lack any style or glamour, they serve their purpose well, and come in a wide range of sizes. In the pub close by, you'll meet the "ghilles" and "stalkers" (hunting and fishing guides).

Invercauld Rd., Braemar AB35 5YR. ✆ **01339/741-605.** Fax 01339/741-428. 68 units. £115 ($230) double. Rates include Scottish breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. Bus: 201. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; laundry/dry cleaning service. *In room:* TV, coffeemaker, hair dryer.

SEEING THE SIGHTS

If you're a royal family watcher, you might be able to spot members of the family, even the queen, at **Crathie Church,** 14km (8⅔ miles) east of Braemar on A93 (✆ **01339/742-208**), where they attend Sunday services when in residence. Services are at 11:30am; otherwise, the church is open to view April to October, Monday to Saturday 9:30am to 5:30pm and on Sunday 2 to 5:30pm.

Nature lovers may want to drive to the **Linn of Dee,** 10km (6¼ miles) west of Braemar, a narrow chasm on the River Dee, which is a local beauty spot. Other beauty spots include Glen Muick, Loch Muick, and Lochnagar. A **Scottish Wildlife Trust Visitor Centre,** reached by a minor road, is located in this Highland glen, off the South Deeside road. An access road joins B976 at a point 26km (16 miles) east of Braemar. The tourist office (see above) will give you a map pinpointing these beauty spots.

Braemar Castle ★ This romantic 17th-century castle is a fully furnished private residence with architectural grace, scenic charm, and historical interest. The castle has barrel-vaulted ceilings and an underground prison and is known for its remarkable star-shaped defensive curtain wall.

On the Aberdeen-Ballater-Perth Rd. (A93). ✆ **01339/741-219.** Admission £4 ($8) adults, £3.50 ($7) seniors and students, £1.50 ($3) children 5–15, free for children 4 and under. Apr–Oct Sat–Thurs 10am–6pm (July–Aug open Fri). Closed Nov–Easter. Take A93 .8km (½ mile) northeast of Braemar.

PLAYING GOLF

Braemar Golf Course, at Braemar (✆ **01339/741-618**), is the highest golf course in the country. The second-hole green is 380m (1,247 ft.) above sea level—this is the trickiest hole on the course. Pro golf commentator Peter Alliss has deemed it "the hardest par 4 in all of Scotland." Set on a plateau, the hole is bordered on the right by the River Clunie and lined on the left by rough. Greens fees are as follows: Monday to Friday £20 ($40) for 18 holes and £26 ($52) for a day ticket; Saturday and Sunday £25 ($50) for 18 holes and £30 ($60) for a day ticket. Pull-carts can be rented for £5 ($10) per day, and sets of clubs can be borrowed for £9 ($18) per day. The only dress code is "be reasonable." The course is open only April to October daily (call in advance as hours can vary).

BALLATER & BALMORAL CASTLE ★★

Ballater is a vacation resort center on the Dee River, with the Grampian Mountains in the background. The town is still centered around its Station Square, where the Royal Family used to be photographed as they arrived to spend vacations. The railway is now closed.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **By Train** Go to Aberdeen and continue the rest of the way by connecting bus. For rail schedules and information, call ✆ **08457/484-950.**

By Bus Buses run hourly from Aberdeen to Ballater. The bus and train stations in Aberdeen are next to each other on Guild Street (✆ **01224/212-266** for information). Bus no. 201 from Braemar runs to Ballater (trip time: 1¼ hr.). The fare is £5 ($10).

By Car From Braemar, go east along A93.

VISITOR INFORMATION The **tourist information office** is at Station Square (✆ **01339/755-306**). Hours are July and August, daily 10am to 1pm and 2 to 6pm; September and October and May and June, Monday to Saturday 10am to 1pm and 2 to 5pm, Sunday 1 to 5pm. Closed November to April.

WHERE TO STAY

Darroch Learg Hotel ★ *Finds* Built in 1888 as an elegant country home, this pink granite hotel stands in 2 hectares (5 acres) of lush woodlands opening onto views of the Dee Valley toward the Grampian Mountains. Constructed at the peak of the golden age of the Royal Deeside area (given the "Royal" designation due to the presence of Balmoral Castle, Queen Victoria's summer home), the hotel is imbued with a relaxing charm. The individually decorated bedrooms are divided between the main house and Oakhall, a baronial mansion on the same grounds. Some units have four-poster beds and private terraces.

Darroch Learg, Braemar Rd. (on A93 at the west end of Ballater), Ballater AB35 5UX. ✆ **01339/755-443.** Fax 01339/755-252. www.darrochlearg.co.uk. 17 units. £130–£160 ($260–$320) double in main house; £95 ($190) double in Oakhall. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Closed Christmas and last 3 weeks in Jan. Free parking. **Amenities:** Restaurant; room service; laundry service; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* TV, coffeemaker, hair dryer, trouser press.

Hilton Craigendarroch Hotel ★ This hotel, built in the Scottish baronial style, is set amid old trees on a 13-hectare (32-acre) estate. Modern comforts have been added, but the owners have tried to maintain a 19th-century aura. The public rooms include a regal oaken staircase and a large sitting room. The fair-size rooms open onto views of the village of Ballater and the River Dee. Each is furnished in individual style, with private bathrooms (showers only). Public facilities are luxurious, especially the oak-paneled study with a log fire and book-lined shelves.

Braemar Rd., Ballater AB35 5XA. ✆ **01339/755-858.** Fax 01339/755-447. www.hilton.co.uk/craigendarroch. 45 units. £69–£149 ($138–$298) double; £170 ($340) suite. Rates include Scottish breakfast and dinner. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. Signposted directly west of town on the road to Braemar. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; 2 bars; indoor pool; tennis court; squash court; health club; Jacuzzi; sauna; steam room; children's playground; business center; salon; room service; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service; coin-operated laundry; all nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* TV, coffeemaker, hair dryer, trouser press, Wi-Fi.

WHERE TO DINE

Green Inn SCOTTISH In the heart of town, once a former temperance hotel, this is now one of the finest dining rooms in town, especially for traditional Scottish dishes. The chef places emphasis on local produce, including homegrown vegetables when available. In season, loin of venison is served with a bramble sauce, and you can always count on fresh salmon and the best of Angus beef with Loch fine scallops.

Three simply furnished double rooms, with shower-only bathroom, TV, and half board, go for £60 ($120) per person.

9 Victoria Rd., Ballater. ✆/fax **01339/755-701.** Reservations required. Fixed-price menu £29 ($58) for 2 courses, £34 ($68) for 3 courses. AE, DC, MC, V. Mar–Oct daily 7–9pm; Nov–Feb Tues–Sat 7–9pm.

Oaks Restaurant BRITISH The most glamorous restaurant in the region, the Oaks is in the century-old mansion that was originally built by the "marmalade kings" of Britain, the Keiller family. (The company's marmalade is still a household word throughout the United Kingdom.) This is the most upscale of the three restaurants in a resort complex that includes hotel rooms, timeshare villas, and access to a nearby golf course. To start, try the venison and duck terrine flavored with orange and brandy and served with a warm black conch vinaigrette. Other main courses are roast rack of lamb, breast of Grampian chicken, loin of venison, and filet of Aberdeen Angus beef.

In the Hilton Craigendarroch Hotel (see "Where to Stay," above), Braemar Rd. ✆ **01339/755-858.** Reservations strongly recommended. Fixed-price 4-course dinner £36 ($72). AE, DC, MC, V. Thurs–Sun 6:30–9:15pm.

THE CASTLE

Balmoral Castle "This dear paradise" is how Queen Victoria described Balmoral Castle, rebuilt in the Scottish baronial style by her "beloved" Albert and completed in 1855. Today Balmoral, 13km (8 miles) west of Ballater, is still a private residence of the British sovereign. Its principal feature is a 30m (100-ft.) tower. Of the actual castle, only the ballroom is open to the public; it houses an exhibit of pictures, porcelain, and works of art. On the grounds are many memorials to the royal family, along with gardens, country walks, souvenir shops, a refreshment room, and pony trekking for £30 ($60) for a 2-hour ride (available to adults and children over 12, daily 10am–noon or 2–4pm).

Balmoral, Ballater. ✆ **01339/742-534.** www.balmoralcastle.com. Admission £7 ($14) adults, £6 ($12) seniors, £3 ($6) for children 5–16, free for children 4 and under. Mar–Aug daily 10am–5pm. Closed Sept–Feb. Crathie bus from Aberdeen.

SPEYSIDE ★ & THE MALT WHISKY TRAIL ★

Much of the Speyside region covered in this section is in the Moray district, on the southern shore of the Moray Firth, a great inlet cutting into the northeastern coast of Scotland. The district stretches in a triangular shape south from the coast to the wild heart of the Cairngorm Mountains near Aviemore. It's a land steeped in history, as its many castles, battle sites, and ancient monuments testify. It's also a good place to fish and, of course, play golf. Golfers can purchase a 5-day ticket from tourist information centers that will allow you to play at more than 11 courses in the area.

One of the best of these courses is **Boat of Garten,** Speyside (✆ **01479/831282**). Relatively difficult, the almost 5,500m (6,000-yd.) course is dotted with many bunkers and wooded areas. April to October greens fees are £32 ($64) Monday to Friday and hours are from 7:30am to 11pm. Saturday greens fees are £37 ($74), and hours are from 10am to 4pm. In winter, call to see if the course is open. Greens fees

Spotting Nessie

Sir Peter Scott's *Nessitera rhombopteryx* continues to elude her pursuers. "Nessie," as she's more familiarly known, has captured the imagination of the world, drawing thousands of visitors yearly to Loch Ness. The Loch Ness monster has been described as one of the world's greatest mysteries. Half a century ago, A82 was built alongside the western banks of the loch. Since that time, many more sightings have been recorded.

All types of high-tech underwater contraptions have searched for the Loch Ness monster, but no one can find her. Dr. Robert Rines and his associates at the Academy of Applied Science in Massachusetts maintain a year-round watch with sonar-triggered cameras and strobe lights suspended from a raft in Urquhart Bay.

The loch is 39km (24 miles) long, 1.6km (1 mile) wide, and some 230m (755 ft.) deep. Even if the monster doesn't put in an appearance, you can enjoy the loch seascape. In summer, you can take boat cruises across Loch Ness from both Fort Augustus and Inverness.

Buses from either Fort Augustus or Inverness traverse A82, taking you to Drumnadrochit. Call ✆ **08705/808-080** for schedules and more information. The bucolic hamlet of Drumnadrochit lies 1.6km (1 mile) from Loch Ness at the entrance to Glen Urquhart. It's the nearest village to the part of the loch from which sightings of the monster have been reported most frequently.

From Grantown-on-Spey, take A938 west until you merge with northwest-bound E15/A9, which leads to Inverness, on the north tip of Loch Ness. From Inverness, travel on the A82 south, which runs the length of the western shoreline. The eastern shoreline can be traveled by following signposted rural roads from Inverness.

are then reduced to £18 ($36). Pull-carts can be rented for £2.50 ($5), and electric carts are available for £10 ($20). Dress reasonably; blue jeans are not acceptable.

The valley of the second-largest river in Scotland, the Spey, lies north and south of Aviemore. It's a land of great natural beauty. The Spey is born in the Highlands above Loch Laggan, which lies 64km (40 miles) south of Inverness. Little more than a creek at its inception, it gains in force, fed by the many "burns" that drain water from the surrounding hills. One of Scotland's great rivers for salmon fishing, it runs between the towering Cairngorms on the east and the Monadhliath Mountains on the west. Its major center is Grantown-on-Spey.

The major tourist attraction in the area is the **Malt Whisky Trail,** 113km (70 miles) long, running through the glens of Speyside. Here distilleries, many of which can be visited, are known for their production of *uisge beatha,* or "water of life." "Whisky" is its more familiar name.

Half the malt distilleries in the country lie along the River Spey and its tributaries. Here peat smoke and Highland water are used to turn out single-malt (unblended) whisky. The five malt distilleries in the area are **Glenlivet, Glenfiddich, Glenfarclas, Strathisla,** and **Tamdhu.** Allow about an hour each to visit them.

The best way to reach Speyside from Aberdeen is to take A-96 northwest, signposted ELGIN. If you're traveling north on the A-9 road from Perth and Pitlochry, your first stop might be Dalwhinnie, which has the highest whisky distillery in the world at 575m (1,886 ft.). It's not in the Spey Valley but is at the northeastern end of Loch Ericht, with views of lochs and forests.

KEITH

Keith, 18km (11 miles) northwest of Huntly, grew up because of its strategic location, where the main road and rail routes between Inverness and Aberdeen cross the River Isla. It has an ancient history, but owes its present look to the "town planning" of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Today it's a major stopover along the Malt Whisky Trail.

The oldest operating distillery in the Scottish Highlands, the **Strathisla Distillery,** on Seafield Avenue (✆ **01542/783-044**), was established in 1786. Hours are March to October, Monday to Friday from 10am to 4pm, Sunday from 12:30 to 4pm. Admission is £5 ($10) for adults, free for children age 8 to 18; children age 7 and under are not admitted. The admission fee includes a £3 ($6) voucher redeemable in the distillery shop against a 70cl bottle of whisky. Be warned that tours of this distillery are self-guided.

DUFFTOWN

James Duff, the fourth earl of Fife, founded this town in 1817. The four main streets of town converge at the battlemented **clock tower,** which is also the tourist information center. A center of the whisky-distilling industry, Dufftown is surrounded by seven malt distilleries. The family-owned **Glenfiddich Distillery** is on A941, 1km (⅔ mile) north (✆ **01340/820-373**). It's open Monday through Friday from 9:30am to 4:30pm (Easter to mid-Oct, also Sat 9:30am–4:30pm and Sun noon–4:30pm). Guides in kilts show you around the plant and explain the process of distilling. A film of the history of distilling is also shown. At the finish of the tour, you're given a dram of malt whisky to sample. The tour is free, but there's a souvenir shop where the owners hope you'll spend a few pounds.

Other sights include **Balvenie Castle,** along A941 (✆ **01340/820-121**), the ruins of a moated 14th-century stronghold that lie on the south side of the Glenfiddich Distillery. During her northern campaign against the earl of Huntly, Mary, Queen of Scots spent 2 nights here. April to September, it's open daily from 9:30am to 6:30pm. Admission is £3.50 ($7) for adults, £2.25 ($4.50) for seniors, and £1 ($2) for children.

Mortlach Parish Church in Dufftown is one of the oldest places of Christian worship in the country. It's reputed to have been founded in 566 by St. Moluag. A Pictish cross stands in the graveyard. The present church was reconstructed in 1931 and incorporates portions of an older building.

Where to Dine

Taste of Speyside ★ SCOTTISH True to its name, this restaurant in the town center, just off the main square, avidly promotes a Speyside cuisine as well as malt whiskies. In the bar you can buy the product of each of Speyside's 46 distilleries. A platter including a slice of smoked salmon, smoked venison, smoked trout, pâté flavored with malt whisky, locally made cheese (cow or goat), salads, and homemade oat cakes is offered at noon and at night. Nourishing soup is made fresh daily and is served with homemade bread. There's also a choice of meat pies, including venison with red wine and herbs, or rabbit. For dessert, try Scotch Mist, which contains fresh cream, malt whisky, and crumbled meringue.

10 Balvenie St. ✆ **01340/820-860.** Reservations recommended for dinner. Main courses £15–£17 ($30–$34); Speyside platter £14 ($28) lunch, £17 ($34) dinner. AE, MC, V. Mon–Sat noon–9pm. Closed Nov–Feb.

GLENLIVET

As you leave Grantown-on-Spey and head east along A95, drive to the junction with B9008; go south and you won't miss the **Glenlivet Distillery.** The location of the **Glenlivet Reception Centre** (✆ **01340/821-720**) is 16km (10 miles) north of the nearest town, Tomintoul. Near the River Livet, a Spey tributary, this distillery is one of the most famous in Scotland. It's open mid-March to June, and September to October, Monday to Saturday from 10am to 4pm, and Sunday from 12:30 to 4pm. July and August, Monday to Saturday from 10am to 4pm and Sunday from 12:30pm to 4pm. Admission is free.

Back on A95, you can visit the **Glenfarclas Distillery** at Ballindalloch (✆ **01807/500-209;** www.glenfarclas.co.uk), one of the few malt whisky distilleries that's still independent of the giants. Founded in 1836, Glenfarclas is managed by the fifth generation of the Grant family. There's a small craft shop, and each visitor is offered a dram of Glenfarclas Malt Whisky. The admission of £3.50 ($7) is for visitors over age 18, and there's a discount of £1 ($2) on any purchase of £10 ($20) or more. It's open all year, Monday to Friday 10am to 5pm; June to September, it's also open Saturday 10am to 5pm and Sunday 10am to 4pm.

Where to Stay

Minmore House Hotel ★ Standing on 1.6 hectares (4 acres) of private grounds adjacent to the Glenlivet Distillery, this is an impressive country house. It was the home of the distillery owners before becoming a hotel. The drawing room opens onto views of the plush Ladder Hills. Well-furnished rooms have basic amenities, and the oak-paneled lounge bar has an open log fire on chilly nights. All rooms are nonsmoking.

Glenlivet, Banffshire AB37 9DB. ✆ **01807/590-378.** Fax 01807/590-472. www.minmorehousehotel.com. 10 units. £55–£117 ($110–$234) double; £81–£143 ($162–$286) suite. Rates include breakfast. AE, MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; outdoor pool; tennis court; hunting and fishing outings. *In room:* Coffeemaker, hair dryer.

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Spain

by Darwin Porter & Danforth Prince

For a nation with such a rich, storied past, Spain has a remarkable verve for the present. This land of sun-washed beaches, terraced vineyards, tranquil hill towns, and dazzling Moorish palaces has grown into a newfound prosperity after more than 2 decades of working to catch up with the rest of Europe. Cultural innovations, high-tech ventures, and contemporary art abound in the new Spain, and even the millennia-old siesta is no longer sacred. This mix of old and new, of "castles in Spain" and cutting-edge cuisine, is making Spain a place that can hold its national head high in the 21st century.

1 Madrid ★★★

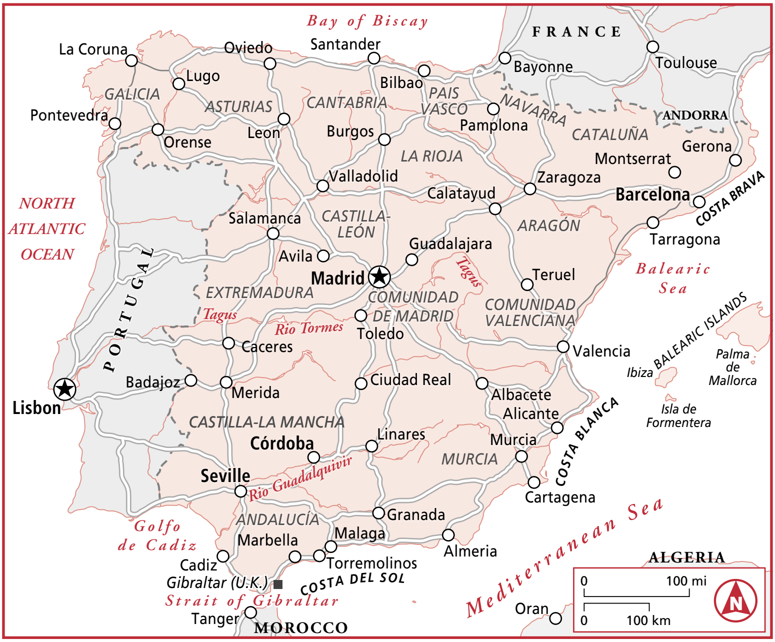
Madrid was built to rule, established on a broad, flat plateau in the geographical center of the Iberian peninsula to bring Spain's many fractious regions together. It's no wonder, then, that Madrid is Spain's melting pot. Native *Madrileños* are joined here not only by Basques, Galicians, Catalonians, and Andalusians, but by immigrants from Africa and South America. Far from the sea and lacking the multi-millennial history of Barcelona or Seville, Madrid can still claim more than its fair share of world-class attractions: its impressive royal palace, handsome parks, wealth of art museums, and passionate and diverse population. Madrileños work hard and party even harder, dining at midnight and dancing until dawn in throbbing, multilevel nightclubs or whiling away the evening in smoky, atmospheric tapas bars.

Renovation and reconstruction are everywhere in Madrid, whether invisible in the lifted gloom of the Chueca neighborhood, once a dangerous, crime-ridden area and now the city's hottest nightlife district, or thrillingly obvious in the modern wings of the Prado, Thyssen, and Reina Sofia museums, three of Spain's greatest temples of art. The result of all this work is a city of comfortable, well-lighted plazas and winding yet approachable streets, and a population that looks to the future with power and pride.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **By Plane** **Aeropuerto Madrid Barajas** (✆ **91-240-4704;** www.aena.es), Madrid's international airport, is 14km (8⅔ miles) east of the city center and has three terminals. Most international flights arrive at Terminal 1. The cheapest ride (3€/$4.40) into town is on **Metro line no. 8.** Its disadvantages are that the station is near Terminal 3, a long trek on moving walkways from Terminal 1, where most international flights arrive, and you have to make at least one line change at Nuevos Ministerios, with more walking. It's a speedy trip, though: Expect to be in the center about half an hour after you enter the system. For 2.45€ ($3.60), the no. 89 **airport bus** runs daily from 4:45am to 1:30am (departures every 10–15 min. 6am–10pm,

Spain


Bay of Biscay
FRANCE
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PAIS VASCO
NAVARRA
ANDORRA
Pontevedra
Pamplona
Leon
Burgos
CATALUÑA
Orense
Gerona
LA RIOJA
Montserrat
Valladolid
Zaragoza
NORTH ATLANTIC OCEAN
Calatayud
Barcelona
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Salamanca
CASTILLA-LEÓN
ARAGÓN
Tarragona
Guadalajara
PORTUGAL
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Tagus
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Balearic Sea
Madrid
EXTREMADURA
COMUNIDAD DE MADRID
COMUNIDAD VALENCIANA
BALEARIC ISLANDS
Tagus
Rio Tormes
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Alicante
Isla de Formentera
CASTILLA-LA MANCHA
Linares
Murcia
COSTA BLANCA
Córdoba
MURCIA
Seville
Rio Guadalquivir
Cartagena
Granada
ANDALUCÍA
Golfo de Cadiz
Marbella
Malaga
Almeria
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less often at other times) between the airport and Plaza de Colón in the center of town. A **taxi** costs about 24€ ($35) plus tip and supplemental charges, and the ride takes 30 to 45 minutes, although during rush hours it can take up to an hour. Avoid unmetered limousines.

By Train Madrid has three major railway stations: **Atocha,** Avenida Ciudad de Barcelona (Metro: Atocha RENFE), for trains to and from Lisbon, Toledo, Andalusia, and Extremadura; **Chamartín,** in the northern suburbs at Augustín de Foxá (Metro: Chamartín), for trains to Barcelona, Asturias, Cantabria, Castilla y León, the Basque country, Aragón, Catalonia, Levante (Valencia), Murcia, and the French border; and **Estación Príncipe Pío** or Norte, Paseo del Rey 30 (Metro: Principe Pío), for trains to northwest Spain (Salamanca and Galicia). Many trains to Atocha run through to Chamartín and vice versa—good to know because the old part of town is much closer to Atocha than to Chamartín.

For information about connections from any of these stations, contact **RENFE,** the Spanish railway company (✆ **90-224-02-02** daily 5am–11:45pm; www.renfe.es). For tickets, go to the principal office of RENFE, Alcalá 44 (Metro: Banco de España), open Monday to Friday 9:30am to 8pm; or go to any of the three main stations listed above.

In the United States, **Rail Europe** sells a variety of **rail passes** valid for use throughout Europe or in one or more specific countries, including Spain. For details, call ✆ **888/382-7245** or visit **www.raileurope.com**.

By Bus Madrid has at least eight major bus terminals, including the large **Estación Sur de Autobuses,** Calle Méndez Alvaro 83 (✆ **91-468-42-00;** Metro: Alvaro). Most buses pass through or arrive at this station.

Travel Discounts Galore

The Madrid Card grants access to dozens of museums, discounts on public transport, and reductions at many restaurants. Available at local tourist offices, the card costs 39€ ($57); 49€ ($71); and 59€ ($86) for 1, 2, or 3 days of use. The card also acts as a pass for 5 or 10 days of trips on the city's subway and buses. Even some participating night clubs offer free drinks or discounts on their cover charges.

By Car The following are the major highways into Madrid, with driving distances to the city: Rte. NI from Irún, 507km (315 miles); NII from Barcelona, 626km (389 miles); NIII from Valencia, 349km (217 miles); NIV from Cádiz, 624km (388 miles); NV from Badajoz, 409km (254 miles); and NVI from Galicia, 602km (374 miles).

VISITOR INFORMATION The **regional government's tourist office** is at Duque de Medinaceli 2 (✆ **91-429-4951;** www.turismomadrid.es; Metro: Antón Martín). Open Monday to Saturday 9am to 7pm, Sunday and holidays 9am to 3pm. The city information office is at Plaza Mayor 27 (✆ **01-588-16-36;** www.minimadrid.es; Metro: Sol or Opera). Open daily 9:30am to 8:30pm. This office is primarily a distribution center for brochures and maps, although attendants can answer questions.

Websites The Tourist Office of Spain (**www.okspain.org**) can help you plan your trip with listings of lodging options, attractions, tour operators, and packages, plus handy tips on getting around. For the viewpoints of individual travelers, check **www.tripadvisor.com** and **www.virtualtourist.com**. The highly personal **www.madridman.com** has a home page that looks frivolous but provides a surprising amount of info, especially on cheap hostels.

CITY LAYOUT The old city of Madrid sits like a small, dense walnut in the middle of Madrid's vast sprawl. The **Gran Vía** is the major east-west artery of the old town, beginning at **Plaza de España,** with one of Europe's tallest skyscrapers, Edificio España. Large numbers of shops, hotels, restaurants, and cinemas are concentrated on this principal avenue. Gran Vía ends at Calle de Alcalá, and at this juncture lies **Plaza de la Cibeles,** with its fountain to Cybele, "the mother of the gods," and what has become known as "the cathedral of post offices." From Cibeles northward, the wide **Paseo de Recoletos** begins a short run to **Plaza de Colón.** From this latter square, the majestic **Paseo de la Castellana** heads north through new Madrid, flanked by expensive shops, apartment buildings, luxury hotels, and foreign embassies. Parallel to the Paseo de la Castellana, **Calle de Serrano** is a prominent shopping street that forms the spine of the prosperous Salamanca neighborhood.

Heading south from Cibeles is **Paseo del Prado,** home to the eponymous **Museo del Prado,** as well as the **Jardín Botánica (Botanical Garden).** The paseo continues on to the Atocha Station, at the southern border of the old town. To the east of the Prado lies the **Parque del Retiro,** once reserved for royalty, with restaurants, nightclubs, a rose garden, and two lakes.

South of Gran Vía is the central **Puerta del Sol,** a half-moon-shaped plaza. All road distances in Spain are measured from here, and it is an important hub for buses and the Metro. Here, **Calle de Alcalá** begins and runs east for 4km (2½ miles).

A couple of blocks west is the **Plaza Mayor,** the heart of Old Madrid, and an attraction in itself with its mix of French and Georgian architecture.

GETTING AROUND The tourist office (see above) provides a street map that includes a schematic of the public transit system. The bus and expanding Metro networks are efficient and extensive, and taxis are abundant. Since traffic is nearly always heavy, though, plan to cover distances under 10 blocks by walking.

By Metro (Subway) The **Metro** (✆ **90-244-44-03;** www.metromadrid.es) is complex, but clean, speedy, and convenient—often more convenient than navigating the tangle of streets in the old town. A **single ticket** *(una sencilla)* is 1€ ($1.45) and a **10-trip pass** *(metrobús)* a more economical 6.70€ ($9.70). Ticket machines in the stations accept coins, bills, and credit cards. The subway runs daily from 6am to 2am.

By Bus Madrid's bus system can be perplexing, as buses travel on circuitous routes. Prices and tickets are the same as on the Metro. Route information is available from the **E.M.T. kiosks** in Plaza de Callao, Puerta del Sol, Plaza de Cibeles, and Atocha (open Monday to Friday 8am to 8:15pm) or on the Web at www.emtmadrid.es. At **Empresa Municipal de Transportes,** Alcántara 24 (✆ **91-406-88-00**), you can purchase a guide to bus routes daily 8am to 2pm. Regular buses run 6am to 11:30pm. A limited night service runs every half-hour 12:30am to 2am, and then every hour to 6am.

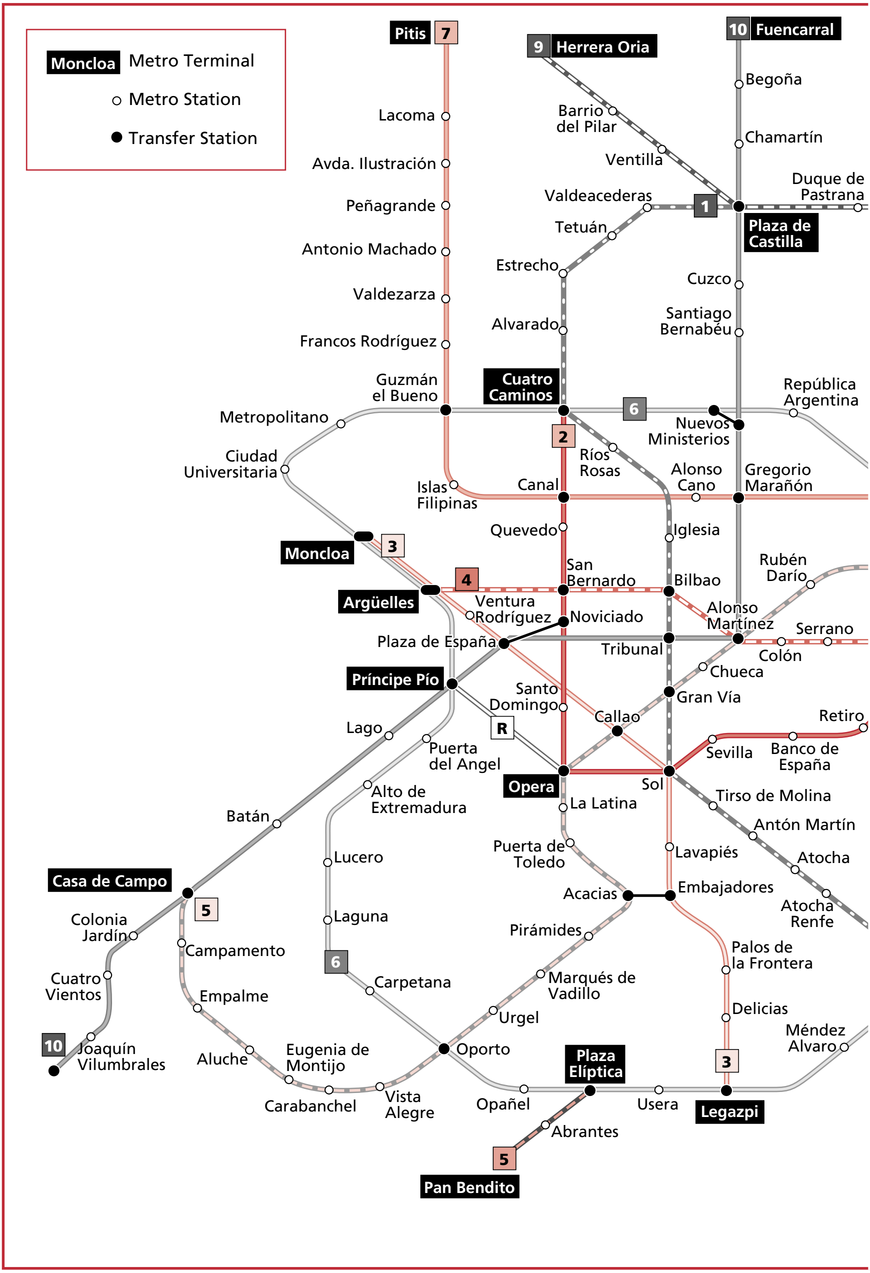
By Taxi When you flag down a taxi, the meter should read 1.95€ ($2.90) and increase by a rate varying from .90€ to 1.05€ ($1.40–$1.60) per kilometer, with the higher rates applying on weekends and late at night. There's a long list of authorized supplements for trips to and from the bullfighting ring, airport, and bus or rail stations; if you're curious, they're all listed at www.radiotelefono-taxi.com/es/tarifas.asp. It's customary to tip about 10% of the fare. To call a taxi, dial ✆ **91-447-51-80.**

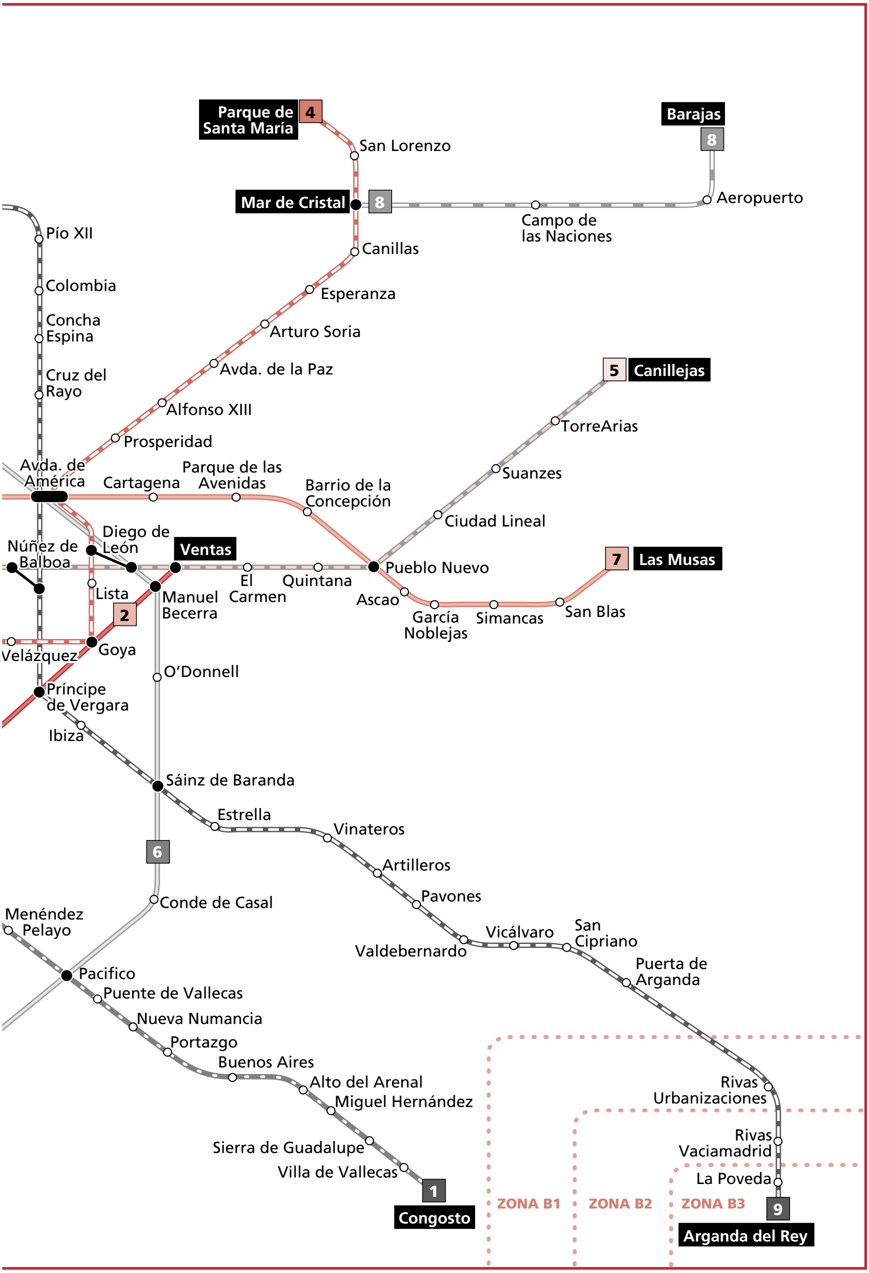
By Car Driving is nightmarish and potentially dangerous in very congested Madrid—it always feels like rush hour. It's not a good idea to maintain a rental car while staying in the city. It's nearly impossible to park, and rental cars are the frequent targets of thieves.

Should you want to rent a car to tour the environs, however, you have several choices. Save money before leaving for Spain by making arrangements with **Auto Europe** (✆ **888/223-5555;** www.autoeurope.com), which brokers economical rates with established firms abroad, including some of the companies mentioned below. The major in-city firms are **Hertz,** Gran Via 88 (✆ **91-542-58-03;** www.hertz.com; Metro: Plaza de España); and **Avis,** Gran Vía 60 (✆ **91-547-20-48;** www.avis.com; Metro: Gran Vía). Known in Spain as Interrent, **Budget Rent-a-Car** is headquartered at Barajas Airport (✆ **91-393-72-16**).

Note: You'll need only your state or provincial driver's license to rent a car, but if you're in an accident or stopped on the road by police, a recent regulation stipulates you must produce an **International Drivers Permit.** These are available at AAA offices in the States for $10 to $15. Know too that stiff fines are collected when drivers are caught speaking on a hand-held cellphone while driving.

Madrid Metro


Moncloa
Metro Terminal
○ Metro Station
● Transfer Station
Pitis
7
Lacoma
Avda. Ilustración
Peñagrande
Antonio Machado
Valdezarza
Francos Rodríguez
Guzmán el Bueno
9
Herrera Oria
Barrio del Pilar
Ventilla
Valdeacederas
Tetuán
Estrecho
Alvarado
Cuatro Caminos
10
Fuencarral
Begoña
Chamartín
Duque de Pastrana
1
Plaza de Castilla
Cuzco
Santiago Bernabéu
República Argentina
6
Nuevos Ministerios
Metropolitano
Ciudad Universitaria
2
Ríos Rosas
Alonso Cano
Gregorio Marañón
Islas Filipinas
Canal
Quevedo
Iglesia
Moncloa
3
San Bernardo
Bilbao
Rubén Darío
4
Argüelles
Ventura Rodríguez
Noviciado
Alonso Martínez
Serrano
Plaza de España
Tribunal
Colón
Príncipe Pío
Chueca
Santo Domingo
Gran Vía
Lago
R
Callao
Retiro
Puerta del Angel
Sevilla
Banco de España
Opera
Sol
Alto de Extremadura
La Latina
Tirso de Molina
Batán
Antón Martín
Lucero
Puerta de Toledo
Lavapiés
Atocha
Casa de Campo
Acacias
Embajadores
Atocha Renfe
Colonia Jardín
5
Laguna
Pirámides
Campamento
Palos de la Frontera
Cuatro Vientos
6
Carpetana
Marqués de Vadillo
Empalme
Urgel
Delicias
10
Joaquín Vilumbrales
Aluche
Eugenia de Montijo
Oporto
Plaza Elíptica
Méndez Alvaro
3
Carabanchel
Vista Alegre
Opañel
Usera
Legazpi
Abrantes
5
Pan Bendito


Parque de Santa María
4
San Lorenzo
Barajas
8
Aeropuerto
Mar de Cristal
8
Campo de las Naciones
Canillas
Esperanza
Arturo Soria
Avda. de la Paz
Alfonso XIII
Prosperidad
Pío XII
Colombia
Concha Espina
Cruz del Rayo
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Cartagena
Parque de las Avenidas
Barrio de la Concepción
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Simancas
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Ibiza
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Estrella
Vinateros
Artilleros
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San Cipriano
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Menéndez Pelayo
Pacifico
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Nueva Numancia
Portazgo
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Sierra de Guadalupe
Villa de Vallecas
1
Congosto
Rivas Urbanizaciones
Rivas Vaciamadrid
La Poveda
9
Arganda del Rey
ZONA B1
ZONA B2
ZONA B3

FAST FACTS: Madrid

American Express There's an office at the corner of Marqués de Cubas and Plaza de las Cortes 2, across the street from the Westin Palace Hotel (✆ **91-322-55-00** or 91-322-54-45; Metro: Gran Vía). Open Monday to Friday 9am to 7:30pm and Saturday 9am to 2pm.

ATM Networks/Cashpoints PLUS, Cirrus, and other networks connecting automated-teller machines operate in Spain, and ATMs are plentiful in Madrid.

Consulates The consulate of the **United States** is in the embassy at Calle Serrano 75 (✆ **91-587-22-00,** or 91-587-22-00 after-hours; www.embusa.es/indexbis.html; Metro: Núñez de Bilbao), open Monday to Friday 9am to 6pm. The consulate of **Canada** is in the embassy at Núñez de Balboa 35 (✆ **91-423-32-50;** Metro: Velázquez), open Monday to Friday 8:30am to 5:30pm. The consulate of the **United Kingdom** is at Calle Fernando el Santo, Recoletos 7/9 (✆ **91-319-02-00;** www.ukinspain.com; Metro: Colón), open Monday to Friday 9am to 1:30pm and 3 to 6pm. The **Republic of Ireland** has its embassy at Claudio Coello 73 (✆ **91-576-35-00;** Metro: Serrano), open Monday to Friday 9am to 2pm. The consulate of **Ireland** is at Paseo de la Castellana 46 (✆ **91-436-40-93;** Metro: Serrano), open Monday to Friday 10am to 2pm. The consulate of **Australia** is at Plaza Descubridor Diego de Ordás 3 (✆ **91-353-66-00;** www.embaustralia.es; Metro: Ríos Rosas), open Monday to Thursday 8:30am to 5pm and Friday 8:30am to 2:15pm. The embassy of **New Zealand** is at Plaza de la Lealtad 2 (✆ **91-523-02-26;** www.nzembassy.com; Metro: Banco de España), open Monday to Friday 9am to 1:30pm and 2:30 to 5:30pm.

Currency The Spanish peseta gave way to the **euro** on March 1, 2002. At press time, 1€ = $1.45.

Dentists & Doctors For an English-speaking dentist or doctor, contact the U.S. embassy, Calle Serrano 75 (✆ **91-587-22-40**), which maintains a list of dentists and doctors who have offered their services to Americans abroad. Also, hotel concierges *(conserjes)* usually have lists of available doctors and dentists. For dental services, also consult **Unidad Médica Anglo-Americana**, Conde de Arandá 1 (✆ **91-435-18-23**), Monday to Friday 9am to 8pm and Saturday 10am to 1pm. There's a 24-hour answering service.

Drugstores For a late-night pharmacy, dial ✆ **098** or look in the daily newspaper under *"Farmacias de Guardia"* to learn what drugstores are open after 8pm. Another way to find an open pharmacy is to go to any pharmacy, even if it's closed—it will have posted a list of nearby pharmacies that are open late. Madrid has hundreds of pharmacies but one of the most central is **Farmacia de la Paloma**, Calle de Toledo 46 (✆ **91-365-34-58;** Metro: Puerta del Sol or La Latina).

Emergencies In an emergency, call ✆ **112** to report a **fire,** to reach the **police,** or to request an **ambulance.**

Hospitals & Clinics **Unidad Médica Anglo-Americana,** Conde de Arandá 1 (✆ **91-435-18-23;** Metro: Retiro), is a private outpatient clinic offering specialized services. This is not an emergency clinic, although someone on the staff is always available. The daily hours are from 9am to 8pm. In a real medical emergency, call ✆ **112** for an ambulance.

Internet Access Internet cafes have sprung up all over the city. Typical of these is **La Casa de Internet,** Calle Luchana 20, corner of Calle de Francisco Rojas (✆ **91-446-80-41** or 91-594-42-00; Metro: Bilbao; bus: 147 or 40). It costs 1.80€ ($2.60) per hour, and is open daily 8am to 1am.

Post Office If you don't want to receive your mail at your hotel, direct it to *Lista de Correos* at the central post office in Madrid. To pick up mail, go to the window marked LISTA, where you'll be asked to show your passport. Madrid's central office is the **Palacio de Comunicaciones** at Plaza de Cibeles (✆ **91-536-01-11;** Metro: Banco de España). An airmail letter or postcard to the United States is .75€ ($1.10).

Safety Leave valuables in a hotel safe or other secure place when going out. You may need your passport, however, as the police sometimes stop foreigners for identification checks. Carry only enough cash for the day's needs. Pickpockets and purse snatchers work major tourist sites, trains, restaurants, and ATMs. Criminals often work in pairs, grabbing purses from pedestrians, cyclists, even cars. Several scams are meant to divert the victim's attention, such as spilling something on his or her clothing, or thrusting maps or newspapers into his or her face.

Taxes The internal sales tax (known in Spain as IVA) ranges between 7% and 33%, depending on the commodity being sold. Food, wine, and basic necessities are taxed at 7%; most goods and services (including car rentals) at 13%; luxury items (jewelry, all tobacco, imported liquors) at 33%; and hotels at 7%.

If you are not a European Union resident and make purchases in Spain worth more than 90€ ($131), you can get a tax refund. To get the refund, you must complete three copies of a form that the store will give you, detailing the nature of your purchase and its value. Citizens of non-E.U. countries show the purchase and the form to the Spanish Customs Office. The shop is then supposed to refund the amount due to you. Discuss in what currency your refund will arrive.

Telephone The country code for Spain is **34** and the city code for Madrid is **91.** All numbers in Spain are now nine digits, starting with the two- or three-digit city code. You must dial all nine digits, no matter where you're calling from or to. Telephone centers are called *locutorios.* The minimum charge for **local telephone calls** is .25€ (40¢). Many pay phones accept major credit cards as well as phone cards you can buy at tobacconists' and post offices.

To charge a call to your calling card, dial **AT&T** (✆ **800/CALL-ATT** or 900/99-0011); **Sprint** (✆ 800/888-0013); **Canada Direct** (✆ 900/99-00-15); **British Telecom** (✆ 900/99-0044); or **Telecom New Zealand** (✆ 900/990-064).

Tipping Customary tips are somewhat less than you'd see in the U.S. or the U.K. In restaurants, tip 5% to 10%, depending on the quality of the service. Tip the hotel porter 1€ ($1.45) for carrying your bags, the doorman .90€ ($1.30) if he's truly helpful, and the hotel maid 1€ ($1.45) per day. Tip cabdrivers 10% of the fare.

WHERE TO STAY

ALONG THE PASEO DE LA CASTELLANA

Very Expensive

Hesperia Madrid ★★★ A member of the Leading Hotels of the World, the sleek, government-rated five-star Hesperia fits in perfectly with this upscale business neighborhood. The hotel's signature restaurant, **Santceloni,** found itself at the pinnacle of the capital's gastronomic pyramid almost as soon as it opened its doors (so reserve well in advance). A less rarefied but thoroughly competent dining room, **La Manzana,** is on the main floor. Guest rooms are of sufficient size, with exceedingly comfortable beds and such extras as fax machines, terry robes, and fresh flowers. High-speed wireless Internet access is available in the lobby and some rooms. Although the hotel is distant from most of the major sights, it is closer to the airport than city-center hotels.

Paseo de la Castellana 57, 28046 Madrid. ✆ **91-210-88-00.** Fax 91-210-88-99. www.hesperia-madrid.com. 171 units. 450€ ($653) double; from 750€ ($1,088) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 23€ ($33). Metro: Ruben Darío. **Amenities:** Restaurant; piano bar; car-rental desk; business center; room service; babysitting; laundry service/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, Wi-Fi.

Ritz Madrid ★★★ At the heart of Madrid near the Prado, this remains Madrid's most prestigious address, a bastion of glamour and an enduring relic of the Edwardian Age. Its grand public areas, with their soaring ceilings and graceful columns, were built in 1908 at the request of Alfonso XIII, who was embarrassed that his capital didn't have suitable accommodations for visiting royals. Rooms are spacious, elegantly furnished, and filled with fresh flowers. Each is equipped with a well-accessorized bathroom. The restaurant, which receives good reviews, has tables that spill onto a garden terrace in warm months.

Plaza de la Lealtad 5, 28014 Madrid. ✆ **800/237-1236** in the U.S. and Canada, or 91-701-67-67. Fax 91-701-67-76. www.ritz.es. 167 units. 561€–674€ ($813–$977) double; from 1,123€ ($1,628) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Banco de España. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; health club w/sauna; room service; babysitting; laundry service/dry cleaning service; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, coffeemaker, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

The Westin Palace ★★★ An ornate 1912 structure that captures the pre–World War I grand hotel style, the Palace faces the Prado and Neptune Fountain. When it first opened, it was the largest hotel in Europe. Everyone from Dalí to Picasso, from Sarah Bernhardt to Sophia Loren, has spent the night here. Nevertheless, the Westin Palace hasn't achieved the cachet of its sibling, the Ritz, across the Paseo de Castellana, perhaps because the Westin is so much larger. Rooms are traditional, with plenty of space, containing large marble bathrooms. Do have a drink under the great stained-glass dome at the back of the main floor.

Plaza de las Cortes 7, 28014 Madrid. ✆ **888/625-4988.** Fax 91-360-80-00. www.westin.com. 417 units. 219€–558€ ($318–$809) double; from 475€ ($689) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 33€ ($48). Metro: Banco de España. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; health club; room service; babysitting; laundry service/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Inexpensive

Mora ★ *Value* Long one of Madrid's top budget choices, even with rate jumps, the Mora is still an excellent choice. The spacious lobby with chandeliers sets the tone. The narrow but bright halls lead to rooms of varied configuration, but all are sufficiently furnished in muted tones, with carpeting. English is spoken by the helpful people at the front desk. The adjacent restaurant, **Bango** (separate management), attracts a polished crowd for low-cost meals.

Paseo del Prado 32, 28014 Madrid. ✆ **91-420-15-69.** Fax 91-420-05-64. www.hotelmora.com. 62 units. 78€ ($113) double; 96€ ($139) triple. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking nearby 21€ ($30). Metro: Atocha. **Amenities:** Lounge bar/cafeteria; bar. *In room:* A/C, TV, safe.

NEAR PLAZA ESPAÑA

MODERATE

Casón del Tormes This attractive hotel is around the corner from the Royal Palace and Plaza de España. Behind a four-story red-brick facade with stone-trimmed windows, it overlooks a quiet one-way street. A long, narrow lobby floored with marble opens onto a public room. Guest rooms are generally roomy and comfortable, with color-coordinated fabrics and dark wood, including mahogany headboards. Motorists appreciate the public parking lot near the hotel.

Calle del Río 7, 28013 Madrid. ✆ **91-541-97-46.** Fax 91-541-18-52. www.hotelcasondeltormes.com. 63 units. 102€ ($148) double; 140€ ($203) triple. AE, DC, MC, V. Nearby parking 20€ ($29). Metro: Plaza de España. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; room service; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer, safe.

Santo Domingo ★ This stylish, carefully decorated hotel adjacent to the Gran Vía is a 2-minute walk from Plaza de España. It was inaugurated in 1994, after an older building was gutted and reconfigured into the comfortable modern structure you see today. The soundproof units are decorated individually, each a wee bit differently from its neighbor, in pastel-derived shades. Some contain gold damask wall coverings, faux tortoiseshell desks, and striped satin bedspreads. The best units are the fifth-floor doubles, especially those with furnished balconies and views over the tile roofs of Old Madrid.

Plaza Santo Domingo 13, 28013 Madrid. ✆ **91-547-98-00.** Fax 91-547-59-95. www.hotelsantodomingo.net. 120 units. 155€–180€ ($225–$261) double; 202€–305€ ($293–$442) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 23€ ($33). Metro: Santo Domingo. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; room service; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, iron, safe, Wi-Fi.

ON OR NEAR THE GRAN VIA

Expensive

Hotel Urban ★★★ With a postage-stamp swimming pool open to the sky, a moonlit restaurant, and a spectacular patio, Urban is the latest word in city chic. Opposite the lower house of the Spanish Parliament, Urban evokes an office building atrium, but its grace notes are the towering sculptures from Papua, New Guinea. Rooms are luxurious and modern with dark-wood furnishings and lots of dark leather. Elegant Madrileños flood the sleek Europa Deco restaurant at night to savor its Mediterranean fusion cuisine. Just below the lobby is a Museum of Egyptian Art with sculptures from the heyday of the Pharaohs.

Carrera de San Jerónimo, 28014 Madrid. ✆ **91-787-77-70.** Fax 91-787-77-99. www.derbyhotels.es. 96 units. 210€–313€ ($305–$454) double; 315€–375€ ($457–$544) junior suite; 550€ ($798) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking: 25€ ($36). Metro: Sevilla. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; outdoor pool; room service; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, safe, Wi-Fi.

Moderate

Best Western Arosa ★ Following extensive renovations, the Arosa gained the government's four-star rating. The broad side of this late-19th-century building occupies a block in the middle of the Gran Vía, but double-paned glass keeps the street noise out. Rooms vary significantly in size and layout, but with this many, if you're unhappy with the room you get, a better one is nearly always available.

Madrid

FRANCE
PORTUGAL
Madrid
SPAIN

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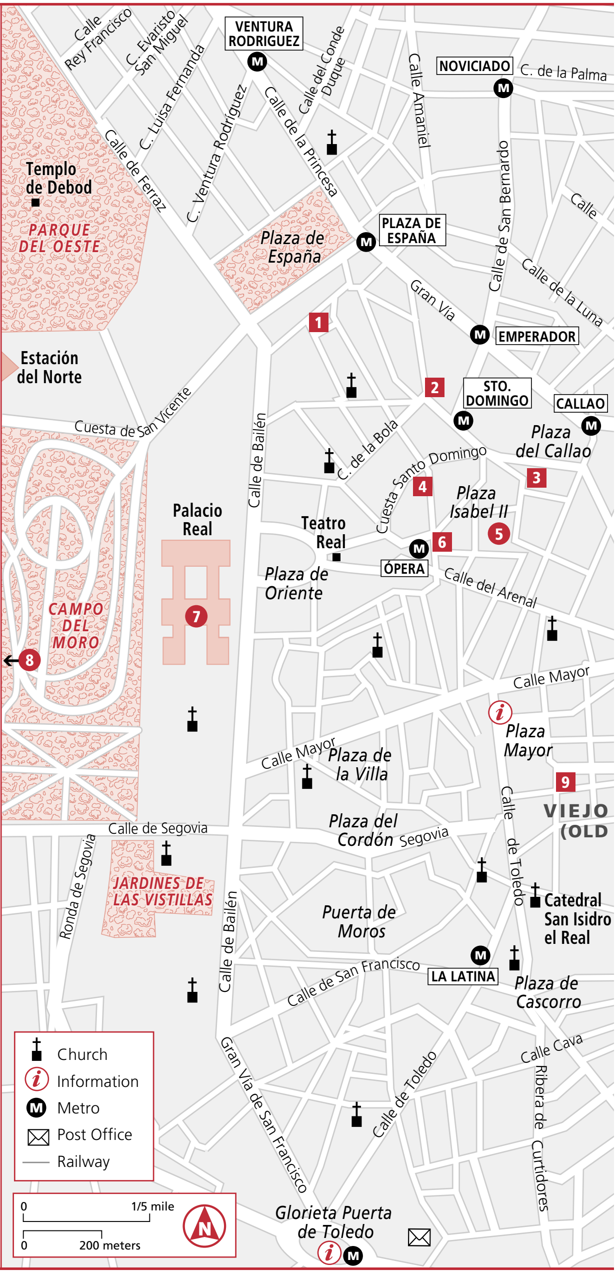
Calle Rey Francisco
C. Evaristo San Miguel
C. Luisa Fernanda
VENTURA RODRIGUEZ
Calle del Conde Duque
Calle Amaniel
NOVICIADO
C. de la Palma
Calle de Ferraz
C. Ventura Rodríguez
Calle de la Princesa
Templo de Debod
PARQUE DEL OESTE
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C. de la Bola
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Plaza Isabel II
Palacio Real
Teatro Real
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ÓPERA
Plaza de Oriente
Calle del Arenal
CAMPO DEL MORO
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Calle Mayor
Plaza Mayor
Calle Mayor
Plaza de la Villa
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Plaza del Cordón
Segovia
Calle de Toledo
Ronda de Segovia
JARDINES DE LAS VISTILLAS
Catedral San Isidro el Real
Puerta de Moros
Calle de Bailén
Calle de San Francisco
LA LATINA
Plaza de Cascorro
Calle Cava
Church
Information
Metro
Post Office
Railway
Gran Vía de San Francisco
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Ribera de Curtidores
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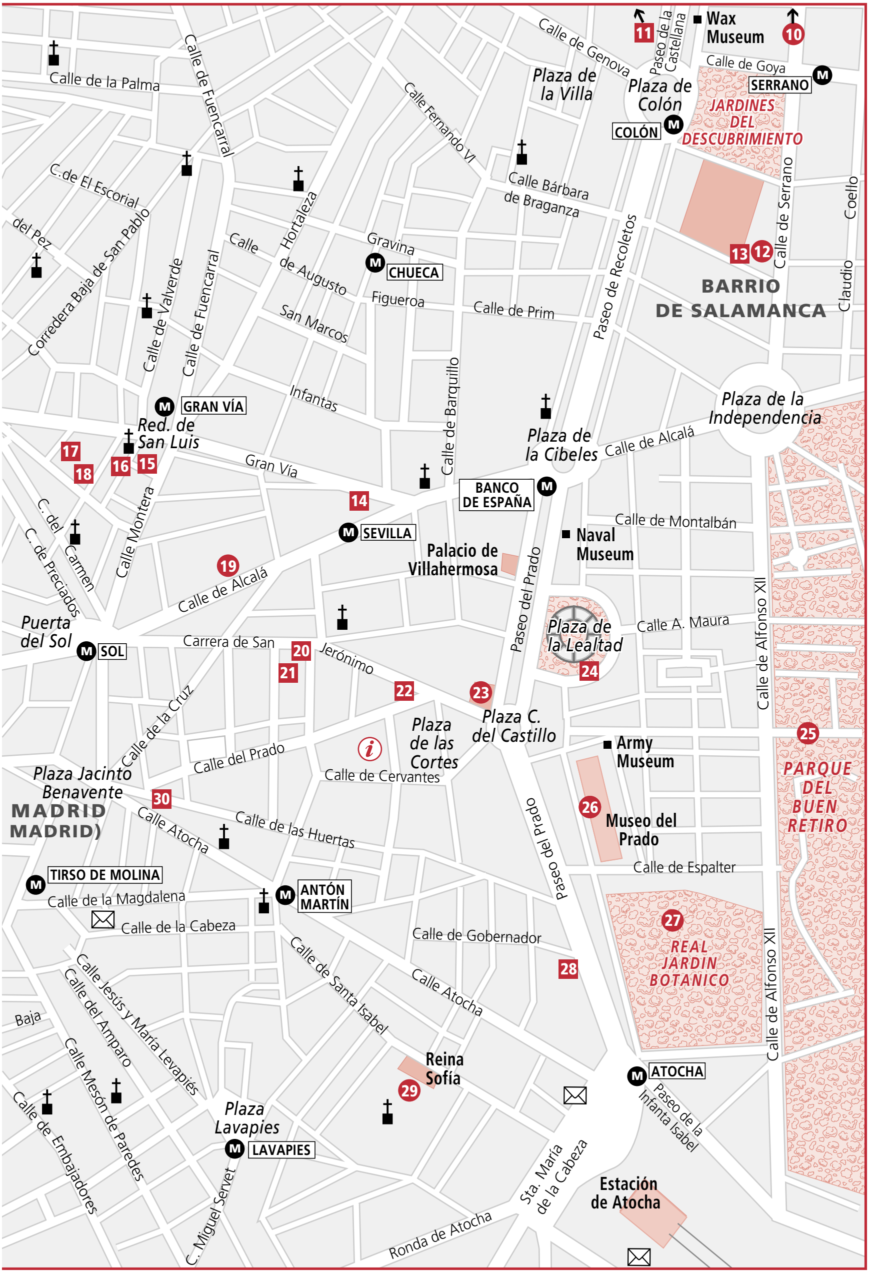
Calle de la Palma
Calle de Fuencarral
C. de El Escorial
del Pez
Corredera Baja de San Pablo
Calle de Valverde
Calle de Fuencarral
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Calle Salud 21, 28013 Madrid. ✆ **91-532-16-00.** Fax 91-531-31-27. www.bestwestern.es/arosa.html. 139 units. 175€ ($254) double. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 25€ ($36). Metro: Gran Vía. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; room service; laundry service/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

High Tech Gran Avenida ★ *Value* This swiftly proliferating chain focuses mostly on bringing older properties up to modern standards. This one opened in 2003. Dark wood fixtures predominate in the comfortable doubles here, but the real value is in the four-person "family rooms." The multinozzle "hydro showers" in some rooms are also great fun. The best rooms are on the third floor. Room no. 316, which commands a premium, is vast, with a panoramic view of the Gran Via. Sure, it's noisy, but it gives an unparalleled sense of the pulse of Madrid.

Calle de Mesonero Romanos 14, 28013 Madrid. ✆ **91-532-71-07.** Fax 91-532-71-06. www.hthoteles.com. 68 units. 115€–165€ ($167–$239) double. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 12€ ($17). Metro: Callao or Gran Vía. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; business center; laundry service/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, trouser press (in some), safe.

Hotel A. Gaudí ★ A majestic, early 1900s building at the end of the Gran Vía was gutted to be transformed into this near-luxury hotel. Plaza Mayor and the Prado and Thyssen museums are within walking distance. A siesta-time retreat to these quiet teak-lined quarters is restorative. The guest rooms come in a number of sizes, each comfortably furnished and well maintained. If Barcelona is not on your itinerary, you may want to sample the Catalán cuisine in the stylish on-site restaurant, Pedrera.

Gran Vía 9, 28013 Madrid. ✆ **91-531-22-22.** Fax 91-531-54-69. www.hoteles-catalonia.es. 184 units. 100€–197€ ($145–$286) double; from 300€ ($435) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Nearby parking 30€ ($44). Metro: Gran Vía. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; exercise room w/sauna and whirlpool; room service; babysitting; laundry service/dry cleaning service. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

Hotel Preciados ★★ *Kids* A beautiful mingling of old and new has resulted in this gorgeous hotel in an 1861 building. The original architecture remains, but the rooms are sparkling and well kept, with spacious bathrooms. Light wood furnishings give the rooms a clean, airy feel; hardwood and marble floors recall its classic past. Wireless Internet access gives the hotel a 21st-century touch. The hotel staff is welcoming to kids. One floor is nonsmoking, and another is for women only. The **Varela** restaurant downstairs serves innovative Spanish cuisine.

Preciados 37, 28013 Madrid. ✆ **91-454-44-00.** Fax 91-454-44-01. www.preciadoshotel.com. 73 units. 125€–162€ ($181–$235) double; 192€–325€ ($278–$471) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 18€ ($26). Metro: Santo Domingo or Callao. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; room service; babysitting; laundry service/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, iron, safe, Wi-Fi.

Liabeny This hotel, named after the original owner (pronounced, more or less, Ya-*bay*-nee) is on a busy plaza midway between the Gran Vía and the Puerta del Sol—the pedestrian shopping district containing the main branch of El Corte Inglés is down a short hill. The contemporary-styled rooms have been redecorated. Personalized attention from the staff adds to the comfort of your stay. The hotel has its own secure garage. Prices jumped a bit after the latest renovations, but in its category, this hotel is still a solid value.

Salud 3, 28013 Madrid. ✆ **91-531-90-00.** Fax 91-532-74-21. www.hotelliabeny.com. 220 units. 135€–150€ ($196–$218) double; 156€ ($226) triple. AE, MC, V. Parking 15€ ($22). Metro: Puerta del Sol, Callao, or Gran Vía. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; room service; gym; sauna; babysitting; laundry service/dry cleaning service; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, iron, safe.

Inexpensive

Anaco It may not quite sparkle, but the Anaco is a fine place to stay. The first five floors of this popular hotel have been renovated with witty alternating red-and-green color schemes, right down to the towels. Double-glazed windows provide blessed silence. Off the lobby, the busy cafeteria offers an inexpensive *menú del día* and stays open from 7:30am to 2am every day.

Tres Cruces 3 (at Plaza del Carmen), 28013 Madrid. ✆ **91-522-46-04.** Fax 91-531-64-84. www.anacohotel.com. 39 units. 94€–99€ ($136–$144) double; 127€–134€ ($184–$194) triple. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 28€ ($41). Metro: Gran Vía or Puerta del Sol. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer, safe.

NEAR THE PUERTA DEL SOL

Expensive

Casa de Madrid ★★★ This small, elegant B&B lies across the street from the Royal Opera. Doña Maria Medina's enclave lies on the second floor of an 18th-century mansion. She has exquisitely decorated each bedroom with antiques, including Persian rugs. Each accommodation has a different theme. The simplest chamber is called the Zen room (a single). Among the most elegant units are the Spanish Room, the Indian Room, the Greek Room, and the Blue Room; the grandest is the Damascus Suite. The house is filled with valuable objets d'art.

Calle Arrieta 2, 28013 Madrid. ✆ **91-559-57-91.** Fax 91-540-11-00. www.casademadrid.com. 17 units. 240€–275€ ($348–$399) double; 390€ ($566) suite. Rates include continental breakfast. AE, DISC, MC, V. Nearby parking 12€ ($17). Metro: Opera. **Amenities:** Massages; library. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar.

Moderate

Hotel Meninas ★ *Value* In the very center of Madrid, this little hotel was created out of a 19th-century building that was transformed into one of the better bargains in the area. The antique structure features modern improvements ranging from a smoke detector system to high-speed Internet access. The midsize and soundproof bedrooms come in a range of sizes and styles, going from singles to suites, even some triples. The hotel, of course, takes its name from *Las Meninas,* the most famous painting in the Prado, the creation of the incomparable Diego Velázquez.

Calle Campomanes 7, 28013 Madrid. ✆ **91-541-28-05.** Fax 91-541-28-06. www.hotelmeninas.com. 37 units. 149€–185€ ($216–$268) double; 189€ ($274) triple; 210€ ($305) suite. AE, MC, V. Parking nearby 30€ ($44). Metro: Opera. **Amenities:** Breakfast room; bar; business center; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

AROUND PLAZA SANTA ANA & PLAZA MAYOR

Expensive

Catalonia Moratín ★ The Catalonia chain rescued a neglected 18th-century mansion and in 2002 turned it into this first-class hotel for both business and leisure travelers. The great granite blocks in its entryway and a marvelous grand staircase are some of the majestic features. The cellar here was used as a bomb shelter during the Civil War and was said to be connected by tunnel to the Royal Palace. Heritage aside, the guest rooms are sizable, many with foldout sleeping sofas and king-size beds. The Puerta del Sol and Plaza Mayor are both 5 minutes away.

Atocha 23, 28012 Madrid. ✆ **91-369-71-71.** Fax 91-360-12-31. www.hoteles-catalonia.es. 63 units. 122€–300€ ($177–$435) double. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking nearby 25€ ($36). Metro: Sol or Tirso de Molina. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; room service; laundry service/dry cleaning service. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Inexpensive

Inglés A large ship model in the front window alerts you to this popular little hotel. Enter the lobby, with its comfy sofas and armchairs, and you'll find that little has changed in recent years, including the room rates and the too-often dour gents at the front desk. Just beyond the TV lounge is the bar/cafeteria where breakfast is served. Many rooms have sitting areas. Nearby Plaza Santa Ana and Calle de las Huertas are brimming with tapas and music bars. A parking garage has 25 spaces for guests. Note that only about half of the hotel is air-conditioned, so ask for an air-conditioned room in summer.

Calle Echegaray 8, 28014 Madrid. ✆ **91-429-65-51.** Fax 91-420-24-23. 58 units. 100€ ($145) double; 120€ ($174) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 12€ ($17). Metro: Sol. **Amenities:** Cafeteria; bar; exercise room; laundry service/dry cleaning service; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* TV, hair dryer, safe.

Plaza Mayor ★ A crisp hotel in the shell of a 19th-century church, this is a welcome addition to Madrid's often dreary budget lodgings. Despite its name, the brick-red building wedges into Plaza Santa Cruz, slightly east of Plaza Mayor. An entrance has been carved out of the ground-floor *taberna.* The bright, contemporary (though often oddly shaped) rooms are of sufficient size, with double-thick windows sealing off traffic noise; four have double beds. The corner rooms offer light and extra space.

Calle Atocha 2, 28012 Madrid. ✆ **91-360-06-06.** Fax 91-360-06-10. www.h-plazamayor.com. 34 units. 81€–97€ ($117–$141) double; 120€ ($174) suite. Rates include breakfast. AE, MC, V. Parking 15€ ($22). Metro: Sol or La Latina. **Amenities:** Coffee shop; bar. *In room:* A/C, TV, safe, hair dryer, Wi-Fi.

NEAR SALAMANCA

Expensive

Hesperia Emperatriz ★ This hotel is just off the Paseo de Castellana, in the orbit of some of Madrid's most deluxe hotels and restaurants, but with relatively more reasonable rates than surrounding hotels. Guest rooms, once decked in gloomy earth tones, have been lightened up with both traditional and modern furniture. They're easier on the eye than the somewhat unimaginative public areas. Ask for a seventh-floor room, where you'll get a private terrace at no extra charge, and if you're going for all-out luxe, ask for a suite with a whirlpool and/or sauna.

López de Hoyos 4, 28006 Madrid. ✆ **91-563-80-88.** Fax 91-563-98-04. www.hotel-emperatriz.com. 158 units. 265€–279€ ($384–$405) double; from 450€ ($653) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 22€ ($32). Metro: Gregoria Marañón. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; room service; in-room massage; babysitting; laundry service/dry cleaning service. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Moderate

Jardín de Recoletos ★ *Value* Built in 1999, this contemporary apartment hotel welcomes its guests to the chic Salamanca district of Madrid. It is close to both the financial district and the best shops, on a quiet street close to the Plaza Colón. The inviting lobby has sleek marble floors and a stained-glass ceiling; adjacent is a combined cafe and restaurant. Most of the rooms are spacious and attractively decorated in a traditional style, with small sitting and dining areas. The accommodations come with well-equipped kitchenettes—unusual for Madrid. If you want to pay extra, you can book either a unit rated "superior" or a suite that offers a hydromassage bathroom and a big terrace.

Gil de Santivañes 6, 28001 Madrid. ✆ **91-781-16-40.** Fax 91-781-16-41. www.vphoteles.com. 43 units. 133€–209€ ($193–$303) double; 200€–268€ ($290–$389) suite. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 17€ ($25). Metro: Serrano. **Amenities:** Restaurant; cafe; room service; laundry/dry cleaning service. *In room:* A/C, TV, kitchenette, minibar, beverage maker, hair dryer, iron, safe.

WHERE TO DINE

NEAR PLAZA DE LA CIBELES

Moderate

El Mirador del Museo ★★ CONTINENTAL The Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza has converted its rooftop into a summer terrace dining event. You are rewarded not only with panoramic views, but presented with one of the most finely honed cuisines in the area. Gigantic umbrellas protect you at lunch from the sun, but at night you dine under the stars. The chef displays a rare talent, a union of traditional and imaginative dishes, each platter filled with market-fresh ingredients rendered with skill. We still remember our veal sirloin with cardamom-flavored vanilla pasta. You might begin with a refreshing vichyssoise with couscous. Fresh fish always appears on the menu—perhaps sea urchins for a bit of exotica. All dishes are well balanced in flavors, and the cellar is awash in fine Spanish vintages.

Paseo Prado 8. ☎ **91-429-27-32.** Reservations required. Main courses 23€–36€ ($33–$52). AE, DC, MC, V. May–Oct Wed–Mon 8pm–1am. Metro: Banco de España.

Tocororo CUBAN This is Madrid's finest Cuban restaurant. The nostalgia is evident in the pictures of Old Havana. The waitstaff is as lively as the pop Cuban music playing on the stereo. The dishes are typical Caribbean dishes, such as *ropa vieja* (shredded meat served with black beans and rice), or lobster enchilada. If you prefer a simpler repast, try a selection of *empanadas y tamales* (fried potato pastries and plantain dough filled with onions and ground meat). Special house cocktails include *mojitos* (rum, lime juice, mint, and a hint of sugar) and daiquiris. Winter brings live Cuban music. Discreet but pleasant, this restaurant is located in the zone of La Letras. (Most of the bars and discos are in this area.)

Calle del Prado 3 (at the corner of Echegaray). ☎ **91-369-40-00.** Reservations required Thurs–Sat. Main courses 14€–20€ ($20–$29); fixed-price menu 15€ ($22). AE, DC, MC, V. Tues–Sun 1:30–5pm and 8:30pm–midnight. Closed last 2 weeks Feb and last 2 weeks Sept. Metro: Sevilla.

NEAR THE PLAZA DE LAS CORTES

Expensive

Restaurante Europa Deco ★★ MEDITERRANEAN Tucked away in the Urban, one of the chicest hotels in Spain, this elegant enclave of good food attracts celebrities, politicians, and even soccer stars. The setting is stunning, with Papuan totems, golden Venetian mosaic columns, and black Brazilian granite floors. The *pijos* (the smart set) shows up here in hordes, and even serious foodies are drawn to the smashing champagne cocktails and such delights as some of Madrid's best sushi. When ordering, we gravitate to the deboned pork or the sautéed scallops, among the chef's specialties. Joaquin de Felipe is rightly hailed as one of the city's most accomplished chefs. Perhaps you'll agree after sampling his "New Wave" gazpacho made with fava beans and Kamone-tomato purée. His skirt steak of Iberian pig is reason enough to come back. End with one of his daily changing but always sumptuous desserts.

In the Urban Hotel, Carrera de San Jerónimo 34. ☎ **91-787-77-80.** Reservations required. Main courses 25€–39€ ($36–$57). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 8pm–midnight. Metro: Sevilla.

Moderate

Errota-Zar BASQUE Next to the House of Deputies and the Zarzuela Theater, Errota-Zar means "old mill," a nostalgic reference to the Basque country, home of the Olano family, owners of the restaurant. A small bar at the entrance displays a collection of fine cigars and wines, and the blue-painted walls are adorned with paintings of

Tapa to Tapa to Tapa

No need to go hungry waiting around for the traditional Madrid dinner hour—10pm or later. Throughout the city you'll find bars—variously known as *mesónes, tascas,* and *tabernas*—that set out platters of tempting hot and cold appetizers known as *tapas:* mushrooms, salads, baby eels, shrimp, lobster, mussels, sausages, ham, and, in one establishment at least, bull testicles. Described below are some favorite tapas bars out of hundreds. ***Tip:*** You can often save money by eating at the bar rather than occupying a table.

La Trucha, Núñez de Arce 6 (☎ **91-532-08-82;** Metro: Sol), serves trout as its signature dish. One version is *trucha a La Trucha*—the whole fish is split open, filled with chopped ham and garlic, and then sautéed. Most tapas and larger dishes are cooked to order. This is a favorite stop on the tapas circuit, partly because the men behind the counter make new patrons feel like old friends. There's a larger but similar La Trucha at Manuel Fernández y González 3 (☎ **91-429-58-33;** Metro: Sol).

Casa Mingo, Paseo de la Florida 24 (☎ **91-547-79-18;** Metro: Norte), has been known for decades for its cider, both still and bubbly. The perfect accompanying tidbit is a piece of Asturian *cabrales* (goat cheese), but the roast chicken is the specialty of the house. Patrons share big tables under the vaulted ceiling of the dining room; in summer, the staff sets tables out on the sidewalk.

Hemingway and the bullfighter Luís Miguel Dominguín used to frequent the casual **Cervecería Alemania,** Plaza de Santa Ana 6 (☎ **91-429-70-33;** Metro: Alonso Martín or Tirso de Molina), which earned its name because of its long-ago German clients. Opening onto one of the liveliest plazas in Madrid, it clings to its early 1900s traditions. To accompany your *caña* (a short beer), try the fried sardines or a wedge of *tortilla,* a firm potato-and-egg omelet served at room temperature.

Unique in Madrid, the **Cervecería Santa Bárbara,** Plaza de Santa Bárbara 8 (☎ **91-319-04-49;** Metro: Alonzo Martínez; bus no. 3, 7, or 21), is an outlet for a beer factory, and the management has spent a lot to make it modern and inviting. Globe lights and spinning ceiling fans hang above the black-and-white marble floor. You come here for beer, of course: *cerveza negra* (black beer) or *cerveza dorada* (golden beer). Brews are best accompanied by the very pricey shrimp, the lobster, or the ugly but tasty goose barnacles called *percebes.* It's open daily from 11:30am to midnight. Many Madrileños begin their nightly *tapeo* at **Toscana,** Manuel Fernandez y Gonzales 10 (☎ **91-429-60-31;** Metro: Puerta del Sol or Sevilla). They sit on crude stools, under sausages, peppers, and sheaves of golden wheat hung from the dark beams, as a man behind the bar ladles out bowls of the nightly specials—kidneys in sherry sauce, perhaps, or veal stew.

Basque landscapes. The restaurant has only about two dozen tables, which can easily fill up. Many Basques begin their meal with a *tortilla de bacalao* (salt cod omelet). For main dishes, sample the delights of *chuletón de buey* (oxtail with grilled vegetables), or *kokotxas de merluza en aceite* (cheeks of hake cooked in virgin olive oil). Hake cheeks may not sound appetizing, but Spaniards and many foreigners praise this fish dish. You might opt for *foie al Pedro Jiménez* (duck liver grilled and served with a sweet wine sauce).

Jovellanos 3, 1st floor. ☎ **91-531-25-64.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 18€–32€ ($26–$46). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat 1–4pm and 9pm–midnight. Closed Aug 15–30 and Easter. Metro: Banco España or Sevilla.

ON OR NEAR THE GRAN VIA

Moderate

La Barraca ★ REGIONAL SPANISH On a narrow side street parallel to the Gran Vía, La Barraca has been around for 7 decades. The folkloric atmosphere includes such touches as lace curtains, ceramic pitchers, and hanging plates. The kitchen excels in *arroces*—the rice dishes of southeastern Spain's Valencia, ranging from one dish flavored with squid ink to one that substitutes thin noodles for rice *(fideua marinera).* If it's your first Spanish rice dish, you might want to order the *paella mixta,* with bits of chicken, sausage, shrimp, mussels, pork, and squid. Expect some time to pass before being served—everything is prepared to order. A smooth liver pâté with good bread is an inexpensive appetite calmer as you await the main event.

Reina 29. ☎ **91-532-71-54.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 18€–30€ ($26–$44). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 1–4pm and 8:30pm–midnight. Metro: Gran Vía or Banco de España.

Suite INTERNATIONAL Beginning life as the "Mad Cafe Club," this hip restaurant/bar remains a popular haunt for the young and fashionable. There's a garden where patrons relax on hot summer nights and a disco that cranks up at midnight. About half of the starters are salads, which are a good choice, since main courses are comprised almost entirely of meat. Preparations are attractive, if decidedly minimalist, as is the case with the three small sea bass filets touched with trout-roe-flavored butter sauce and served with a few chunks of boiled potato.

Virgin de los Peligros 4 (between Alcalá and Gran Vía). ☎ **91-521-40-31.** Reservations recommended. *Menu dégustacion* 32€ ($46). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat 4:30pm–1am. Metro: Gran Vía.

NEAR THE PUERTA DEL SOL

Expensive

Lhardy SPANISH/INTERNATIONAL A Madrileño legend since it opened in 1839, this restaurant's street-level room contains what might be the most elegant snack bar in town. Cups of steaming consommé are self-dispensed from silver samovars into delicate porcelain cups, accompaniments to tasty tapas that run along the lines of creamy-centered croquettes. Early evening is the fashionable time for a stop here. Some of the city's older literati and politicians gather in the formal restaurant upstairs.

Carrera de San Jerónimo 8 (east of Puerta del Sol). ☎ **91-521-33-85.** Reservations recommended in the upstairs dining room. Main courses 27€–64€ ($39–$93). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 1–3:30pm and 8:30–11pm. Closed Aug. Metro: Puerta del Sol or Sevilla.

Inexpensive

La Biotika ★ *Finds* VEGETARIAN Vegetarian cuisine doesn't get a lot of attention in most Madrid restaurants, but this discovery is a rare exception. Opening east of the landmark Plaza Santa Ana, it is intimate and charming. It serves the capital's best macrobiotic vegetarian cuisine, and does so exceedingly well. We always begin with one of the homemade soups, which are made fresh daily, then have one of the large, crisp salads. The bread is also made fresh daily. A specialty is the "meatball without meat"—made with vegetables, shaped like a meatball. Tofu with zucchini and many other offerings appear daily.

Amor de Dios 3. ✆ **91-429-07-80.** *Menú del día* 9.40€–15€ ($14–$22). MC, V. Mon–Sat 1–5pm; Sun 1–5pm. Metro: Antón Martín.

La Finca de Susana ★ *Value* MEDITERRANEAN A concern for light, healthy eating is far from a priority in most Spanish restaurants. But maybe they'll think again after they see the business this place is doing. It's housed in a space that looks like a former bank, with potted palms and a long wall of windows. You'll find a choice of five vegetable dishes and a similar number of low-calorie options. The manager even declares that the specialty of the house is grilled vegetables. That doesn't mean that all diners go the green and leafy route. There's plenty of fish, chicken, and pork on the menu, but prepared with less oil, fat, and salt than at most other restaurants.

Calle Arlaban 4. ✆ **91-369-35-57.** Reservations not accepted. Main courses 7€–15€ ($10–$22); lunch menu 10€ ($15). MC, V. Daily 1–3:45pm and 8:30–11:45pm. Metro: Sevilla.

NEAR PLAZA SANTA ANA

Moderate

Champagnería Gala ★ MEDITERRANEAN The front room has blood-orange walls with painted vines coupled with a glassed-over courtyard containing real and artificial plants and a Venetian chandelier. *Arroces* (rice dishes) are featured. Italian risottos have joined the paellas and *fideuàs* (a similar dish with thin noodles instead of rice) and come with a choice of 16 components, from cheese and bull's tail to rabbit and fish. Included in the menu are do-it-yourself *pa amb tomaquet* (Catalán bread rubbed with garlic and tomato pulp and drizzled with oil), a seasonal salad, wine, aioli and *romesco* sauces, dessert, and coffee.

Moratín 22 (west of Paseo del Prado). ✆ **91-429-25-62.** Reservations required. Main courses 13€–18€ ($19–$26). No credit cards. Daily 1–4pm and 9:30pm–11pm. Metro: Antón Martín.

Inexpensive

La Creazione ★ ITALIAN On one of Madrid's favorite restaurant streets, this trattoria gratifies several needs. You'll be asked "restaurant or pizzeria?" The "restaurant" has tablecloths, while the tables in the pizzeria are cheerful glass-topped displays of pasta and beans. Both pastas and pizzas are made on the premises and prepared to order. The big stars are the 25 or so pizza variations, each with a thin, crunchy, airy crust and improbable mixes of toppings (bacon, oregano, pine nuts, and currants) that are actually good. The restaurant menu features sophisticated seafood dishes. Most food is available *para llevar*—for takeout.

Ventura de la Vega 9 (near Carrera de San Jerónimo). ✆ **91-429-03-87.** Main courses 16€–22€ ($23–$32); pizzas and pastas 12€–18€ ($17–$26); *menú turístico* 20€ ($29). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 1:30–4:30pm and 9pm–12:30am. Metro: Sol.

La Moderna SPANISH/TAPAS Some of the best tapas around the plaza are served at this upscale tavern—no small feat, given the fierce competition. But look first to the inviting cheese and wine selections. A chalkboard tells of the rotated six or seven pressings available by the glass, which go wonderfully with the many regional cheeses. Each glass also comes with a little minitapa, such as a sardine tail on tomato-rubbed bread. You can also get rations of smoked fish, hams, or sausages.

Plaza de Santa Ana 12 (near the Hotel Reina Victoria). ✆ **91-420-15-82.** Tapas and *raciones* 4€–15€ ($5.80–$22). MC, V. Daily noon–3am. Metro: Sol.

NEAR THE ROYAL PALACE

Expensive/Moderate

Café de Oriente FRENCH/SPANISH Bordering on one of Madrid's most historic and royal squares, the Oriente offers bistro informality in the main-floor cafe (inexpensive); grand dining (very expensive) in the 17th-century cellar called the Horno de Leña; and an adjoining tapas bar, La Botillería. Expect members of high-powered corporate groups downstairs, while the cafe is filled with a workaday crowd during the day and fashionable night owls in the evening. All patrons appreciate the generous array of tapas.

Plaza de Oriente 2. ✆ **91-547-15-64.** Reservations recommended (restaurant only). In cafe and bar tapas 6€–12€ ($8.70–$17). In restaurant main courses 18€–36€ ($26–$52). AE, DC, MC, V. Cafe daily 8:30am–1:30am. Restaurant daily 1–4pm and 8:30pm–1:30am. Metro: Opera.

Inexpensive

La Bola REGIONAL SPANISH Easily spotted by its crimson exterior, La Bola has been on the scene since 1870. Hemingway and Ava Gardner were patrons, as attested to by photos above the carved wainscoting. Ask about the restaurant's history and you'll get a leaflet. The big menu item is *cocido madrileño,* the traditional Castilian Sunday boiled dinner: Several kinds of meat and vegetables are slow-cooked together for hours and the rich broth is then strained off and tiny noodles are dropped in as a first course. This course is followed by the vegetables (potatoes, chickpeas, cabbage) and the meats (usually chicken, chorizo, beef, and pork). Fish dishes are well suited to smaller appetites.

Bola 5 (2 blocks north of the Teatro Real). ✆ **91-547-69-30.** Main courses 18€–36€ ($26–$52). No credit cards. Daily 1:30–4pm; Mon–Sat 8:30–11pm. Metro: Santo Domingo.

NEAR RETIRO & SALAMANCA

Very Expensive

Horcher ★★ GERMAN/INTERNATIONAL Berlin was the first home of this legendary luxury restaurant, which opened in 1904. Prompted by a tip from a high-ranking officer that Germany was losing World War II, Herr Horcher moved his restaurant to neutral Madrid in 1943. Ever since, the restaurant has continued its grand European traditions, including service by knowledgeable waiters and uniformed doormen. Among the tempting possibilities are shrimp tartare and a distinctive warm hake salad. The venison stew in green pepper with orange peel, and the crayfish with parsley and cucumber, are examples of the elegant fare, served with impeccable style. The kitchen does a fine job with wild boar, veal, and sea bass as well.

Alfonso XII 6 (near Valenzuela). ✆ **91-532-35-96.** Reservations required. Jackets and ties required for men. Main courses 25€–40€ ($36–$58). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri 1:30–4pm and 8:30pm–midnight; Sat 8:30pm–midnight. Metro: Retiro.

Viridiana ★ INTERNATIONAL Long praised as one of Madrid's most notable restaurants, Viridiana is named after the 1961 Luís Buñuel film classic. As soon as patrons are settled, the captain launches into a lengthy recitation of the day's specials, from salads to desserts. Among these are contemporary takes on traditional recipes, often with Asian touches. Some fine examples include tuna tartare, salads of exotic greens with smoked fish, steak filet with truffles, guinea fowl stuffed with herbs and wild mushrooms, baby squid with curry on a bed of lentils, and roast lamb in puff pastry with fresh basil. While rarely as brilliant as it was perceived to be 2 decades ago, the food here is never predictable—you'll find an exciting twist or two in every dish.

Juan de Mena 14 (west of Alfonso XII). ✆ **91-531-10-39.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 30€–37€ ($44–$54). V. Mon–Sat 1:30–4pm and 9pm–midnight. Closed Aug and 1 week at Easter. Metro: Retiro Bancode España.

Expensive

Alkalde BASQUE/INTERNATIONAL Alkalde affects a humble, countrified mien, with a barnlike *típico* tavern upstairs and a maze of stone-sided cellars downstairs that are pleasantly cool in summer. You might begin with the fish soup, followed by one of the five different preparations of *merluza* (hake), chicken cutlets, or *cigalas* (crayfish). Other recommended dishes are trout, stuffed peppers, and chicken steak.

Jorge Juan 10 (near Claudio Coello). ✆ **91-576-33-59.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 17€–40€ ($25–$58). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily noon–midnight. Metro: Serrano. Bus: 8, 21, 29, or 53.

El Amparo ★★ BASQUE This superior gastronomic enclave hides with four other restaurants behind a curtain of vines at the end of an alley. The multitiered space is defined by rough-hewn beams, and is illuminated by sunlight through the long skylight. The innovative offerings have included cod cheeks in a red-pepper purée, and ravioli with crayfish. A battalion of correct, unobtrusive waiters bring two different *aperitivos* to stoke the appetite, and then serve such main courses as cold marinated salmon with tomato sorbet, *lubina* (sea bass), bisque of shellfish with Armagnac, pigs' feet stuffed with morels, and platters of steamed fish of the day.

Callejón de Puígcerdá 8 (at the corner of Jorge Juan). ✆ **91-431-64-56.** Reservations required. Main courses 25€–42€ ($36–$61). AE, MC, V. Mon–Fri 1:30–3:30pm and 9–11:30pm; Sat 9–11:30pm. Closed the week before Easter and 1 week in Aug. Metro: Goya. Bus: 21 or 53.

Moderate

El Espejo ★ INTERNATIONAL You'll find good-tasting food and one of the most perfectly crafted Art Nouveau interiors in Madrid at this restaurant. There's an attractive cafe/bar, a neo-Victorian glass pavilion out on the promenade, and outdoor tables and chairs nearby. A piano player often performs on warm nights. Menu items include grouper ragout with clams, steak tartare, and duck with pineapple.

Paseo de Recoletos 31 (near Zurbarán). ✆ **91-308-23-47.** Reservations required. *Menú del día* 25€ ($36). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 1–4pm and 9pm–midnight. Metro: Banco de España or Colón. Bus: 27 or 45.

La Gamella ★★ INTERNATIONAL This restaurant occupies the 19th-century building where the Spanish philosopher Ortega y Gasset was born. The prestigious Horcher, one of the capital's legendary restaurants (see above), is just across the street, but the food at La Gamella is better. The russet-colored, high-ceilinged design invites customers to relax. The founder has prepared his delicate and light-textured specialties for the king and queen of Spain, as well as for Madrid's most talked-about artists and merchants, many of whom he knows and greets personally between sessions in his kitchen.

Typical menu items include a ceviche of Mediterranean fish, sliced duck liver in truffle sauce, a dollop of goat cheese served over caramelized endive, and duck breast with peppers. An array of well-prepared desserts includes an all-American cheesecake. Traditional Spanish dishes such as chicken with garlic have been added to the menu, plus what has been called "the only edible hamburger in Madrid."

Alfonso XII no. 4. ✆ **91-532-45-09.** Reservations required. Main courses 15€–22€ ($22–$32). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri 1:30–4pm and 9pm–midnight; Sat 9pm–midnight. Closed 4 days around Easter. Metro: Retiro. Bus: 19.

CHAMBERI

Very Expensive

Jockey ★★ INTERNATIONAL Into its sixth decade, this was Madrid's premier restaurant during the Franco era. The food here is more classic than adventurous, but it remains a favorite of international celebrities and executives. The chef prides himself on coming up with creative twists on old-fashioned dishes featuring ingredients that justify the steep prices, such as lobster ragout with fresh pasta showered with grated truffle. The cold melon soup with shrimp is soothing on a hot day, especially when followed by roasted pigeon from Talavera cooked in its own juice or monkfish en papillote with Mantua sauce. Dress up for your meal.

Amador de los Ríos 6. ✆ **91-319-24-35.** Reservations required. Main courses 29€–40€ ($42–$58). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 1:45–4pm and 9pm–midnight. Closed Aug. Metro: Colón.

NEAR PLAZA MAYOR

Moderate

El Gran Café SPANISH The tobacco-brown ceiling of this restaurant is high enough to accommodate 4.5m (15-ft.) windows and a dining balcony over the service bar. The building is 19th century, and the restaurant has been given a Belle Epoque appearance. A piano player adds to the mood in the evening, when the crowd has a polished look. Fish and game dominate the menu, but specific ingredients are changed frequently, a sign that the chef follows the market. The fast-moving staff doesn't waste a step bringing the chef's creations to the table.

Avinyo 9 (a block south of Carrer Ferrán). ✆ **93-318-79-86.** Reservations recommended. Main courses up to 12€–22€ ($17–$32). AE, DC, MC, V. Sun–Thurs 1pm–midnight; Fri–Sat 1pm–12:30am. Metro: Liceu or Jaume I.

Julián de Tolosa ★ CASTILIAN This is a Basque version of a steakhouse. The menu is simplicity itself and hasn't changed in some 2 decades. Appetizers are fish soup, hearts of lettuce, or unadorned spears of fat white asparagus, mayo on the side. There are two meats and two fish on the menu. Have the steak. You'll get a small, tender kernel of filet. Just as you're feeling virtuous for not overindulging, the rest of the slab of meat appears. With coffee, you get an icy cranberry-and-anise liqueur.

Cava Baja 18 (south of Plaza de Puerta Cerrada). ✆ **91-365-82-10.** Reservations recommended on weekends. Main courses 20€–28€ ($29–$41). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat 1:30–4pm and 9pm–midnight; Sun 1:30–6pm. Metro: Sol or Latina.

Sobrino de Botín ★★ SPANISH According to the *Guinness Book of World Records,* this is the oldest continually operating restaurant in the world. It opened in 1725, and Goya supposedly worked here before becoming a painter. About 100 years later, Ernest Hemingway helped make this place famous when he had Jake Barnes invite Lady Brett here for dinner. They had the house specialty, roast suckling pig, washed down with Rioja. You'll see an open kitchen with a charcoal hearth, hanging copper pots, an 18th-century tile oven for roasting suckling pig, and a big pot of regional soup whose aroma drifts across the room. Roast lamb is also good. Yes, it's packed with tourists, but don't let that stop you.

Calle de Cuchilleros 17 (off southwest corner of Plaza Mayor). ✆ **91-366-42-17.** Reservations required. Main courses 18€–50€ ($26–$73) *menú del día* 35€ ($51). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 1–4pm and 8pm–midnight. Closed Christmas. Metro: Puerta del Sol or Tirso de Molina.

CHAMARTIN

Very Expensive

Zalacaín ★★★ INTERNATIONAL Outstanding in food, decor, and service, Zalacaín occupies the apex of Madrid's gastronomical pyramid, although younger challengers are crowding it. When it opened in 1973, it introduced nouvelle cuisine to Madrid. The menu features dishes of French and Basque origin subjected to a great deal of experimentation. The chefs might offer a superb sole in a green sauce, but they also know the glory of grilled pigs' feet. Among other recommendable dishes are roast duck with peppers and cherries, crepes stuffed with smoked fish, and bouillabaisse. One quibble is the restaurant's inclination to stick with one set of menu items for too long, not justifiable at these prices.

Alvarez de Baena 4 (north of María de Molina). ☎ **91-561-48-40.** Reservations required. Jacket and tie required for men. Main courses 24€–45€ ($35–$65). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri 1:15–4pm; Mon–Sat 9pm–12:20am. Closed Holy Week and Aug. Metro: Rubén Darío.

Expensive

El Olivo ★ MEDITERRANEAN French-born chef-owner Jean Pierre Vandelle makes no bones about his enthusiasm for olive oil, exemplified by the live olive tree at the entrance. No matter what you order in the dining room, a cart of olive oils and vinegars will be wheeled over with an invitation to shake a few drops on whatever dish sits before you. Menus often include a medallion of marinated and grilled *rape* (monkfish) over a tangy compote of fresh tomatoes; quail in their reduced juices with a cube of foie gras on the side; or four preparations of cod—an always-featured ingredient—arranged on a single platter and served with a spicy *pil-pil* sauce. With a selection of more than 100 sherries at the bar (another of the chef's enthusiasms), you might try a dry *oloroso* as an aperitif.

General Gallegos 1 (near Padre Damián). ☎ **91-359-15-35.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 19€–27€ ($28–$39); *menú del día* 55€ ($80). AE, DC, MC, V. Tues–Sat 1–4pm and 9pm–midnight. Closed last 2 weeks in Aug. Metro: Plaza de Castilla.

SEEING THE SIGHTS

Madrid has something to amuse and enlighten everyone. As the capital of Spain since the 16th century, Madrid is where kings and conquistadors deposited the booty and brilliance of a globe-girdling empire. The city has more than 50 museums and one of the world's grandest palaces. Elegant public parks have been developed from imperial hunting grounds.

SIGHTSEEING SUGGESTIONS FOR FIRST-TIME VISITORS

If You Have 1 Day Spend the morning at the **Prado,** one of the world's great art museums. It's best to arrive when it opens at 9am (but note that it's closed Mon). Have lunch and then visit the **Palacio Real (Royal Palace),** on the other side of the city. Have an early dinner near Plaza Mayor.

If You Have 2 Days On day 2 explore the **Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum** in the morning, stroll around Madrid's medieval area, and visit the **Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía** in the late afternoon or early evening (it closes at 9pm most nights). Here you can see Picasso's *Guernica* and other masterpieces of the 20th century. Have dinner once again at one of the many restaurants off Plaza Mayor.

If You Have 3 Days On your third day take a trip to **Toledo,** where you can visit the cathedral, the Santa Cruz

Museum, and the Alcázar. Return to Madrid in the evening.

If You Have 4 Days On day 4 take a 1-hour train ride to the **Monastery of San Lorenzo de El Escorial,** in the foothills of the Sierra de Guadarrama. Return to Madrid in the evening.

THE TOP SIGHTS

Museo del Prado ★★★ With more than 20,000 paintings and other artworks, the Prado is one of the most important repositories of art in the world. The Prado has no equal when it comes to paintings from the Spanish school, so if it's your first visit, concentrate on the Spanish masters. You'll find a treasure trove of works by El Greco, the Crete-born artist who lived much of his life in Toledo. Look for *Las Meninas,* the museum's most famous painting, and other works by the incomparable Diego Velázquez. The Francisco de Goya collection includes the artist's unflattering portraits of his patron, Charles IV, and his family, as well as the *Clothed Maja,* the *Naked Maja,* and pictures from his black period. There are also paintings by Zurbarán and Murillo, and be sure to search out Flemish genius Hieronymus Bosch's best-known work, *The Garden of Earthly Delights.* (Confusingly, the Spanish call Bosch "El Bosco.") In 2005 the Prado launched a $92-million expansion, much of it underground. Floor space doubled, and there are new attractions such as children's workshops. The main structure, from 1785, is now linked underground to a modern annex. Several adjacent buildings have been incorporated, and many modern galleries for temporary exhibits have opened.

Paseo del Prado s/n. ✆ **91-330-28-00.** http://museoprado.mcu.es. Admission 6€ ($8.70) adults, 3€ ($4.40) students, free for seniors and for those 17 and under. Tues–Sat 9am–8pm. Free entry days: Sun (9am–7pm), Oct 12, Dec 6, May 2, and May 18. Metro: Atocha or Banco de España. Bus: 9, 10, 14, 19, 27, 34, 37, or 45.

Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía ★ This museum is a great repository of modern art, including both the 20th and 21st centuries. After a $95-million expansion, it is better than ever. The core is a former 18th-century hospital, once called "the ugliest building in Spain." Its most celebrated work is Picasso's *Guernica* (some critics call it his masterpiece), depicting the horrors of war during the Franco era. Works by other Spanish artists, including Dalí, Miró, Gris, and Solana, supplement Picasso's masterwork. The collection of the Sofia is ever growing. Its curators hope that one day soon it will rival the Centre Pompidou in Paris. Two mammoth galleries are set aside for large-scale, temporary exhibitions.

Santa Isabel 52 (at the corner of Atocha). ✆ **91-774-10-00.** www.museoreinasofia.es. Admission 6€ ($8.70) adults, 3€ ($4.40) students and children 17 and under; free for everyone Sat after 2:30pm, free for seniors and children Sun. Mon–Sat 10am–9pm; Sun 10am–2:30pm. Metro: Atocha.

Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza ★★★ On display in the late-18th-century Palacio de Villahermosa and an extension that opened in 2004 are the works gathered by three generations of the Thyssen-Bornemisza family (pronounced *Tees*-ahn Bore-noh-*mees*-uh). In all, 16 new galleries have opened up, allowing 200 more paintings to be displayed. Viewing the quirky collection of paintings is like taking a class in art history, with an image or two covering practically every major style and period from the late 13th century to the present. The collection of 19th- and 20th-century paintings is especially strong—certainly the strongest of any Madrid museum. The nucleus of the collection consists of 700 world-class paintings, including works by El Greco, Velázquez, Dürer, and Rembrandt, as well as art from the Impressionist period. Works from the American abstract expressionist movement and related movements are also featured.

Paseo del Prado 8. ✆ **91-369-01-51.** www.museothyssen.org. Admission to permanent collection 6€ ($8.70) adults, 4€ ($5.80) seniors/students, free for 11 and under. Tues–Sun 10am–7pm. Metro: Banco de España. Bus: 1, 2, 5, 9, 10, 14, 15, 20, 27, 34, 45, 51, 52, 53, 74, 146, or 150.

Palacio Real (Royal Palace) ★★ This opulent palace was begun in 1738 for Felipe V on the site of the Alcázar, a fortified castle that burned in 1734. The decor is a mix of baroque and neoclassical styles. Some of the palace's 2,800 rooms are open to the public, while others are still used for state business. The multilingual guided tour includes the reception room, the state apartments, the royal pharmacy, and the stunning state dining room. The rooms are filled with art treasures and antiques—salon after salon of monumental grandeur, with no apologies for the damask, mosaics, stucco, Tiepolo ceilings, gilt and bronze, chandeliers, and paintings. In the Armory, a collection of weaponry features bizarre scaled-down suits of armor for the royal toddlers.

Plaza de Oriente, Calle de Bailén 2. ✆ **91-542-69-47.** www.patrimonionacional.es. Admission 10€ ($15) adults; 3.50€ ($5.10) seniors, students, and children 16 and under. Oct–Mar Mon–Sat 9:30am–5pm, Sun 9am–2pm; Apr–Sept Mon–Sat 9am–4pm, Sun 9am–3pm. Metro: Opera. Bus: 3, 25, 39, or 148.

MORE ATTRACTIONS

Monasterio de las Descalzas Reales ★★ In the heart of old Madrid, near the Puerta del Sol, this richly endowed royal convent was founded in the mid–16th century in the palace where Juana of Austria, Felipe II's sister, was born. She used it as a retreat and brought the Poor Clare nuns here. For many years, the convent sheltered only royal women. Typically, the daughters of aristocrats were sequestered here until they were old enough for arranged marriages. The girls didn't live a spartan existence, though, judging from the wealth of religious artwork that surrounded them, including tapestries, sculptures, and paintings by **Rubens, Brueghel the Elder,** and **Titian.** The main staircase features *trompe l'oeil* paintings and frescoes, and you can view 16 of the 32 lavishly decorated chapels. Compulsory tours for groups of 25 or fewer are conducted in Spanish by guides who hasten visitors from canvas to tapestry to chapel. Try to slow their pace, for there's much to savor. There are frequent alterations to the visiting hours noted below.

Plaza de las Descalzas 3. ✆ **91-542-69-47.** www.patrimonionacional.es. Admission 6€ ($8.70) adults, 3.40€ ($5) seniors, students, and children 12 and under; free to all Wed. Tues–Thurs and Sat 10:30am–12:45pm and 4–5:45pm; Fri 10:30am–12:45pm; Sun and holidays 11am–1:45pm. From Plaza del Callao, off Gran Vía, walk down Postigo de San Martín to Plaza de las Descalzas Reales; the convent is on the left. Metro: Opera.

Museo Arqueológico Nacional ★★ This underrated museum is in the same vast building as the National Library (which has a separate entrance on Paseo de Recoletos). It houses antiquities from prehistory to the Middle Ages. Most of the artifacts are related specifically to the development of the Iberian Peninsula, although there are some Egyptian and Greek objects. Most illuminating are the rooms devoted to the Iberian period, before Christ and the waves of sequential conquerors, and those rooms containing relics of the Visigoths, who left relatively little behind, rendering these objects of even greater interest. A particular treasure is the ***Dama de Elche*** ★★, a resplendent example of 4th-century-B.C. Iberian sculpture, easily equal to the better-known works produced in Greece at the same time.

Serrano 13 (facing Calle Serrano). ✆ **91-577-79-12.** http://man.mcu.es. Admission 3€ ($4.40); free for children and adults over 65. Free Sat 2:30–8pm. Tues–Sat 9:30am–8pm, Sun 9:30am–2:30pm. Metro: Serrano or Retiro.

Museo Lázaro Galdiano Madrid was the beneficiary of financier/author José Lázaro Galdiano's largesse, for when he died, he left the city his 30-room, early 1900s mansion and a substantial private art collection. There are paintings from Spain's golden age, including works by Spaniards El Greco, Zurbarán, Murillo, and Goya; works by Renaissance Italians Tiepolo and Leonardo da Vinci; and canvases by Englishmen Gainsborough and Constable. However, the museum is most admired for its comprehensive array of enamels, ivories, and works in gold and silver, much of it created during the Middle Ages.

Serrano 122. ✆ **91-561-60-84.** www.flg.es. Admission 4€ ($5.80) adults, 3€ ($4.40) students. Free for seniors and children 11 and under; free for everyone Wed. Wed–Mon 10am–4:30pm. Metro: Rubén Dario or Gregorio Marañón.

Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando (San Fernando Royal Fine Arts Academy) ★ An easy stroll from the Puerta del Sol, this museum is located in the restored and remodeled 17th-century baroque palace of Juan de Goyeneche. The collection—more than 1,500 paintings and 570 sculptures, ranging from the 16th century to the present—was started in 1752 during the reign of Fernando VI (1746–59). It emphasizes works by Spanish, Flemish, and Italian artists. Masterpieces by El Greco, Rubens, Velázquez, Zurbarán, Ribera, Cano, Coello, Murillo, and Sorolla are here. The Goya collection in itself is worth a visit. Goya was a member of the academy from 1780, and the museum houses two of his self-portraits, along with a full-size portrait of the actress La Tirana, and a portrait of the royal favorite Manuel Godoy. Goya's carnival scene, *Burial of the Sardine,* and eight more of his oils are also on view.

Alcalá 13. ✆ **91-524-08-64.** http://rabasf.insde.es. Admission 3€ ($4.35) adults, 1.50€ ($2.20) students, free for seniors and children 17 and under. Free for all Wed. Tues–Fri 9am–7pm; Sat–Mon and holidays 9am–2:30pm. Metro: Puerta del Sol or Sevilla.

PARKS & GARDENS

Casa de Campo (Metro: Batán), the former royal hunting grounds, is composed of miles of parkland west of the Royal Palace across the Manzanares River. You can see the gate through which the kings rode out of the palace grounds—either on horseback or in carriages—on their way to the park. Casa de Campo has a zoo, many trees, and a lake that's usually filled with rowers. You can have refreshments around the lake or go swimming in a municipally operated pool. The park can be visited daily 24 hours.

Parque del Retiro ★★ (Metro: Retiro), originally a playground for the Spanish monarchs and their guests, is now a park of more than 120 hectares (297 acres). The huge palaces that once stood here were destroyed in the early 19th century, and only the former dance hall, Casón del Buen Retiro (housing some of the Prado's modern works), remains. The park has many fountains and statues, plus a large lake in front of an extravagant monument to Alfonso XII. Along the promenade beside the lake are rows of tarot card readers, puppeteers, musicians, and other street performers. There are also two exposition centers: the Velázquez and the Crystal palaces. In summer, the rose gardens are worth a visit. The park is open daily 24 hours, but it's safest, as most public parks are, during daylight hours.

Immediately south of the Prado Museum is the **Real Jardín Botánico (Royal Botanical Garden),** Plaza de Murillo 2 (✆ **91-420-30-17;** www.rjb.csic.es; Metro: Atocha). Founded in the 18th century, the garden contains more than 100 species of trees and 3,000 types of plants. Hours are daily as follows: October to March 10am to 7pm; April and September 10am to 8pm; May to August 10am to 9pm; November to February 10am to 6pm. Admission is 2€ ($2.90) for adults, 1€ ($1.45) for children, free for children 10 and under.

ORGANIZED TOURS

For the 15€ ($22) ticket, the distinctive **Madrid Vision Bus** (✆ **91-779-18-88;** www.madridvision.es) lets riders get off and reboard as many times in a day as they want. The air-conditioned buses carry multilingual guides who provide commentary over earphones. Three routes make color-coded, 75-minute loops around themed sets of monuments and buildings: either Historic Madrid, Modern Madrid, or the length of the Gran Via. Convenient places to pick up the bus are at the Puerta de Alcalá and Puerta del Sol.

Pullmantur, Plaza de Oriente 8 (✆ **91-541-18-07;** www.pullmantur-spain.com; Metro: Opera), is one of Spain's largest tour operators and offers several guided city tours, including a Madrid sightseeing tour for 19€ ($28).

Pullmantur also offers full-day tours to Toledo, Avila, and Segovia. The most popular trip is to Toledo, costing 60€ ($87), including lunch and departing daily at 8:45am. You can, if you wish, take an abbreviated morning tour of Toledo, without stopping for lunch, for 49€ ($71).

THE SHOPPING SCENE

THE MAIN SHOPPING AREAS

The sheer diversity of Madrid's shops is staggering. One of the greatest concentrations of stores lies immediately north of **Puerta del Sol,** along the pedestrian streets of Calle del Carmen and Calle Preciados.

Conceived, designed, and built in the 1910s and 1920s as a showcase for the city's best shops, hotels, and restaurants, the **Gran Vía** has since been eclipsed by other shopping districts, although fragments of its Art Nouveau and Art Deco glamour still survive. The book and music shops along here are among the best in the city, as are the outlets for fashion, shoes, jewelry, and handcrafts from all regions of Spain.

The **Salamanca** district is the quintessential upscale shopping neighborhood. Here, you'll find exclusive furniture, fur, fashion, and jewelry stores, plus rug and art galleries. The main shopping streets here are Serrano and Velázquez. This district lies northeast of the center of Madrid, a few blocks north of Retiro Park. Its most central Metro stops are Serrano and Veláquez.

SOME NOTEWORTHY SHOPS

El Corte Inglés ★★, Preciados 3 (✆ **91-379-80-00;** www.elcorteingles.es; Metro: Puerta del Sol), is Spain's number-one department-store chain. The store sells Spanish handcrafts along with glamorous fashion articles, such as Pierre Balmain designs, often at lower prices than you'll find in most European capitals. Competition for El Corte

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Tips Spain's Biggest Flea Market

Foremost among Madrid's flea markets is **El Rastro,** Plaza Cascorro and Ribera de Curtidores (Metro: La Latina; bus no. 3 or 17), which occupies a roughly triangular area of streets and plazas that are a few minutes' walk south of Plaza Mayor. This market will delight anyone attracted to sometimes-intriguing kitsch. Goods are sold from open stalls arranged in front of stores selling antiques and paintings. ***Note:*** Thieves are rampant here, so secure your purse and wallet, be alert, and proceed with caution. The market is open Saturday and Sunday only, from 9am to 2pm and (to a lesser extent) from 5 to 8pm.

Inglés has arrived just up the street in the form of **FNAC,** Preciados 28 (✆ **91-595-61-00;** Metro: Puerta del Sol), a chain of stores concentrating on photographic and audio equipment, video games, TVs, software, computers, and books. Predictably, El Corte Inglés has opened a mirror-image operation right next door. With a substantial stock of CDs in most musical genres, **Madrid Rock,** Gran Vía 25 (✆ **91-523-26-52;** Metro: Gran Vía), also sells tickets to pop concerts. Near Madrid Rock is **La Casa del Libro,** Gran Vía 29 (✆ **91-521-21-13;** Metro: Gran Vía), a large bookstore with a sizable English-language section.

For unique craft items, **El Arco de los Cuchilleros Artesania de Hoy,** Plaza Mayor 9 (basement; ✆ **91-365-26-80;** Metro: Puerta del Sol or Opera), may be a mouthful of a name to remember, but it has an unparalleled array of pottery, leather, textiles, glassware, and jewelry produced by individual artisans throughout Spain. It's open daily 11am to 9pm, even during siesta.

Since 1846, **Loewe** ★★★, Calle Serrano 26 and 34 (✆ **91-522-68-15;** www.loewe.com; Metro: Banco de España), has been Spain's most elegant leather store. Its designers keep abreast of changing tastes and styles, but the inventory retains a timeless chic. The store sells luggage, handbags, and jackets for men and women (in leather or suede). At **Casa de Diego,** Puerta del Sol 12 (✆ **91-522-66-43;** www.casadediego.net; Metro: Puerta del Sol), you'll find a wide inventory of fans, ranging from plain to fancy, from plastic to exotic hardwood, from cost-conscious to lavish.

MADRID AFTER DARK

From May to September, the municipal government sponsors a series of plays, concerts, and films, and the city has the atmosphere of a free arts festival. Pick up a copy of ***Guía del Ocio*** (available at most newsstands) for listings of these events. This guide also provides information about occasional discounts for commercial events, such as the concerts given in Madrid's parks. The guide is in Spanish, but it's not difficult to make out the times, locations, and prices for various events.

With some exceptions, flamenco in Madrid is geared primarily to tourists, and nightclubs are expensive. But since Madrid is a city of song and dance, you can often be entertained at very little cost—for the price of a glass of wine or beer, in fact—if you sit at a bar with live entertainment.

Tickets to dramatic and musical events can cost anywhere from 6€ to 200€ ($8.70–$290), with discounts of up to 50% granted on certain days (usually Wed and early performances on Sun). In the event that your choice is sold out, you may be able to get tickets (with a reasonable markup) at **Localidades Galicia,** Plaza del Carmen 1 (✆ **91-531-27-32;** www.eol.es/lgalicia; Metro: Puerta del Sol). It's open Tuesday to Sunday 10am to 1pm and 4:30 to 7:30pm. Telephone ticket sales are also provided by the following agencies: **Caja de Cataluña** (✆ **90-210-12-12**), and **Corté Ingles** (✆ **90-240-02-22;** www.elcorteingles.es/entradas).

THE PERFORMING ARTS

Ballet Nacional de España (✆ **91-517-99-99;** http://balletnacional.mcu.es) is devoted exclusively to dances created by Spanish choreographers. Its performances are always well attended. Also look for performances by choreographer Nacho Duato's **Compañía Nacional de Danza** (✆ **91-354-50-53;** http://cndanza.mcu.es).

World-renowned flamenco sensation António Canales and his troupe, **Ballet Flamenco António Canales,** offer high-energy, spirited performances. Productions are centered around Canales's impassioned *Torero*—his interpretation of the physical and emotional struggles of a bullfighter.

CLASSICAL MUSIC

Madrid's opera company is the **Teatro de la Opera,** and its symphony orchestra is the outstanding **Orquesta Sinfónica de Madrid** (at Teatro Real, see below).

Teatro Real, Plaza Isabel II (✆ **90-516-06-60;** www.teatro-real.com; Metro: Opera), is one of the world's finest stage and acoustic settings for opera. Guided tours of the grand hall are available every day except Tuesday from 11am to 1:30pm at a cost of 4€ ($5.80). Today, the building is home to the Compañía del Teatro Real and the Teatro de la Opera, and is the major venue for classical music and opera. Tickets are 14€ to 115€ ($20–$167).

Auditorio Nacional de Música, Príncipe de Vergara 146 (✆ **91-337-01-39;** www.auditorionacional.mcu.es; Metro: Cruz del Rayo), is the ultramodern home of both the **National Orchestra of Spain,** which pays particular attention to the music of Spanish composers, and the **National Chorus of Spain.** Just north of Madrid's Salamanca district, the concert hall ranks as a major addition to the classical music circuit in Europe. Tickets are 9€ to 60€ ($13–$87).

FLAMENCO

At Madrid's flamenco *tablaos,* doors usually open at 9 or 9:30pm, and the show starts at about 10:45pm and ends at 12:30am or even later. To save money, go after dinner, when the still-hefty admission at least includes a drink. The later performances are usually better anyway, after the tour groups leave and the performers are warmed up. These stages feature large troupes with several dancers, two or three guitarists, and one or two singers, all in costume. Among the established tablaos are **Torres Bermejas,** Mesonero Romanos 11 (✆ **91-531-03-52;** Metro: Callao); **Corral de la Morería,** Morería 17 (✆ **91-365-11-37;** Metro: Opera); and **Café de Chinitas,** Torija 7 (✆ **91-547-15-01;** Metro: Santa Domingo).

For a flamenco club that doesn't cater primarily to tourists, try **Casa Patas,** Cañizares 10 (✆ **91-369-04-96;** www.casapatas.com; Metro: Antón Martín). In front, it's a restaurant, with a long bar, a high ceiling held up by cast-iron pillars, and three rows of tables with checked tablecloths. A pot-bellied stove in the middle provides heat, and photos of matadors and flamenco performers cover the walls. That's not where the shows are, though. Go to the closed door in back. Shortly before showtime, a shuttered window opens, your money is taken, and you are allowed to enter. You are then seated at tiny tables around the open stage. The music will be powerful, the dancing fiery and gripping. Monday to Thursday, shows are at 8pm and Friday and Saturday, shows are at 7:30pm and 1am. Call ahead to reserve a table. The cover is 28€ to 35€ ($41–$51) per person. It's worth the cost and effort, for this is modern flamenco at its best.

Another good choice for authentic, nontouristy flamenco is **Las Tablas,** Plaza de España 9 (✆ **91-542-05-20;** Metro: Plaza de España). The cover charge of 24€ ($35) includes your first drink. Shows are held nightly at 10:30pm; make reservations on weekends.

LIVE MUSIC

Off Plaza de Santa Ana, **Café Central,** Plaza del Angel 10 (✆ **91-369-41-43;** www.cafecentralmadrid.com; Metro: Antón Martín), is *the* place for live jazz. Black bench seating, marble-topped tables, and glistening brass set the scene, and the place is usually packed with students, visitors, and Madrid's night beauties. Performances are usually at 10pm and midnight. While jazz is the main course, the cafe also hosts folkies, blues belters, and performers of related music. Calle de las Huertas runs through this plaza, so a visit to the cafe could be the start or the end of an extended pub-crawl. It's open daily 1:30pm to 2 or 3am, with a cover that varies from 7€ to 13€ ($10–$19).

Not far from the Central is **Café Jazz Populart,** Calle Huertas 22 (✆ **91-429-84-07;** Metro: Antón Martín), a showcase for American blues, Latin salsa, and Caribbean reggae as well as many varieties of jazz. The large space allows for a little elbow room, and the atmosphere is laid-back. You can relax at the marble-topped bar or the tables ringing the stage. Admission is often free, but the drink prices tend to jump sharply when music is playing. Still, it's cheaper than Central. Open Monday to Thursday 6pm to 2:30am, Friday and Saturday 6pm to 3:30am; the music usually starts around 11pm.

With dozens of small tables and a huge bar in its dark and smoky interior, **Clamores,** Albuquerque 14 (✆ **91-445-79-38;** Metro: Bilbao), is the largest and one of the most popular jazz clubs in Madrid. It has thrived because of the noted American and Spanish jazz bands that appear here. Clamores is open daily from 7pm to 3am or so, but jazz is presented only from Tuesday to Saturday. From Tuesday to Thursday, performances are at 11pm and 1am; Saturday they're at 11:30pm and 1:30am. There are no live performances Sunday or Monday. Cover from Tuesday to Saturday is 7€ to 27€ ($10–$39), depending on the act.

DANCE CLUBS

Madrid's most popular dance clubs operate with a selective entrance policy, so dress stylishly and try to look as young, gorgeous, celebrated, and/or rich as possible. The clubs are usually open nightly until 5am or later, with nothing much happening before 2am. (***Tip:*** It's easier to get past the unsmiling gents at the door if you arrive before then.) Some clubs have a matinee, usually 7 to 9 or 10pm, attended primarily by teenagers. After closing for an hour or two to clear out the youngsters, they reopen to older patrons.

Two decades ago, an old Victorian-era theater was transformed into the popular disco **Joy Eslava,** Arenal 11 (✆ **91-366-37-33;** www.joy-eslava.com; Metro: Sol or Opera). Laser shows, videos, and energetic performers keep things moving. The best nights are Friday and Saturday, and 20% discount coupons are available around town. It's open daily from 11:30pm until 6am. Cover is 12€ ($17), or 15€ ($22) on Friday and Saturday; it includes the first drink.

The most multicultural, multifarious, and multimusical disco in Madrid, **Kapital,** Atocha 125 (✆ **91-420-29-06;** Metro: Atocha), has seven floors, with the main dance floor at street level, a terrace up top, and more bars and dance floors (with different kinds of music) in between. Laser shows, karaoke, a movie room, and what used to be called go-go dancers are added attractions. Throngs of kids show up for the "afternoon" session from 6 to 11pm. Grown-ups arrive after midnight and stay until 6am. The cover is 12€ to 15€ ($17–$22). **Palacio Gaviria,** Arenal 9 (✆ **91-526-60-69;** www.palaciogaviria.com; Metro: Sol), is a vintage mansion near Puerta del Sol that has been converted into a *multispacio* with several salons, each serving up expensive drinks, cabaret, and live or recorded dance music. Open Monday to Friday 9pm to 3am, Saturday and Sunday 9pm to 5am. Cover charge is 9€ to 12€ ($13–$17) including the first drink.

PUBS & BARS

Hemingway and his journalist buddies suffered the Civil War siege of Madrid at **Museo Chicote,** Gran Vía 12 (✆ **91-532-67-37;** Metro: Gran Vía). Photos on the walls to the left and right of the entrance document the patronage of Coop, Ty, Orson, and Ava. A superior martini is still available, and they've added breakfast and light meals. **Bar Cock,** Reina 16 (✆ **91-532-28-26;** Metro: Gran Vía), a dark, cavernous room on a narrow street parallel to Gran Vía, is another old-timer, where Madrid's artistic and showbiz elite routinely assault their livers. It was given renewed cachet by the presence of internationally known film director Pedro Almodóvar.

If you want to witness a supremely assured professional mixologist in action, head up the same street a few doors. **Del Diego,** Reina 12 (✆ **91-523-31-06;** Metro: Gran Vía), is a stylish contemporary watering hole that attracts exactly the upmarket crowd it seeks, including government ministers and upper-echelon executives. The maestro twirling the swizzle sticks is the eponymous head man, never losing his composure as he shakes and stirs everything from pure martinis to Long Island iced teas and Madrid's drink of the moment, the *mojito* (rum, lime juice, mint, and a hint of sugar).

Pop in for at least a quick drink to admire the variety of pictorial ceramic tiles covering the walls of the five rooms of **Los Gabrieles,** Echegaray 17 (✆ **91-369-07-57;** Metro: Sol or Sevilla), a century-old tavern. Live music, mostly flamenco, is presented Tuesday nights (no cover). Students and 20-something singles have given the 1890 tavern **Viva Madrid,** Manuel Fernández González 7 (✆ **91-429-36-40;** Metro: Sol or Antón Martín), new life as a trendy meeting place. Both the facade and the interior are resplendent with intricately patterned tiles, and mythical creatures hold up carved ceilings. Light meals and tapas are served in the room behind the bar.

GAY & LESBIAN CLUBS & CAFES

The Plaza Chueca area (Metro: Chueca) is now Spain's number-one hot spot for gays and bohemian straights, with more than 60 gay-friendly bars, cafes, and discos. Pick up a map of gay Madrid and a copy of the **Shanguide** pocket-size nightlife guide at the **Berkana** gay bookstore, Hortaleza 64 (✆ **91-522-55-99**).

D'Mystic, Gravina 5 (✆ **91-308-24-60**) caters exclusively to gay men.

Truco, Gravina 10 (✆ **91-532-89-21**), is a hub of Madrid's lesbian community; it's open nightly from 10:30pm.

Black and White, Libertad 34 (✆ **91-531-11-41**), remains the major gay bar of Madrid, but draws a mixed crowd on weekends. There's a disco in the basement. The turn-of-the-20th century **Café Figueroa,** Augusto Figueroa 17 (✆ **91-521-16-73**), attracts a diverse clientele including a large number of gays and lesbians.

DAY TRIPS FROM MADRID

TOLEDO ★★★ Once the capital of Visigothic Spain, Toledo—69km (43 miles) southwest of Madrid—bristles with steeples and towers spread over an unlikely hill that's almost completely moated by the River Tajo. Toledo is one of the most photogenic cities on the peninsula, its streets tilting and twisting past buildings representing more than 1,500 years of construction. Here is history . . . deep, palpable, warming the stones. Those familiar with the painting of the city by El Greco, who lived most of his creative life here, will be struck by how closely his 16th-century canvas, *View of Toledo,* conforms to the present view, in overall impression if not in detail.

The streets are clogged all year with tour buses and their occupants and crammed with shops hung with Toledo cutlery, fake armor, Lladró figurines, and every kind of gaudy souvenir. If possible, stay overnight to get a less feverish picture of the city when it's briefly returned to its citizens.

Getting There You can reach Toledo by **train** (six trips daily from Madrid's Atocha Station) or by **bus** (from Madrid's Estación Sur de Autobuses). The one-way trip takes about an hour and 15 minutes by either method. The train fare is 8.50€ ($12), while the bus (www.continental-auto.es) costs 4.40€ ($6.40). Taxis are available at the charming neo-Mudéjar train station in Toledo, but not in great numbers and not always when you want them. We don't recommend driving to Toledo, but if you want to, take Rte. 401 for 69km (43 miles) south of Madrid.

Visitor Information The **tourist office** is at Puerta de Bisagra (✆ **92-525-08-43;** www.diputoledo.es), open Monday to Friday 9am to 6pm, Saturday 9am to 7pm, and Sunday 9am to 3pm.

Exploring Toledo Although ranked among the greatest of Gothic structures, the **Cathedral** ★★★, Arcos de Palacio (✆ **92-522-22-41**), actually reflects a variety of styles because of the more than 2½ centuries that passed during its construction, from 1226 to 1493. Among its art treasures, the *transparente* stands out—a wall of marble and florid baroque alabaster sculpture overlooked for years because of the cathedral's poor lighting. The sculptor Narcisco Tomé cut a hole in the ceiling, much to the consternation of Toledans, and now light touches the high-rising angels, a *Last Supper* in alabaster, and a Virgin in ascension. The Treasure Room has a 225-kilogram (496-lb.) 15th-century gilded monstrance (receptacle of the Host)—allegedly made with gold brought back from the New World by Columbus—that's still carried through the streets of Toledo during the feast of Corpus Christi. Admission to the cathedral is free; admission to the Treasure Room is 6€ ($8.70). Both are open Monday to Saturday 10:30am to 6:30pm, and Sunday 2 to 6pm.

The **Alcázar,** General Moscardó 4, near Plaza de Zocodover (✆ **92-522-16-73**), at the eastern edge of the old city, dominates the Toledo skyline. It was damaged frequently over its centuries as a fortress and royal residence and leveled during a siege of the Spanish Civil War. The existing structure is essentially a replica but is built over the old cellars and foundations. Today it has been turned into an army museum, housing such exhibits as a plastic model of what the fortress looked like after the civil war, electronic equipment used during the siege, and photographs taken during the height of the battle. A walking tour gives a realistic simulation of the siege. Admission is 3€ ($4.40). Open May to September Tuesday to Saturday 8:30am to 2:30pm and 6 to 8pm; Sunday 10am to 2pm; October to April Tuesday to Saturday 10am to 2pm and 4:30 to 6:30pm, Sunday 9:30am to 2:30pm.

Queen Isabel had a hand in arranging the construction of the 16th-century building housing the **Museo Santa Cruz,** Cervantes 3 (✆ **92-522-14-02**), with its impressive Plateresque facade. The paintings within are mostly from the 16th century and 17th century, with yet another by El Greco. Find the museum immediately east of Plaza de Zocodover. Admission is free. Hours are Monday to Saturday 10am to 6pm, and Sunday 10am to 2pm.

EL ESCORIAL PALACE ★★ The second-most-important excursion from Madrid is a 55km (34-mile) trip to the Royal Monastery in the village of San Lorenzo de El Escorial. Felipe II commissioned Juan Bautista de Toledo and his assistant, Juan de Herrera, to build this gloomy Xanadu in the Sierra de Guadarrama, northwest of Madrid. Its purported intent was to commemorate an important victory over the

French in Flanders, but the likely real reason was that the ascetic Felipe was unnerved by the stress of overseeing an empire bridging four continents and this retreat insulated him from the intrigues of the Madrid court. He ruled his troubled empire from the rooms here for the last 14 years of his life, and it was from here that he ordered his doomed "Invincible Armada" to set sail.

Getting There More than two dozen **trains** depart daily from Madrid's Atocha and Chamartín stations (trip time: 60–80 min.), costing 2.70€ ($3.90) one way. For schedules and information, contact **RENFE** (✆ **90-224-02-02;** www.renfe.es).

Buses, however, are preferable. Use line nos. 661 and 664, run by **Empresa Herranz,** Isaac Peral 10, Moncloa (✆ **91-896-90-28**), and which cost 3.20€ ($4.70) for the 55-minute trip one-way; they drop you closer to Felipe's royal retreat than do the trains.

If you're **driving,** take N-IV northwest from Madrid; after about 48km (30 miles), exit south on M-505 about 10km (6¼ miles) to El Escorial.

VISITOR INFORMATION The **tourist office** at Calle Grimaldi 2 in El Escorial can be reached at ✆ **91-890-53-13.**

Exploring the Monastery The huge monastery/palace/mausoleum that is the **Real Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial** ★★★, San Lorenzo de El Escorial 1 (✆ **91-890-59-03**), is typically praised for its massive, brooding simplicity. That impression is allayed inside, as the wealth of sumptuous detail, the hundreds of rooms, and the 24km (15 miles) of corridors are revealed. An extraordinary library reflects the scholarly king's intellectual interests, with tens of thousands of volumes and rare manuscripts in many languages, representative of the three primary religions that had existed in Spain. Also in the building is a sizable church with a frescoed dome more than 90m (300 ft.) high. The main altar is four stories high with gold sculptures and paintings framed in jasper. Beneath the basilica is a royal pantheon with sarcophagi containing the remains of most of Spain's monarchs since Carlos V. Galleries and royal apartments contain canvases by El Greco, Titian, Ribera, Tintoretto, Rubens, and Velázquez, among others. Throughout the building, you'll see copies of a gridlike symbol that echoes the layout of the palace itself. These symbols represent St. Lawrence, who was roasted alive on a grill by the Romans. April to September, El Escorial is open Tuesday to Sunday and holidays 10am to 7pm (to 5pm in winter). An all-inclusive ticket is 8€ ($12) adults and 4€ ($5.80) seniors and students, and guided tours are 9€ ($13). Free on Wednesday.

SEGOVIA ★★★ Less commercial than Toledo, Segovia, 87km (54 miles) northwest of Madrid, typifies the glory of Old Castile. Wherever you look, you'll see reminders of a golden era—whether it's the spectacular Alcázar or the well-preserved Roman aqueduct. Segovia lies on the slope of the Guadarrama Mountains, where the Eresma and Clamores rivers converge. Isabel was proclaimed queen of Castile here in 1474.

Getting There **Buses** are preferable to trains for price and speed, if not comfort. Between Madrid and Segovia, the bus takes 75 to 90 minutes and the train 2 hours. The unmarked bus station in Madrid is on Paseo de Florida, opposite the Estación del Norte and next to the Hotel Florida del Norte, right by the Principe Pío Metro station. Buses run by **La Sepulvedana** (✆ **91-142-77-07;** www.lasepulvedana.es) depart every half-hour or so on weekdays from Madrid 6:30am to 10:30pm; on weekends, buses run pretty much hourly from 8am on. A one-way fare is 6.30€ ($9.10). Buses drop passengers off at the Estación Municipal de Autobuses at Paseo de Ezequile González 10. From the front of the terminal, turn left, cross the street, and walk down the largely pedestrian and arcaded Avenida Fernández Ladreda. This arrives in Plaza del Azoguejo, beneath the city's principal site.

Trains depart from Madrid's Atocha, Nuevos Ministerios, and Chamartín stations every 2 hours from 6am to 8pm, costing 5.60€ ($8.10) each way. The train station is a 20-minute walk from the town center, so take local bus no. 3 instead; it leaves every 15 minutes for the Plaza Mayor.

If you're **driving,** take NVI northwest out of Madrid; after about 98km (61 miles), exit north on Route 603. It's 55km (34 miles) from there to Segovia.

Visitor Information The **tourist office** is at Plaza Mayor 10 (✆ **92-146-03-34**), open July to September Monday to Thursday and Sunday 9am to 8pm, Friday and Saturday 9am to 9pm; September to June daily 9am to 2pm and 5 to 8pm.

Exploring Segovia The town is quite walkable. Its narrow medieval streets suffer less from the ravages of mass tourism (except on weekends and holidays) than other destinations in Madrid's orbit and reveal much about what life must have been like here 500 years ago.

Located here is what might be the most recognizable structure in Spain—an intact **Roman Aqueduct** ★★, Plaza de Azoguejo. A spectacular engineering feat even if it were contemplated today, the double-tiered Roman aqueduct cuts across the city to the snow-fed waters of the nearby mountains. Almost 730m (2,400 ft.) long and nearly 30m (98 ft.) at its highest point at the east end of town, it contains more than 160 arches fashioned of stone cut so precisely that no mortar was needed in the construction. Probably completed in the 2nd century A.D. (although some sources date it as many as 3 centuries earlier), it has survived war and partial dismantling by the Moors. Amazingly, it carried water until only a few decades ago.

Constructed between 1515 and 1558, the **Catedral de Segovia** ★★, Plaza de la Catedral, Marqués del Arco (✆ **92-146-22-05**), was the last Gothic cathedral built in Spain. Fronting the Plaza Mayor, it stands on the spot where Isabel I was proclaimed queen of Castile. It contains numerous treasures, such as a chapel created by the flamboyant Churriguera, elaborately carved choir stalls, and 16th- and 17th-century paintings. More interesting, if only for historical reasons, is the attached 15th-century **cloister** ★. After rebels razed the earlier cathedral, its cloister was moved here stone by stone and reassembled. The cloister contains a small museum. To reach the cathedral, walk west along Calle de Cervantes, which becomes Calle Bravo. Admission to the cathedral is free, but the cloister and museum cost 3€ ($4.40). It's open April to October daily 9am to 6:30pm, November to March daily 9:30am to 5:30pm.

Continue west on Calle de Daolz, where the prow of the old town rears above the confluence of the Clamores and Eresma rivers. **El Alcázar** ★★, Daolz s/n (✆ **92-146-07-59**), a fortified castle almost as familiar a symbol of Castilla (Castile) as the aqueduct, occupies this dramatic location. Though it satisfies our "castles in Spain" fantasies, at least from the outside, note that it's essentially a late-19th-century replica of the medieval fortress that stood here before a devastating fire in 1868. Admission is 3.50€ ($5.10) adults; 2.50€ ($3.70) seniors, students, and children; and free for children 5 and under. It's open April to September daily 10am to 7pm; October to May daily 10am to 6pm.

2 Barcelona ★★★

With an unforgettable visual style, passionate life force, and continuous churn of old and new, the capital of the autonomous region of Catalonia (don't call it Spanish!) is easily Spain's most enjoyable city, a place where people play with gusto but still manage to get things done. Catalonians consider themselves a distinct nationality, speaking a language that owes as much to French as it does to Spanish. It says something that Catalonia's favorite sons have been four artists known for their brilliant eccentricity: Gaudí, Miró, Picasso, and Dalí.

Since the 19th century, the Catalán metropolis has always been at the forefront of modernity. Barcelona was the nation's first industrial center, expanding from its ancient settlement into the surrounding hills by the 1920s. The end of the 20th century brought another burst of expansion: first for the 1992 Olympics, and in 2004 for Expo 2004, a 6-month festival that gave rise to the construction of an entirely new neighborhood on the waterfront.

A visual expression of Barcelona's quirky personality and willingness to take risks is some of Europe's most amazing architecture, from the Gothic cathedral to the parade of modernist masterpieces along the Passeig de Gràcia. The region has given birth to some of history's most visionary artists, among them the 21st-century chefs who have put themselves on the world map creating a brilliant, almost surrealist cuisine. Joyously joining the Europe of the millennium, Barcelona has everything going for it—good looks, a sharp business sense, an appreciation for all forms of culture, and an unerring eye for style.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **By Plane** **El Prat Airport** (✆ **93-298-38-38;** www.aena.es) lies 13km (8 miles) southwest of the city. A **train** runs between the airport and the Estació Sants rail station every 30 minutes from 6:25am to 11:05pm, continuing to the more central Plaça de Catalunya; it costs 3.45€ ($5). **Aerobuses** (✆ **93-415-60-20**) run among the three terminals at the airport and to Plaça de Catalunya (with intermediate stops) Monday to Friday every 12 minutes 6am to 1am. The trip takes 25 to 40 minutes and costs 3.90€ ($5.70). A **taxi** into town costs from 25€ ($36), plus tip and supplements for luggage.

By Train A high-speed train called Trenhotel runs between Paris and Barcelona in just 12 hours. National and international trains arrive at the **Estació Sants** or the **Estació de França,** both situated slightly outside the city center but linked to the municipal Metro network. Many trains also stop at the Metro station at **Plaça de Catalunya.** For schedules and prices, call **RENFE** (✆ **90-224-02-02;** www.renfe.es) or **Rail Europe** (✆ **888/382-7245;** www.raileurope.com).

By Bus Bus travel to Barcelona is possible but not popular—it's pretty slow. Barcelona's Estació del Nord is the arrival and departure point for **Alsa** (✆ **90-242-22-42;** www.alsa.es) buses to and from southern France and Italy. Alsa also operates 24 buses per day to and from Madrid (trip time: 7½ hr.). A one-way ticket from Madrid costs 26€ to 37€ ($38–$54). **Linebús** (✆ **90-233-55-33;** www.linebus.com) offers six trips a week to and from Paris. **Eurolines Viagens,** Carrer Viriato (✆ **90-240-50-40;** www.eurolines.es), operates seven buses a week to and from Frankfurt and another five per week to and from Marseille.

By Car From France, the major access route is at the eastern end of the Pyrenees, with the choice of the express highway (E-15) or the more scenic coastal road. From France, it's possible to approach Barcelona via Toulouse. Cross the border into Spain at Puigcerdá (frontier stations are there), near the principality of Andorra. From here, take N-152 to Barcelona. From Madrid, take N-2 to Zaragoza, and then A-2 to El Vendrell, followed by A-7 to Barcelona.

VISITOR INFORMATION A conveniently located tourist office is the subterranean **Centre d'Informació,** at the southeast corner of Plaça Catalunya (✆ **93-285-38-34;** Metro: Catalunya), open daily 9am to 9pm.

Websites A good place to start is **www.okspain.org**, where you can find up-to-date information and book hotels, restaurants, and tours. The excellent municipal website, **www.bcn.es**, features a terrific interactive map. Additional sources are **www.barcelonaturisme.com** and **www.bcn-guide.com**.

CITY LAYOUT Old Barcelona sits just north of the Mediterranean, bisected by the Rambla promenade. The **Barri Gótic,** the Gothic Quarter and the oldest part of town, lies east of the Rambla; south of the Barri Gótic is the **Ribera** district, also known as **El Born,** developed during the 13th and 14th centuries and home to the Picasso Museum.

The old-town areas west of the Rambla are grittier; the residential **Raval** district, home to many of Barcelona's Muslim residents, is currently balancing on the knife edge between marginally unsafe and breathtakingly hip. The **Barri Xinés,** south of Nou de la Rambla, is a once-rough area that's still best avoided at night.

Southeast of the Old City, right on the water, is **Barceloneta,** originally home to the city's fishermen and now known for its seafood restaurants. Farther east along the coast are the brand-new **Vila Olímpica** and **Diagonal Mar** neighborhoods, areas developed for the 1992 Olympics and 2004 Forum, respectively.

West of the Old City is the brooding **Montjuïc,** a towering hill that's home to the Miró Museum and a large park.

Plaça de Catalunya marks the northern edge of the old city, leading out onto the **Passeig de Gràcia,** Barcelona's proudest boulevard. The Passeig de Gràcia cuts north across the **Eixample,** a grid of wide streets and modernist buildings that was the product of Barcelona's growing prosperity in the late 19th century. North of the Eixample are **Gràcia,** an area of small squares and lively bars and restaurants that's known as "Barcelona's Greenwich Village"; **Sarría,** a quiet residential area; and **Tibidabo,** Barcelona's tallest mountain.

GETTING AROUND

The best deal for getting around Barcelona is the T10 10-ride **Metro/bus pass,** which costs 7.20€ ($10) and can be shared by multiple people. If you're really going to be zipping around, a 1-day pass costs 5€ ($7.30), a 2-day pass costs 9.20€ ($13), and 3-, 4-, and 5-day versions are available as well. Passes are available at most Metro stations, tourist offices, many newsstands and lottery shops, and the office of the local transportation agency **TMB** (✆ **93-318-70-74** for information; www.tmb.net).

BY METRO (SUBWAY) The Metro and integrated commuter train lines (called FGC) operate Monday to Thursday 5am to midnight, Friday and Saturday 5am to 2am, and Sunday and holidays 6am to midnight. The lines you'll want to use within the city are numbered L1 through L8; other lines starting with L, R, and S serve various suburbs. The one-way fare is 1.30€ ($1.90).

Barcelona

FRANCE
Barcelona
Madrid
PORTUGAL
SPAIN

ATTRACTIONS ●

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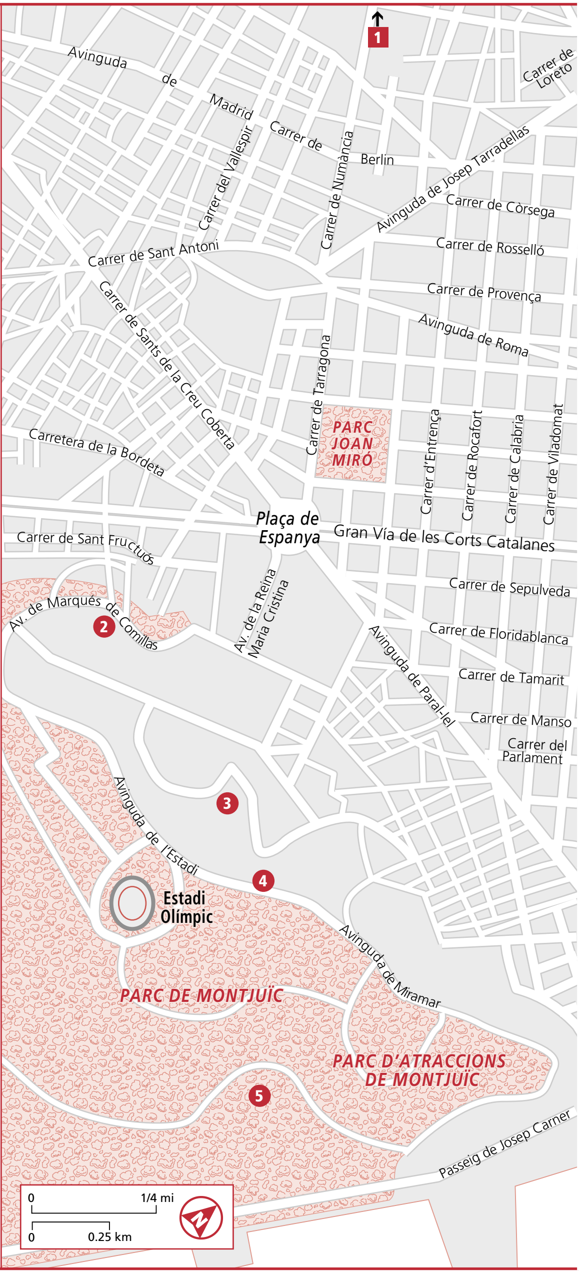
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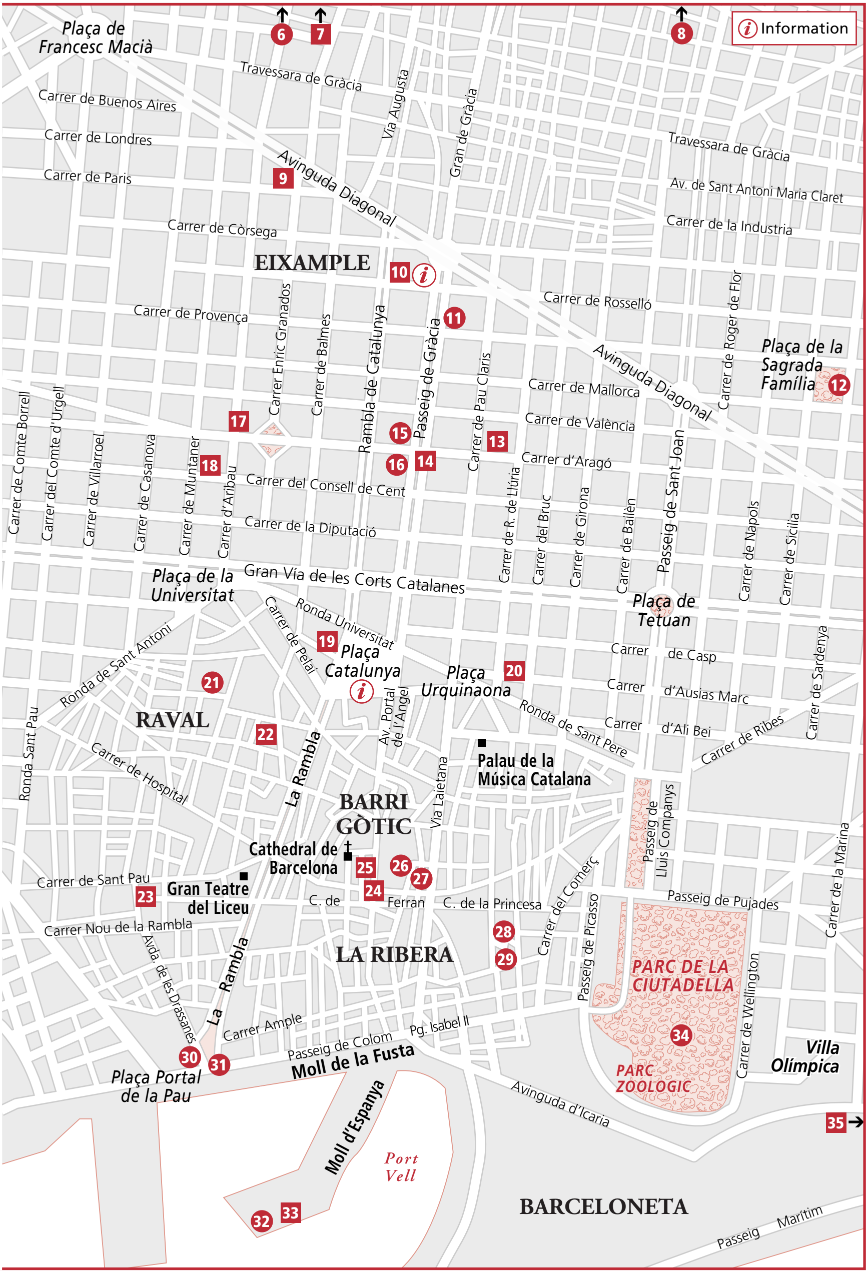
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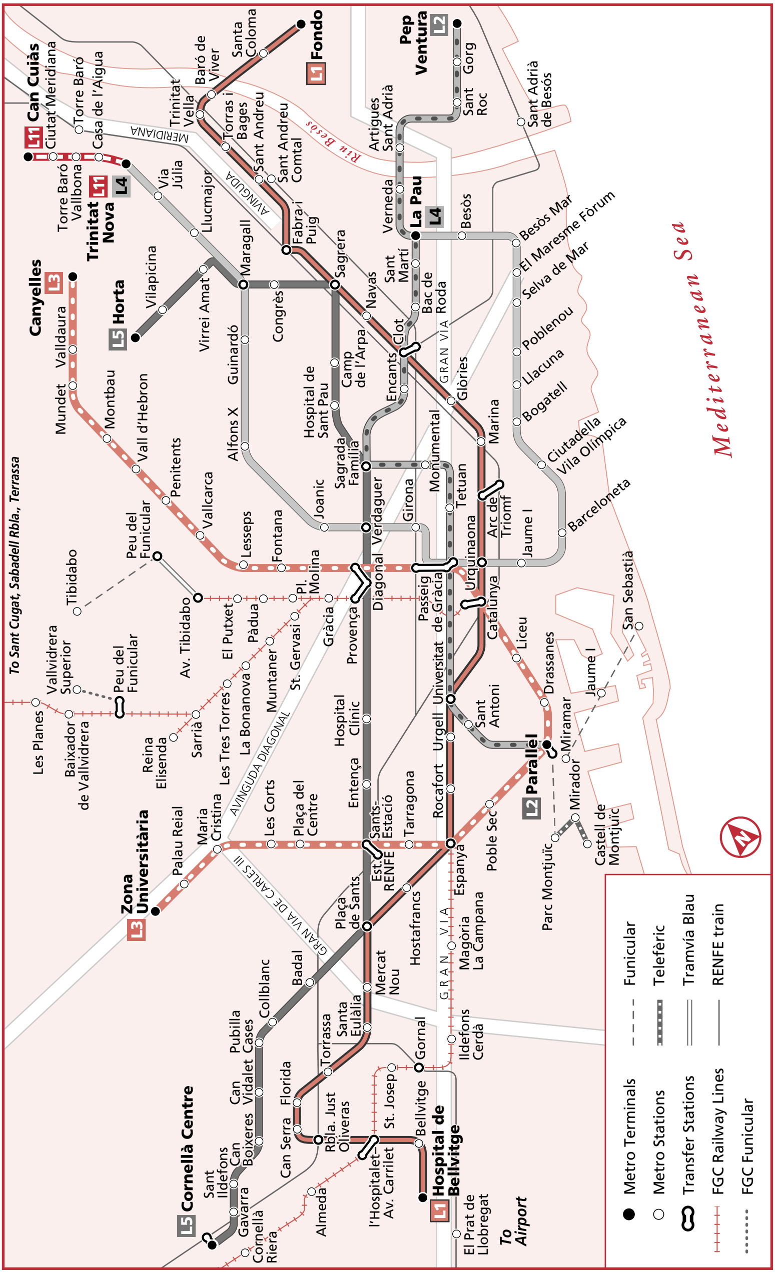
Barcelona Metro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Sant Andreu
Sant Andreu Comtal
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MERIDIANA
AVINGUDA
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Besòs
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Bac de Roda
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Camp de l'Arpa
Sagrada Família
Joanic
Verdaguer
Girona
Monumental
Tetuan
Marina
Arc de Triomf
Urquinaona
Jaume I
Tibidabo
Peu del Funicular
Av. Tibidabo
El Putxet
Pàdua
Pl. Molina
Gràcia
Diagonal
Provença
Passeig de Gràcia
Catalunya
Liceu
Drassanes
San Sebastià
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Vallvidrera Superior
Peu del Funicular
Les Planes
Baixador de Vallvidrera
Reina Elisenda
Sarrià
Les Tres Torres
La Bonanova
Muntaner
St. Gervasi
Hospital Clínic
Universitat
Urgell
Sant Antoni
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Miramar
Mirador
Castell de Montjuïc
Parc Montjuïc
Zona Universitària L3
Palau Reial
Maria Cristina
AVINGUDA DIAGONAL
Les Corts
Plaça del Centre
Entença
Sants-Estació
Est. RENFE
Tarragona
Rocafort
Poble Sec
Espanya
GRAN VIA DE CARLES III
Plaça de Sants
Hostafrancs
Magòria La Campana
Mercat Nou
Badal
Collblanc
Santa Eulàlia
Torrassa
Pubilla Cases
Can Vidalet
Can Boixeres
Florida
Can Serra
Rbla. Just Oliveras
L5 Cornellà Centre
Sant Ildefons
Gavarra
Cornellà Riera
Almeda
l'Hospitalet-Av. Carrilet
St. Josep
Bellvitge
Gornal
L1 Hospital de Bellvitge
Ildefons Cerdà
GRAN VIA
El Prat de Llobregat
To Airport
Metro Terminals
Metro Stations
Transfer Stations
FGC Railway Lines
FGC Funicular
Funicular
Telefèric
Tramvia Blau
RENFE train

BY BUS TMB runs Barcelona's bus system, which has dozens of complicated, frequent, and useful lines. Board at the front to pay your fare, or get your pass punched in one of the machines just inside the bus. For schedules and route information, visit one of the service offices mentioned above, call ✆ **93-318-70-74,** or visit TMB's website at **www.tmb.net**. The single fare is 1.30€ ($1.90), same as the Metro.

BY TAXI Taxis are black and yellow. When available, they display a sign reading LIBRE (Spanish) or LLIURE (Catalán) and/or an illuminated green roof light. On weekdays between 6am and 10pm, the fare starts at 1.15€ ($1.70) and increases by .70€ ($1) per kilometer; at other times, the fare starts at 1.30€ ($1.90) and increases by .90€ ($1.30) per kilometer. You can hail a taxi on the street or call one at ✆ **93-303-30-33.**

BY CAR Driving is a headache in congested Barcelona, but a car is ideal for touring the environs. All three of the major U.S.-based car-rental firms are represented in Barcelona, both at the airport and at downtown offices. Check with **Budget,** at Barcelona Airport 71 (✆ **93-298-36-00**); **Avis,** at Rita Bonnat 5 (✆ **102-180-854**); or **Hertz,** at El Prat Airport Terminal B-C (✆ **93-298-36-38**).

BY FUNICULAR & TELEFERIC Two of Barcelona's high-altitude vantage points, Montjuïc and Tibidabo, accessible by funicular, are popular for panoramic views of the city. The departure point for Tibidabo lies at the northern edge of Barcelona. Take Metro FGC line L7 to Avinguda del Tibidabo, and then a taxi (8€/$12), a bus (2€/$2.90), or, on weekends, the **Tramvía Blau** (blue trolley) (2.60€/$3.80) to the funicular.

Tibidabo's counterpart is the peak of Montjuïc, a hump of hill at the southwest end of the harbor. Site of some of the sporting activities during the 1992 Olympic games, it can be reached by the Montjuïc funicular, whose point of origin is the Parallel Metro station. The funicular runs daily: late March to mid-September 9am to 10pm and late September to early March 9am to 8pm. It's part of the Metro system, so fares are the same as for the subway.

You can get off the funicular partway up Montjuïc to explore the attractions there (the Joan Miró museum is nearby), and it's fun to continue to the top of the hill on the *teleféric,* an aerial cable car. It arrives near the Castell de Montjuïc, a 17th-century fortress. From mid-March to mid-June and mid-September to early November, it runs daily from 11am to 7:15pm. During high summer it runs from 11:15am to 9pm. The rest of the year the schedule is subject to change but it usually runs on Saturday, Sunday, and holidays from 11am to 7:15pm. The round-trip fare is 2.40€ ($3.50).

FAST FACTS: Barcelona

Consulates The consulate of the **United States,** at Reina Elisenda 23 (✆ **93-280-22-27;** Metro: Reina Elisenda), is open Monday to Friday 9am to 12:30pm and 3 to 5pm. The consulate of the **United Kingdom,** Avinguda Diagonal 477 (✆ **93-366-62-00;** Metro: Hospital Clínic), is open Monday to Friday 9:30am to 1:30pm and 4 to 5pm. The **Canadian Consulate** is at Carrer de Elisenda Pinós 10 (✆ **93-204-27-00;** Metro: Reina Elisenda), open Monday to Friday 10am to 1pm; **New Zealand** at Travesera de Gràcia 64 (✆ **93-209-03-99;** Metro: Gràcia), open Monday to Friday 9am to 2pm and 4 to 7pm; and the **Australian Consulate**, Gran

Vía Carlos III 98 (✆ **93-490-90-13;** Metro: María Cristina), open Monday to Friday 10am to noon.

Currency Exchange Most banks will exchange currency Monday to Friday 8:30am to 2pm and Saturday 8:30am to 1pm. *Oficinas de cambio* (exchange offices) are located in the airport and at the central rail station. Avoid the small exchange offices found in tourist areas that claim to charge no commission: They don't have to, because their rates are so much in their favor. ATMs are widely available; most machines provide directions in English. *You'll need a four-digit PIN,* so call your credit card company before you leave home if you don't have one.

Dentists Call **Clinica Dental Beonadex,** Paseo Bona Nova 69, Third Floor (✆ **93-418-44-33;** bus no. 22), for an appointment. It's open Monday 3 to 9pm and Tuesday to Friday 8am to 3pm.

Drugstores After-hours, various pharmacies take turns staying open at night. All pharmacies that are not open post the names and addresses of the pharmacies that are open all night in the area.

Emergencies To report a **fire,** dial ✆ **080;** to call an ambulance ✆ **061;** the police ✆ **091.**

Hospitals Barcelona has many hospitals and clinics, including **Hospital Clínic,** Casanova 143 (✆ **93-227-54-00;** Metro: Hospital Clinic), and **Hospital de la Santa Creu i Sant Pau,** at the intersection of Carrer Cartagena and Carrer Sant Antoni Maria Claret (✆ **93-291-90-00;** Metro: Hospital de Sant Pau).

Post Office The main post office is at Plaça d'Antoni López (✆ **93-486-80-50;** Metro: Jaume I). It's open Monday to Friday 8am to 9pm and Saturday 8am to 2pm.

Safety Be particularly careful with cameras, purses, and wallets, all favorite targets of thieves and pickpockets in Barcelona—especially on La Rambla, in the Gothic Quarter, in the streets around the Picasso Museum, and in the parts of the old town near the waterfront. Avoid those sections at night or travel them by taxi. Muggings, increasingly violent, are reportedly on the upswing. New lighting on side streets is intended to alleviate the problem, but urban caution is still in order.

Telephone The **country code** for Spain is **34.** The **city code** for Barcelona is **93.** To make an **international call,** dial **07,** wait for the tone, and dial the country code, the area code, and the number. Note that an international call from a public phone booth requires stacks of coins. As an alternative, purchase a **phone card** from a tobacco shop *(estanco),* the post office, or other authorized dealer.

WHERE TO STAY

CIUTAT VELLA (OLD CITY)

Very Expensive

Le Meridien Barcelona ★★★ This is the finest hotel in the old town, thanks in large part to a major refurbishment. A fave with CEOs and celebs—Madonna stayed here—it's far superior in both amenities and comfort to any competitor in the old town. It's a genteel retreat in the middle of the area's action. Have a cocktail in the calming piano bar after a long day of sightseeing. Rooms are spacious and comfortable, with double-glazed windows, extralarge beds, and bathrooms with heated floors.

La Rambla 111, 08002 Barcelona. ✆ **800/543-43-00** in the U.S., or 93-318-62-00. Fax 93-301-77-76. www.lemeridien-barcelona.com. 233 units. 295€–395€ ($428–$573) double; from 495€ ($718) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 25€ ($36). Metro: Liceu or Plaça de Catalunya. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; access to a nearby health club; car-rental desk; business center; room service; babysitting; laundry service/dry cleaning service. *In room:* A/C, TV, beverage maker, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Expensive

Colón ★★ This immensely popular hotel is blessed with one of the most dramatic locations in Barcelona, opposite the cathedral. Inside you'll find conservative and slightly old-fashioned public areas and a helpful staff. Rooms are filled with cushy furniture and (despite continuing renovations) an appealingly dowdy kind of charm. Though lacking views, those in back are quieter, especially when celebrations and rock concerts take place in front of the cathedral. Sixth-floor rooms have terraces overlooking the square, and are the most desirable and hardest to reserve. Some lower rooms are dark.

Av. de la Catedral 7, 08002 Barcelona. ✆ **93-301-14-04.** Fax 93-317-29-15. www.hotelcolon.es. 145 units. 110€–245€ ($160–$355) double; from 245€–280€ ($355–$406) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Catalunya or Jaume I. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; room service; babysitting; laundry service/dry cleaning service. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Moderate

Duques de Bergara ★ Here, guests can enjoy a striking 1898 mansion that underwent an expansion to triple the number of rooms. Some *modernista* details have been retained, including the magnificent carved wood and marble entry, although most everything else is sleekly contemporary. The halls were constructed to allow for relatively spacious rooms, many of which have separate seating and desk areas. The desk staff is multilingual.

Bergara 11 (off Plaça de Catalunya), 08002 Barcelona. ✆ **93-301-51-51.** Fax 93-317-34-42. www.hoteles-catalonia.es. 151 units. 145€–245€ ($210–$355) double. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Universitat. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; small rooftop pool; business center; room service; laundry service/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Grand Hotel Central ★★ This hip hotel in the heart of El Born was created out of a 1920s office building. Boasting one of the most helpful staffs in Barcelona, it offers as a special feature a small rooftop terrace with a plunge pool. The bedrooms are a bit Zen, with limed oak furniture and taupe-painted walls. The rooms have a sophisticated color scheme of tobacco, chocolate, and pewter. The location is between the Santa Caterina market and the 13th-century cathedral. Opt for one of the sixth-floor doubles that don't face traffic-clogged Via Laietana.

Via Laietana 30, 08003 Barcelona. ✆ **93-295-79-00.** Fax 93-268-12-15. www.grandhotelcentral.com. 147 units. 165€–290€ ($239–$421) double; 340€–765€ ($493–$1,109) suite. AE, MC, V. Parking 25€ ($36). Metro: Barceloneta. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; infinity pool; gym; room service; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

Inexpensive

Hotel España Although the rooms at this cost-conscious hotel have none of the architectural grandeur of Barcelona's modernist age, they're well scrubbed, comfortably sized, and outfitted with functional furniture. The building itself is a relic of the city's turn-of-the-20th-century splendor, as it was constructed in 1902 by fabled architect Domènech i Montaner, designer and architect of the Palau de la Música. It was once patronized by the likes of Salvador Dalí. There's an elevator for the building's four floors, a facade that still evokes the past, and a hardworking staff that's comfortable with non-Spanish-speaking visitors.

Carrer Sant Pau 9, 08001 Barcelona. ✆ **93-318-17-58.** Fax 93-317-11-34. www.hotelespanya.com. 80 units. 105€ ($152) double; 135€ ($196) triple. AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: Liceu. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer, safe.

EIXAMPLE

Very Expensive

Claris ★★ An 1882 aristocratic residence was converted into one of only two officially designated *gran lujo* (grand luxury) hotels in the city center. The hotel opened in 1992, in time for the Olympics, and has a small pool and garden on its roof, as well as a gallery of Egyptian antiquities on its second floor. Rooms with clean-lined contemporary furnishings incorporate pieces of ancient Egyptian art, both real and copies, and all the high-end electronic accessories you could wish for.

Carrer de Pau Claris 150, 08009 Barcelona. ✆ **800/888-4747** in the U.S., or 93-487-62-62. Fax 93-215-79-70. www.derbyhotels.es. 124 units. 175€–325€ ($254–$471) double; from 350€ ($508) suite. AE, MC, V. Parking 20€ ($29). Metro: Passeig de Gràcia. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; outdoor pool; exercise room; sauna; room service; in-room massage; babysitting; laundry service/dry cleaning service. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

Expensive

Pulitzer ★★ *Finds* With its high-concept modern design, attractive guest rooms, and immensely welcoming sense of comfort, this fashionable boutique hotel is our favorite hotel in an area that is too often marred by stark commercial lodging. Pulitzer, located right off the heartbeat Plaça Catalunya, boasts a rooftop bar that opens onto panoramic views of Las Ramblas and the Gothic Quarter. The bedrooms are decorated in tones of charcoal gray, squid-ink black, and stark white, and some of them are a bit cramped. But even the humblest abode here has a bit of flair, with leather, silk, and glamorous fabrics.

Bergata 8, 08002 Barcelona. ✆ **93-481-67-67.** Fax 93-481-64-64. www.hotelpulitzer.es. 91 units. 155€–250€ ($225–$363) standard double; 175€–275€ ($254–$399) superior double. Parking 25€ ($36). Metro: Catalunya. **Amenities:** Restaurant; cocktail bar; gym; business center; room service; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms; solarium. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

Moderate

Axel ★ *Finds* You don't have to be young and gay to check in here, but it certainly helps. Cutting-edge architectural designs and a liberal, cosmopolitan atmosphere prevail at this chic bastion of comfort and charm. *outTraveler* magazine awarded it "Best Hotel" in 2005, and that award-winning standard of hospitality still prevails today. Hotel-savvy travelers, and not just gay ones, view Axel as a cherished, unique address. You might meet Mr. Right at the rooftop pool and sundeck, or perhaps in the hip cocktail bar or lobby restaurant. The designers of the hotel weren't afraid to use splashes of scarlet against a mellow background of whites and neutrals. Bedrooms are midsize and soundproof, with king-size beds.

Aribau 33, 08011 Barcelona. ✆ **93-323-93-93.** Fax 93-323-93-94. www.axelhotels.com. 66 units. 152€–215€ ($220–$312) double; 203€–248€ ($294–$360) superior double, 308€–353€ ($447–$512) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 15€ ($22). Metro: Universitat. **Amenities:** Restaurant; 2 bars; outdoor pool; gym; sauna; room service; massages; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms; solarium. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer, safe.

Cram ★ *Finds* Don't judge this hotel by its name. A hip crowd of guests, most of whom are in their 30s and 40s, seek out this hot address, with its textured red-leather walls, glossy black surfaces, and whimsical touches like UFO-shaped chairs. This gem is housed in a restored and architecturally beautiful building from the 19th century.

The team of architects respected the facade but turned the interior into a modern palace of convenience and comfort. The bedrooms are high quality with mirrored walls, amber-wood floors, and sophisticated color schemes such as mustard yellow and saffron. The location is good, too, right in the center of Barcelona, just 4 blocks from the Passeig de Gràcia.

Aribau 54, 08011 Barcelona. ✆ **93-216-77-00.** Fax 93-216-77-07. www.hotelcram.com. 67 units. 168€–278€ ($244–$403) double; 233€–430€ ($338–$624) executive and privilege units; 270€–515€ ($392–$747) suite. AE, MC, V. Parking 15€ ($22). Metro: Universitat. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; outdoor pool; spa; room service; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms; limited mobility rooms; solarium. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer, safe.

Inexpensive

Astoria *Value* Another property from the growing Derby chain, the 1954 Astoria has a between-the-wars facade that makes it appear older than it is. The high ceilings, geometric designs, and brass-studded detailings in the gracious public areas hint of Moorish Andalusia. Rooms are soundproof and feature the warmth of exposed cedar as well as elegant modern accessories.

París 203, 08036 Barcelona. ✆ **93-209-83-11.** Fax 93-202-30-08. www.derbyhotels.es. 115 units. 108€–140€ ($157–$203) double. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 20€ ($29). Metro: Diagonal. **Amenities:** Cafe; bar; modest exercise room; sauna; room service; laundry service/dry cleaning service. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Fashion House B&B ★ *Finds* B&B is not a typical concept for staying in Barcelona, but this boutique hotel may be a trendsetter. The gay-friendly house is situated in the heart of the Eixample, a few minutes walk from La Pedrera and only 3 blocks off Plaça Catalunya. In a restored 19th-century building, Fashion House has been converted to receive and house guests in comfort. Decorated with stucco and friezes, the B&B evokes a homelike aura. Bedrooms are attractively furnished, each cheerily decorated with pastels, and the finest units open onto little verandas.

Bruc 13 Principal, 08010 Barcelona. ✆ **63-790-40-44.** Fax 93-165-15-60. www.bcn-fashionhouse.com. 8 units. 50€–100€ ($73–$145) double; 85€–115€ ($123–$167) triple; 80€–150€ ($116–$218) suite. Rates include breakfast. MC, V. Parking 25€ ($36). Metro: Urquinaona. **Amenities:** Breakfast room. *In room:* A/C, TV (in suite), kitchenette (in suite).

NORTH DIAGONAL

Expensive

Gallery Hotel ★★ Perched at the top of the Passeig de Gràcia, this superstylish, ultramodern hotel is a perfect base for attacking the shops of both the Eixample and Grácia. The spare, spacious rooms have an almost Asian feel to them, with furnishings in red and black, firm beds, and big bathtubs. Service is impeccable.

Roselló 249, 08008 Barcelona. ✆ **93-415-99-11.** Fax 93-415-91-84. www.galleryhotel.com. 115 units. 219€–280€ ($318–$406) double; 326€–406€ ($473–$589) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 20€ ($29). Metro: Diagonal. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; gym; sauna; business center; room service; laundry service/dry cleaning service. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

NORTHERN NEIGHBORHOODS

Very Expensive

Gran Hotel La Florida ★★★ Perched on top of a mountain at the northern edge of town, this hotel in a 1925 building is a surfeit of gorgeous views, perfect service, and memorable food. The restaurant, sun deck, and pool look out on the entire city of Barcelona, right down to the Mediterranean Sea. The spacious rooms are outfitted with cloudlike beds and plasma TVs. Service is impeccable, provided by a multinational staff who jump at the chance to make your trip more enjoyable.

The La Florida is on Tibidabo, best known for its amusement park. To get to the hotel from central Barcelona, hop on a complimentary car shuttle (available on demand), hail a taxi, or take an awkward bus-train combination—but any way you go the trip is worth it.

Carretera Vallvidrera 83–93, 08035 Barcelona. ✆ **93-259-30-00.** Fax 93-259-30-01. www.hotellaflorida.com. 74 units. 360€–610€ ($522–$885) double; 660€–890€ ($957–$1,291) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 20€ ($29). **Amenities:** Restaurant; 2 bars; nightclub; indoor/outdoor pool; gym; spa; business center; salon; room service; laundry service/dry cleaning service. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

VILA OLIMPICA

Very Expensive

Hotel Arts ★★★ This deluxe hotel is the only lodging in Barcelona that gives The Palace serious competition. The hotel occupies part of a postmodern tower marked by a huge Frank Gehry sculpture of a fish above the terrace facing the sea. The location is about 2.5km (1½ miles) east of Barcelona's historic core, adjacent to the sea and the Olympic Port. The decor is contemporary and elegant, and both the public and private areas are filled with contemporary art. Views from the rooms sweep the skyline and the Mediterranean. The multinozzle showers are a truly uplifting experience.

Marina 19–21, 08005 Barcelona. ✆ **800/241-33-33** in the U.S., or 93-221-10-00. Fax 93-221-10-70. www.ritzcarlton.com. 483 units. 325€–605€ ($471–$877) double; from 553€ ($802) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 35€ ($51). Metro: Ciudadela–Vila Olímpica. **Amenities:** 5 restaurants; 2 bars; outdoor and indoor pools; health club and spa; business center; salon; room service; in-room massage; babysitting; laundry service/dry cleaning service. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

MOLL DE BARCELONA

Expensive

Eurostar Grand Marina Hotel ★★ No, it's not New York's iconic Guggenheim Museum, although its circular, upside-down wedding cake design evokes that famous building. Next to Barcelona's World Trade Center, the hotel naturally attracts businesspeople, bankers, and conventioneers, although it's equally suitable as a holiday hotel. It lies at the end of a long pier that juts into the Barcelona harbor. Some of the most panoramic views of water and cityscape can be seen from the hotel's windows. The eight-floor hotel offers spacious, well-furnished guest rooms, with private terraces in some units.

Moll de Barcelona s/n, 08039 Barcelona. ✆ **93-603-90-00.** Fax 93-603-90-90. www.grandmarinahotel.com. 278 units. 170€–280€ ($247–$406) double; 270€–350€ ($392–$508) junior suite; from 305€ ($442) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 25€ ($36). Metro: Drassanes. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; piano bar; small outdoor pool; gym; sauna; salon; room service; massage; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, iron, safe.

WHERE TO DINE

CIUTAT VELLA (OLD CITY)

Expensive

Casa Leopoldo ★ *Finds* SEAFOOD This surprisingly sophisticated restaurant in the somewhat seedy Barri Xinés has thrived since 1929. It offers some of the freshest seafood in town, and caters to a loyal clientele. Pictographic tiles and bullfighting paraphernalia constitute much of the traditional decor. There's a thriving tapas bar in front, plus two dining rooms, one slightly more formal than the other. Specialties include stuffed oxtail, roast *merluza* (hake) and *rape* (monkfish) with a *sofrito* of garlic and shrimp, and baby eels boiled in oil—a pricey delicacy. An enduring specialty is the enormous platter of fish and shellfish, prepared only for two.

Sant Rafael 24 (near Carrer de la Riereta). ☎ **93-441-30-14.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 45€–70€ ($65–$102); tasting menu 50€ ($73) dinner. AE, DC, MC, V. Tues–Sat 1:30–4pm and 9–11pm; Sun 1:30–4pm. Closed Aug 4–Sept 4. Metro: Liceu.

Espai Sucre ★★ *Finds* DESSERTS Espai Sucre (literally, "Sugar Space") is Barcelona's most unusual dining room, with a minimalist decor and seating for 30. For the dessert lover, it is like entering a heaven created by the sugar fairy. The desserts here are original creations. "Salad" is likely to be small cubes of spicy milk pudding resting on matchsticks of green apple with baby arugula leaves, peppery caramel, dabs of lime kefir and lemon curd, and toffee. A tiny phyllo pyramid, no bigger than a pencil eraser, conceals a filling of lemon and rosemary marmalade. Ever had a soup of litchi, celery, apple, and eucalyptus? If some of the concoctions frighten your palate, you'll find comfort in the more familiar—vanilla cream with coffee sorbet and caramelized banana. Every dessert comes with a recommendation for the appropriate wine to accompany it.

Princesa 53. ☎ **93-268-16-30.** Reservations required. Tasting menu 50€ ($73); 3-dessert platter 30€ ($44); 5-dessert platter 40€ ($58). DC, MC, V. Tues–Thurs 9–11:30pm; Fri–Sat 8:30–11:30pm. Closed Dec 24 to 1st week of Jan. Metro: Arco de Triompho or Jaume I.

Moderate

Agut ★★ SPANISH If it weren't for Agut's location in a dark corner of the Gothic Quarter, you might not be able to get in at all. As it is, be there when the doors open to have a chance at a table if you don't have reservations. The chefs give all their attention to delicately balancing ingredients and allowing every flavor to take its bow. Their precision shows up even in salads, such as young basil and arugula leaves with toasted pine nuts and croutons on a bed of diced tomatoes, draped with slivers of smoked fish. The beef is superb—look for *filetitos de buey con salsa trufa* (beef filets with truffle sauce) with *trumpetas de la muerte* (black mushrooms). Around since 1924, the restaurant occupies several rooms on two floors with wooden wainscoting, marble floors, and early 1900s paintings.

Gignàs 16 (a block south of the main post office). ☎ **93-315-17-09.** Reservations strongly recommended. Main courses 25€–35€ ($36–$51); fixed price lunch 12€ ($17). DC, MC, V. Tues–Sun 1:30–4pm and 9pm–midnight. Metro: Barceloneta.

Can Culleretes CATALAN Founded in 1786 as a pastry shop, Barcelona's oldest restaurant is located in the Gothic Quarter. The restaurant retains many original architectural features, with wooden beams overhead and a long bas-relief mural in wood depicting folkloric Catalunya. Every last dish on the menu is a Catalán standard, making this a good place to learn what the simple traditional form of this regional cuisine is all about. Just don't expect novelty. Rabbit with garlic mayo is typical, as is the sausage *butifarra* with beans. From October to January, game is featured, including *perdiz* (partridge).

Quintana 5 (between Fernando and Boquería). ☎ **93-317-64-85.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 10€–18€ ($15–$26), *menú del día* 18€ ($26) lunch. DC, V. Tues–Sun 1:30–4pm; Tues–Sat 9–11pm. Closed 3 weeks in July. Metro: Liceu. Bus: 14 or 59.

Els Quatre Gats *Value* CATALAN This has been a Barcelona legend since 1897. The "Four Cats" (in Catalán slang, "just a few people") was a favorite of Picasso, Rusiñol, and other artists, who once hung their works on its walls. On a narrow cobblestone street in the Barri Gòtic near the cathedral, the *fin de siècle* cafe was the setting for piano concerts by Isaac Albéniz and Ernie Granados, and murals by Ramón

Casas. It was a base for members of the *modernismo* movement and figured in the city's intellectual and bohemian life.

Today the restored bar is a popular meeting place. The fixed-price meal is one of the better bargains in town, considering the locale. The unpretentious Catalán cooking here is called *cucina de mercat* (based on whatever looks fresh at the market). The constantly changing menu reflects the seasons.

Montsió 3. ☎ **93-302-41-40.** Reservations required Sat–Sun. Main courses 12€–24€ ($17–$35); fixed-price menu (Mon–Fri) 16€ ($23). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 8am–2am. Metro: Plaça de Catalunya.

Inexpensive

Café de L'Academia ★ *Value* CATALAN/MEDITERRANEAN In the center of Barri Gòtic a short walk from Plaça Sant Jaume, this 15-table (20–25 in summer) restaurant looks expensive but is really one of the most affordable as well as the best in the medieval city. The building dates from the 15th century, but the restaurant was founded in 1987. At a small bar you can peruse the menu and study the wines. Dishes of this quality usually cost three times as much in Barcelona. The chef is proud of his "kitchen of the market," suggesting that only the freshest ingredients from the day's shopping are featured. Try such delights as *lassanye de butifarra i ceps* (lasagna with Catalán sausage and flap mushrooms), or *bacalla gratinado i musselina de carofes* (salt cod gratinée with an artichoke mousse).

Carrer Lledó 1 (Barri Gòtic), Plaça Sant Just. ☎ **93-315-00-26** or 93-319-82-53. Reservations required. Main courses 10€–15€ ($15–$22); fixed-price menu (lunch only) 13€ ($19). AE, MC, V. Mon–Fri 9am–noon, 1:30–4pm, and 8:45–11:30pm. Closed last 2 weeks Aug. Metro: Jaume I.

Cuines Santa Caterina ★ *Finds* ASIAN/MEDITERRANEAN/ITALIAN In the Santa Caterina market, this soaring space with an open kitchen has a tapas bar. With its different types of kitchens, ranging from Asia to Italy, this fusion cuisine is served against a backdrop that includes columns of light; ficus trees planted in between tables, and one wall composed of shelves stacked with wine, olive oil, and various vinegars. The food comes directly from the market, so it's very fresh. Many dishes are suitable for vegetarians, especially those fresh green asparagus emerging from the grill or the delicious salads made, say, of melted cheese, nuts, and dates. The sushi tastes fresh and is prepared in the best tradition of Japan.

Mercado de Santa Caterina, Avinguda Francesc Cambó 17, La Ribera. ☎ **93-268-99-18.** Reservations not required. Main courses 5€–20€ ($7.30–$29). MC, V. Daily 1–4pm and 8–11:30pm. Metro: Jaume I.

Garduña CATALAN This is the most famous restaurant in Barcelona's covered food market, La Boqueria. Battered, somewhat ramshackle, and a bit claustrophobic, it's fashionable with an artistic set that might have been designated as bohemian in an earlier era. It's near the back of the market, so you'll pass endless rows of fresh produce, cheese, and meats before you reach it. You can dine downstairs near a crowded bar, or a bit more formally upstairs. Food is ultrafresh—the chefs certainly don't have to travel far for the ingredients. You might try "hors d'oeuvres of the sea," cannelloni Rossini, or grilled hake with herbs.

Jerusalén 18. ☎ **93-302-43-23.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 12€–28€ ($17–$41); fixed-price lunch 13€ ($19); fixed-price dinner 19€ ($28). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat noon–5pm and 8pm–midnight. Metro: Liceu.

Los Caracoles CATALAN "The Snails" (as it translates into English) was founded back in 1835 in the heart of the Gothic Quarter near the Rambles, and the tantalizing aroma of roasting chicken still wafts through this seedy street after all these years.

Even though Los Caracoles hasn't been acclaimed the best restaurant in Barcelona since the time of the American Civil War, it remains a bastion of local culture and a favorite of old-time locals. The food on the menu at this old favorite—which was featured in the inaugural edition of *Spain on $5 a Day* and recommended for many years—has never been altered.

Escudellers 14. ✆ **93-302-31-85.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 8€–30€ ($12–$44). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 1:15pm–midnight. Metro: Drassanes.

Pla de la Garsa ★ *Value* MEDITERRANEAN/CATALAN In Barrio Ribera close to the cathedral, this historic building is fully renovated but retains some 19th-century fittings. The restaurant boasts one of the city's best wine lists, and features a daily array of traditional Catalán and Mediterranean favorites. Begin with one of the pâtés, especially the goose, or a confit of duck thighs. You can also order meat and fish pâtés. One surprise is a terrine with black olives and anchovies.

Assaonadors 13. ✆ **93-315-24-13.** Reservations recommended for weekends. Main courses 8€–16€ ($12–$23). AE, MC, V. Daily 8pm–1am. Metro: Jaume I.

DIAGONAL & ABOVE

Very Expensive

Botafumeiro ★★ SEAFOOD Widely regarded as Barcelona's best seafood restaurant, this is where the king of Spain comes for his fish. The menu is stacked with dozens of preparations of fish, mussels, clams, lobster, scallops, and other sea life. Whether grilled, fried, or served in paella, the fish is always fresh and often heartbreakingly simple, showcasing the beauty of Galician seafood. The *Mariscos Botafumeiro* specialty is a grand parade of all the shellfish owner Moncho Neira can get his hands on. Don't come here if you intend to eat anything other than fish, though a few meat dishes do lurk at the edges of the menu. White-jacketed waiters, always snapping to attention, make you feel like royalty. If the prices here are too high, Neira owns several other restaurants in town; grilled seafood is the specialty at **Moncho's Barcelona,** Travessera de Gràcia 44–46 (✆ **93-414-66-22**).

Gran de Grácia 81. ✆ **93-218-42-30.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 26€–60€ ($38–$87). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 1pm–1am. Metro: Fontana.

Drolma ★★★ FRENCH/SPANISH The setting here meets the high expectations fostered by the glowing reviews this trendsetter has garnered since the day it opened. A squad of scrupulously trained male and female servers tends to your needs. They'll wheel over a cart of wines and offer any of them as an aperitif. Following that, they bring not one but two *aperitivos*—Spanish for *amuse-bouche*—an airy little dumpling, maybe, or a shot glass of crabmeat in basil oil. That's only a hint of what's to come. There's the salad with four quail eggs and four chunks of grilled foie gras, the potato soup with mushrooms and slivered truffles, the glazed goat, the lamb—some dishes even come with second helpings. The restaurant has a faint aura of corporate calm, but the bravura display of skill and largesse is not soon forgotten by serious diners.

In the Hotel Majestic, Passeig de Gràcia 68. ✆ **93-496-77-10.** Reservations required. Main courses 46€–78€ ($67–$113). AE, DC, MC, V. Sept–July Mon–Sat 1–3:30pm and 8:30–11pm; Aug Mon–Sat 8:30–11pm. Metro: Passeig de Gràcia.

Moderate

Cata 181 ★★ *Finds* CATALAN/TAPAS All dishes here are tapas size, and how innovative they seem until you learn that many of the recipes are based on time-tested favorites from Grandmother Catalonia's cupboard. Take the pig trotters with walnuts and fresh figs, accompanied by a scoop of honey ice cream. Sweetened pig's-foot flan in some variation has been served in Catalonia for centuries. Another startling but flavor-filled dish is squid stuffed with minced pork and served with an almond-flavored chocolate sauce. A savory rice dish is served with fresh asparagus and black truffles, and ravioli come stuffed with codfish and minced smoked ham. A Catalán favorite, cannelloni, is presented in a truffle-studded béchamel sauce.

Calle Valencia 181. ✆ **93-323-68-18.** Reservations required. Tasting menu 30€ ($44) for 9 dishes, 38€ ($55) for 11 dishes; tapas 5€–12€ ($7.30–$17). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Thurs 6pm–midnight; Fri–Sat 7pm–1am. Closed 3 weeks in Aug. Metro: Passeig de Gràcia or Hospital Clínic.

Gresca ★★ *Finds* CATALAN/INTERNATIONAL This small restaurant, a real discovery, is the creation of Chef Rafael Peña, who finely tuned his culinary skills under Ferran Adrià, hailed as the world's greatest chef. In this modern setting, a chic crowd of foodies is lured to taste the offerings of this highly talented and imaginative chef. Food-smart Cataláns can be seen ordering some of the more experimental dishes—fresh calf's liver with plantains and licorice, for example. The octopus carpaccio was a sure-fire winner, and so was the black bultifarra (a regional sausage popular in Catalonia). Here it's served with fried potatoes.

Carrer Provenza 230. ✆ **93-451-61-93.** Reservations required. Main courses 14€–27€ ($20–$39). MC, V. Daily 1:30–3:30pm; Mon–Sat 8:30–11pm. Metro: Catalunya or Hospital Clinic.

L'Olive ★ CATALAN/MEDITERRANEAN You assume that this two-floor restaurant is named for the olive that figures so prominently into its cuisine, but actually it's named for the owner, Josep Olive. The building is designed in modern Catalán style. The tables are topped in marble, the floors impeccably polished. There are sections on both floors where it's possible to have some privacy, and overall the feeling is one of elegance with a touch of intimacy. You won't be disappointed by anything on the menu, especially *bacalla llauna* (raw salt cod) or *filet de vedella al vi negre al forn* (baked veal filets in a red-wine sauce), and *salsa maigret* of duck with strawberry sauce.

Calle Balmes 47 (corner of Concéjo de Ciento). ✆ **93-452-19-90.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 15€–29€ ($22–$42); *menú completo* 55€ ($80). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 1–4pm; Mon–Sat 8:30pm–midnight. Metro: Passeig de Gràcia.

LA RIBERA & BARCELONETA

Expensive

Can Costa ★ SEAFOOD This is one of the oldest seafood restaurants in this seafaring town. Established in the late 1930s, it has two busy dining rooms, a practiced staff, and an outdoor terrace, although a warehouse blocks the view of the harbor. Fresh seafood prepared according to traditional recipes rules the menu. It includes the best baby squid in town—sautéed in a flash so that it has a nearly grilled flavor, almost never overcooked or rubbery. A long-standing chef's specialty is *fideuá de peix,* a relative of the classic Valencian shellfish paella, with noodles instead of rice. Desserts are made fresh daily.

Passeig Don Joan de Borbò 70. ✆ **93-221-59-03.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 18€–41€ ($26–$59). MC, V. Daily 12:30–4:30pm; Thurs–Tues 8–11:30pm. Metro: Barceloneta.

7 Portes CATALAN In business since 1836, these "Seven Doors" open into a food emporium that is a lunchtime favorite for businesspeople (the Stock Exchange is across the way) and an evening favorite for anyone who enjoys the peachy glow of the hanging lamps and the ministrations of the piano player. Known for its paellas, changed daily, there are also regional dishes that include grilled rabbit, fresh herring with onions and potatoes, a wide selection of superfresh fish and oysters, and an herb-laden stew of black beans with pork. Portions are enormous.

Passeig Isabel II 14. ✆ **93-319-3033.** Reservations required weekends. Main courses 16€–30€ ($23–$44). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 1pm–1am. Metro: Barceloneta.

Inexpensive

Cal Pep SPANISH This fine little tapas bar just south of the Picasso Museum is popular with both locals and visitors. There are 20 seats at the long marble bar and a tiny sit-down back room. While you'll probably get a seat if you arrive at 1:30pm during the week, expect a wait after 2pm and on weekends. (If it *is* full, there are two other cafes on the same square.) There's no menu—the manager will tell you what's available and use his lapel mic to relay your order to the kitchen when it gets busy. What comes forth from the kitchen doesn't stray far from the traditional repertoire, but it's so much better prepared. This is the way *pescados fritos* (fried fish), *almejas con jamón* (steamed clams with ham), and *pan con tomate* (Catalán tomato bread) should taste.

Plaça de les Olles 8. ✆ **93-310-79-61.** Reservations required for dining room. Main courses 13€–26€ ($19–$38). AE, DC, MC, V. Tues–Sat 1:15–4pm and 8–11:30pm; Mon 8–11:30pm. Closed Aug. Metro: Jaume I.

SEEING THE SIGHTS

Spain's second-largest city is also its most cosmopolitan. Barcelona is more European and internationalist than Madrid. The city is filled with landmark buildings and world-class museums, including Antoni Gaudí's Sagrada Família, Museu Picasso, the Gothic cathedral, and La Rambla, the famous tree-lined promenade cutting through the heart of the old city from Plaça de Catalunya to the harbor.

SIGHTSEEING SUGGESTIONS FOR FIRST-TIME VISITORS

If You Have 1 Day Spend the morning exploring the **Barri Gótic (Gothic Quarter).** In the afternoon visit the **Museu Picasso** in the Ribera quarter, which is filled with Renaissance mansions and is the site of the notable **Santa María del Mar church.** Return to the Plaça de Catalunya for a walk down **La Rambla.** To cap your day, board the funicular to the top of **Tibidabo** for a panoramic view of Barcelona and its harbor. Take the 10-minute walk to the **Gran Hotel La Florida** for a drink before heading back down.

If You Have 2 Days On day 2, see Antoni Gaudí's unfinished masterpiece, **La Sagrada Família.** Have a seafood lunch in **Barceloneta** and, in the afternoon, stroll up **Passeig de Gràcia** past the city's other masterpieces of modernist architecture. Explore **Montjuïc** and visit the **Museu d'Art de Catalunya** and the nearby **Poble Espanyol,** a village with replicas of regional architecture created for the 1929 World's Fair. End the day with a meal of paella at **Set Portes,** one of the oldest restaurants in the city.

If You Have 3 Days On day 3, take the train to the monastery of **Montserrat,** about 45 minutes outside of Barcelona, to see the venerated Black Virgin and the art museum, and to hear the famous 50-member boys' choir.

If You Have 4 or 5 Days On day 4, take a morning walk through the **Eixample** district, enjoying the upscale window-shopping and great 19th-century architecture. Have lunch at one of the tapas bars along the Passeig de Gràcia. After lunch, visit La Pedrera, Gaudí's signature apartment house. On day 5, take another excursion from the city. If you're interested in history, visit the former Roman city of **Tarragona** to the south. If you want to unwind on a beach, head south to **Sitges.**

THE TOP ATTRACTIONS

Catedral de Barcelona (La Seu) ★★ Begun in the late 13th century and completed in the mid–15th century (except for the main facade, which dates from the late 19th c.), this Gothic cathedral attests to the splendor of medieval Barcelona. Its main points of interest are the central choir, the 14th-century alabaster crypt of Santa Eulàlia, and the *Cristo de Lepanto,* whose twisted torso allegedly dodged a bullet during the naval battle of the same name. Do see the adjoining **cloister** ★, with access down on the right from the front entrance. It encloses palm and magnolia trees, flowering medlars, a fountain erupting from a moss-covered rock, and a gaggle of live geese, said to be reminders of the Roman occupation (or of the Apostles or the virtuous St. Eulàlia, depending on the various convictions of writers and guides). On the steps at noon on Sunday, a band with ancient instruments plays the eerily haunting *sardana,* the music of the hallowed Catalán folk dance.

Plaça de la Seu. ✆ **93-315-15-54.** www.catedralbcn.org. Cathedral free admission. Global ticket to museum, choir, rooftop terraces, and towers 4€ ($5.80). Cathedral daily 8am–12:45pm and 5:15–7:30pm. Museum Mon–Sat 10am–12:45pm and 5–6:45pm; Sun 10am–1:15pm and 5–6:45pm. Metro: Jaume I. Bus: 17, 19, 40, or 45.

Fundació Joan Miró ★★ A tribute to the Catalán lyrical surrealist Joan Miró, this contemporary museum follows his work from 1914 to 1978 and includes many of his sculptures, paintings, and multimedia tapestries. Even the roof displays his whimsical sculptures as well as bestows impressive city vistas. There's also a gallery of "Miró's contemporaries"—"minor" artists like Henry Moore. Temporary exhibits of other contemporary artists are held on a regular basis. From the top of the Montjuïc funicular, turn left and walk down to the museum.

Parc de Montjuïc. ✆ **93-443-94-70.** www.bcn.fjmiro.es. Admission 8€ ($12) adults, 6€ ($8.70) students, free for children 14 and under. July–Sept Tues–Sat 10am–8pm, Thurs 10am–9:30pm, Sun and holidays 10am–2:30pm; Oct–June Tues–Sat 10am–7pm, Sun and holidays 10am–2:30pm. Funicular: Montjuïc. Bus: 50 or 55 from Plaça de Espanya.

La Sagrada Família ★★ If you see but one monument in Barcelona, make it this one. Looking like something halfway between a fever dream and a giant sandcastle, this *modernista* cathedral will be Europe's largest, with a 158m (518-ft.) central dome—*if* it's ever finished. In 1884, architect Antoni Gaudí i Cornet took over the then 2-year-old project and turned it into the ultimate statement of his flamboyant, surrealist vision. At the pinnacles of the completed towers, for example, are vivid mosaic sunbursts of gold and crimson, and much of the east facade appears to have melted under the blast of a giant blowtorch. Unfortunately, Gaudí died in 1926 after being run over by a tram and left no detailed plans. Construction has continued off and on, with different additions reflecting different eras, sometimes quite dissonantly (such as the aggressively Cubist sculptures on the west facade). As art critic Robert Hughes has written, Gaudí "is not someone with whom one can collaborate posthumously." One of the towers has an elevator that takes you up to a magnificent view. The crypt's **Museu del Temple** chronicles the cathedral's structural evolution.

Mallorca 401. ✆ **93-207-30-31.** www.sagradafamilia.org. Admission 8€ ($12) adults, 5€ ($7.30) students. Guided tour 3.50€ ($5.10) extra. Elevator 2€ ($2.90). Mar–Sept daily 9am–8pm; Oct–Feb daily 9am–6pm. Metro: Sagrada Família. Bus: 19, 33, 34, 43, 44, 50, or 51.

Museu Picasso ★★★ Barcelona's most popular single attraction, this museum reveals much about the artist whose long, prolific career extended well beyond Cubism. The paintings, drawings, engravings, and ceramics go all the way back to the artist's juvenilia, but the museum is light on his most famous later paintings—except for the series based on Velázquez' *Las Meninas,* on display here. The galleries in the original three Renaissance mansions have been expanded into two more adjoining palaces.

Montcada 15–23. ✆ **93-319-63-10.** www.museupicasso.bcn.es. Admission permanent collection 9€ ($13) adults, 2.50€ ($3.70) seniors/students under 25, free for 15 and under; temporary exhibits up to 6€ ($8.70) extra. Free for everyone 1st Sun of every month. Tues–Sun 10am–8pm. Metro: Jaume I.

MORE ATTRACTIONS

Casa Batlló ★★ As part of the 2002 citywide celebration of Gaudí, this, the architect's second-most-important commission on the Passeig de Gràcia, was opened to public visits for the first time. Unlike La Pedrera (see below), Gaudí didn't design this building from the ground up. Instead, he transformed an existing structure with a facade of shimmering tiles and a free-form roofline that evokes the scaly back of a dragon. The interior is just as striking. Inquire ahead to be certain it is still open.

Passeig de Gràcia 43 (corner of Aragó). ✆ **93-216-03-06.** www.casabatllo.es. Admission 11€ ($16), 9€ ($13) ages 5–16 and students; free for kids 4 and under. Daily 9am–8pm. Metro: Passeig de Gràcia.

La Pedrera ★★ Formally the Casa Milà, the popular name of this apartment/office block means the "Stone Quarry." Antoni Gaudí didn't restrain himself here: The undulating exterior of carved stone gives the building the aspect of the lair of a mythical dragon, its balconies enclosed by free-form wrought iron. The top floor and an apartment are open to visitors. Don't miss the roof terrace, populated with highly sculptural chimneys and vents that might have been imagined by H. G. Wells.

Provença 261–265 (at the corner of Passeig de Gràcia). ✆ **93/484-59-00.** Admission to attic, terrace, and apt. 8€ ($12), adults, 4.50€ ($6.50) seniors and students, free for ages 11 and under. Daily 10am–8pm; guided tours daily at 4pm. Metro: Diagonal.

L'Aquàrium ★ *Kids* This carefully conceived aquarium is one of the largest in Europe. It exhibits more than 8,000 marine creatures of 450 species in 21 tanks. A highlight is the clear tunnel where you glide on a moving walkway through a tank stocked with prowling sharks and gliding rays. The admission fee is shockingly high.

Port Vell, on the Moll d'Espanya, in the harbor. ✆ **93-221-74-74.** www.aquariumbcn.com. Admission 16€ ($23) adults, 11€ ($16) seniors and children 4–12, free for children 3 and under. July–Aug daily 9:30am–11pm; June and Sept daily 9:30am–9:30pm; Oct–May daily 9:30am–9pm. Metro: Drassanes or Barceloneta. Bus: 14, 17, 19, 36, 38, 40, 45, 57, 59, 64, 91, or 100.

Monument à Colom (Columbus Monument) This waterfront landmark was erected in 1888 to commemorate Columbus's triumphant return after his first expedition to the New World. An 8m (26-ft.) bronze statue of the explorer surmounts the Victorian-era monument. Inside the iron column is a creaky elevator that ascends to a panoramic view.

Plaça Portal de la Pau. ✆ **93-302-52-24.** Admission 2.20€ ($3.20) adults, 1.40€ ($2) seniors/students 4–12, free for children 3 and under. June–Sept daily 9am–8:30pm; Oct–May daily 10am–6:30pm. Metro: Drassanes. Bus: 14, 36, 38, 57, 59, 64, or 91.

Poble Espanyol ★ *Kids* This "village," executed for the 1929 World's Fair, houses examples of architectural styles found throughout Spain. After renovations and changes in operational philosophy, the once-stuffy open-air museum has become almost a village in its own right, with working artisans, dozens of crafts shops, restaurants, and assorted nightclubs and bars. Some visitors judge it a slightly kitschy theme park, but, in fact, the buildings are accurate full-size replicas of specific structures in the various regional styles of Spain. Nightclubs, discos, and restaurants take over in the evening; most stay open well into the early hours.

Marqués de Comillas, Montjuïc. ✆ **93-508-63-30.** www.poble-espanyol.com. Admission 8€ ($12) adults; 5€ ($7.30) seniors, students, and children 7–14, free for children 6 and under. Mar–Oct Mon 9am–8pm, Tues–Thurs 9am–2am, Fri–Sat 9am–4pm, Sun 9am–midnight; winter Mon–Thurs 9am–8pm, Fri–Sun 9am–4pm. Metro: Plaça de Espanya, and then bus no. 61 or the free double-decker Poble Espanyol shuttle bus (on the half-hour).

MORE MUSEUMS

Fundació Antoni Tàpies ★ Housed in a *modernista* building designed by Lluís Domènech i Muntaner and refurbished by his great-grandson in 1989, this museum continues the Barcelona tradition of honoring prominent native artists. Tàpies is thought by many to be the living heir to Miró and Picasso, and this exhibit space rotates examples of his work and that of younger Catalán artists. The tangle of tubing atop the building is a Tàpies sculpture called *Chair and Cloud*—it makes more sense if you keep the title in mind as you look at it.

Aragó 255. ✆ **93-487-03-15.** www.fundaciotapies.org. Admission 6€ ($8.70) adults, 4€ ($5.80) seniors and students, free 15 and under. Tues–Sun 10am–8pm. Metro: Passeig de Gràcia.

Museu Barbier-Mueller ★ Dedicated by Queen Sofia in 1997, this collection highlights 6,000 pieces of pre-Columbian sculpture. It contains religious, funerary, and ornamental objects of considerable variety, in stone and ceramics and, in some cases, jade. Richest are the exhibits relating to Mayan culture, originating in 1000 B.C. Descriptions are in English.

Montcada 12–14. ✆ **93-310-45-16.** www.barbier-mueller.ch. Admission 3€ ($4.40) adults, 1.50€ ($2.20) seniors and students, free for children 15 and under. Tues–Sat 10am–6pm; Sun and holidays 10am–3pm. Metro: Jaume I. Bus: 17, 39, 40, 45, or 51.

Museu d'Art Contemporàni (MACBA) ★ Much excitement attended the 1995 opening of this light-filled building by American architect Richard Meier. Standing in stark contrast to the 16th-century convent opposite and the surrounding tenements with laundry drying on their balconies, this museum generated a renewal of the El Raval neighborhood. The permanent collection comprises about 1,300 paintings and sculptures from the late 1940s, including works by many Catalán and Spanish artists and a few by non-Spaniards such as Calder and Dubuffet. To get here, walk 5 blocks west from the upper Rambla along Carrer Bonsucces, which changes to Elisabets.

Plaça de les Angels 1. ✆ **93-412-08-10.** www.macba.es. General admission 3€ ($4.40) adults, 2€ ($2.90) students, free for children 13 and under. Mon–Fri 11am–7:30pm; Sat 10am–8pm; Sun and holidays 10am–3pm. Metro: Catalunya or Universitat.

Museu d'Historia de la Ciutat (Museum of the History of the City) ★ Housed in a 15th-century mansion that was moved here stone by stone from Carrer Mercaders, several blocks away, this museum features **excavations** ★ of Roman and Visigothic remains below ground. On the upper floors are jumbled assortments of sculptures, weapons, ceramics, household implements, and more—a sort of municipal attic.

Plaça del Rei. ✆ **93-315-11-11.** www.museuhistoria.bcn.es. Admission 4€ ($5.80) adults, 2.50€ ($3.70) students and seniors; free for 15 and under. Free to all 1st Sat afternoon of the month. June–Sept Tues–Sat 10am–8pm; Sun and holidays 10am–3pm (the rest of the year closes 2–4pm). Metro: Jaume I.

Tips An Ancient Neighborhood to Explore

The **Barri Gótic** ★★ is Barcelona's old aristocratic quarter, parts of which have survived from the Middle Ages, and fragments of which have lasted from Roman times. To explore the Gothic Quarter's narrow streets and squares, start walking up Carrer del Carme, east of La Rambla. The buildings, for the most part, are austere and sober, and the cathedral is the crowning achievement. Roman ruins and the vestiges of 3rd-century walls add further interest. This area is packed full of details and attractions that are easy to miss, so take your time. A nighttime stroll adds drama, but exercise caution.

Museu Frederic Marés This repository of medieval sculpture is located just behind the cathedral, with a pleasant shaded courtyard in front. Housed in an ancient palace that's impressive in its own right, it displays hundreds of polychrome ecclesiastical sculptures.

Plaça de Santa Iú 5–6. ✆ **93-256-35-00.** www.museumares.bcn.es. Admission 4.20€ ($6.10) adults, 2.40€ ($3.50) students, free for children 15 and under. Free for all 1st Sun of the month. Tues–Sat 10am–7pm; Sun 10am–3pm. Metro: Jaume I. Bus: 17, 19, or 45.

Museu Marítim (Maritime Museum) ★ Located in the Drassanes, the 14th-century Gothic royal shipyards, this museum's superb collection of maritime vessels and artifacts is distinguished by a full-size replica of Don Juan of Austria's galleon. The baroque flagship of the Spanish and Italian fleet defeated a naval force of the Ottoman Empire in the 1571 Battle of Lepanto. There are also humbler fishing boats, intricate ship models, and a map owned by Amerigo Vespucci.

Av. de les Drassanes 1. ✆ **93-342-99-20.** www.diba.es/mmaritim. Admission 6€ ($7.20) adults, 3€ ($3.60) seniors, students, and children 7–16, free for children 6 and under. Free for all 1st Sat of the month 3–6pm. Daily 10am–8pm. Metro: Drassanes.

Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya (MNAC) ★★★ In this building—built for the 1929 World's Fair and redesigned inside by controversial Italian architect Gae Aulenti in the 1990s—is a collection of Catalán art from the Romanesque and Gothic periods as well as the 16th century to the 18th century, along with works by high-caliber non-Catalán artists like El Greco, Velázquez, Zurbarán, and Tintoretto. Pride of place goes to the sculptures and frescoes removed from the Romanesque churches strung across Catalunya's northern tier. The view of the city from the front steps is a bonus.

In the Palau Nacional, Parc de Montjuïc. ✆ **93-622-03-76.** www.mnac.es. Admission to permanent collection 8.50€ ($12) adults, 6€ ($8.70) ages 15–20, free for children 14 and under. Tues–Sat 10am–7pm; Sun and holidays 10am–2:30pm. Metro: Espanya.

PARKS & GARDENS

Parc Güell ★, a fanciful park on the northern edge of Barcelona's inner core, is much more than green space. Begun by Antoni Gaudí as an upper-crust real-estate venture for his wealthy patron, Count Eusebi Güell, it was never completed. Only two houses were constructed, but Gaudí's whimsical creativity, seen in soaring columns that impersonate trees and splendid winding benches of broken mosaics, is on abundant display. The city took over the property in 1926 and turned it into a public park. Don't miss the ceramic mosaic lizard at the park's entrance stairway, the Hall of a Hundred Columns, and the panoramic views from the plaza above.

Parc de la Ciutadella ★ occupies the former site of a detested 18th-century citadel, some remnants of which remain. Here, you'll find the Museu d'Art Modern, the Museu de Zoología, the Museu de Geología, the regional Parliament, the zoo, and an ornate fountain that's in small part the work of the young Gaudí.

Another attraction, **Tibidabo** ★, offers the best panoramic view of Barcelona. A funicular takes you up 490m (1,600 ft.) to the summit. A retro amusement park—with Ferris wheels and airplanes that spin over Barcelona—has been there since the '30s. There's also a church in this carnival-like setting called Santa Creu (Sacred Heart), plus bars and restaurants. Take the funicular uphill from Plaça John Kennedy.

ORGANIZED TOURS

Take advantage of the bargain **Bus Turístic** ★ (✆ **93-318-70-74;** www.tmb.net). A single ticket permits unlimited travel on these buses, many of them open-topped double-deckers. Originating at Plaça de Catalunya, the red bus makes two circular sweeps. Highlights of the northern route are the Parc Güell, La Sagrada Família, the base of Tibidabo, and the Monestir de Pedralbes. The southern circuit makes stops on Montjuïc, at the Port Olímpic, and in the Barri Gòtic. Together, they make 42 stops, and you can get off and reboard as often as you please. The buses run daily, about every 15 minutes in summer and every 30 minutes the rest of the year, 9am to 9:30pm. If you stay on the bus, without debarking, each tour takes about 2 hours. An all-day ticket is 17€ ($25), and a ticket good for 2 consecutive days is 21€ ($30), while one for children 4 to 12 years is 13€ ($19) for 1 day and 15€ ($22) for 2 days. Admission is free for children 3 and under. You can buy tickets on the bus, and they come with a guidebook in six languages and vouchers providing discounts on entrance to attractions like the zoo and the Poble Espanyol. Multilingual guide/conductors announce stops and answer questions.

THE SHOPPING SCENE

THE BEST SHOPPING STREETS

Barcelona's most beautiful shopping street is **Passeig de Gràcia.** Stroll this street from the Avinguda Diagonal (also called Avenida Diagonal) to the Plaça de Catalunya, and you'll pass some of Barcelona's most elegant boutiques. You'll also find interesting shops nearby in the Eixample on Avinguda Diagonal and Carrer de Balmes, and farther north in Gràcia on the Travessera de Gràcia and Carrer Verdi.

In the **old quarter,** the principal shopping streets are La Rambla, Carrer del Pi, Carrer de la Palla, and Avinguda Portal de l'Angel. Moving north in the Eixample are Passeig de Catalunya, Passeig de Gràcia, and Rambla de Catalunya.

THE BEST BUYS

El Corte Inglés ★ is Spain's most prominent department store. Its main Barcelona emporium is at Plaça de Catalunya 14 (✆ **93-306-38-00;** www.elcorteingles.es; Metro: Catalunya), with a large branch a block away on Portal de l'Angel. It stays open through the siesta period and has a full-size supermarket in the basement and a cafeteria/restaurant on the ninth floor. Up in the Eixample, the **Bulevard Rosa** (51–53 Passeig de Gràcia; www.bulevardrosa.com; no phone) is a mall of 110 shops, mostly midrange clothing boutiques.

For designer housewares and the best in Spanish contemporary furnishings, a good bet is **Vincón,** Passeig de Gràcia 96 (✆ **93-215-60-50**), housed in the former home of artist Ramón Casas. Various high-end shops on the Passeig de Gràcia and Avinguda Diagonal showcase men's and women's fashions. You'll find cutting-edge boutiques (and few tourists) on **Carrer Verdí** in the Grácia neighborhood, from the Plaça Revolució stretching about 6 blocks north and onto side streets. Pick up a shopping map from any of the Verdi boutiques.

In the city of Miró, Tàpies, and Picasso, art is a major business. There are dozens of galleries, especially in the Barri Gótic and around the Picasso Museum. In business since 1840, **Sala Parés** ★★, Petritxol 5 (✆ **93-318-70-20;** www.salapares.com; Metro: Plaça de Catalunya), displays paintings in a two-story amphitheater; exhibitions change about once a month. At **Art Picasso,** Tapinería (✆ **93-268-32-40;** Metro: Jaume I), you can purchase good lithographic reproductions of the works not only of Picasso but Miró and Dalí as well.

For antiques, drop by **El Bulevard des Antiquarius** ★★, Passeig de Gràcia 55 (✆ **93-215-44-99;** Metro: Passeig de Gràcia). This 70-unit complex, just off the city's most aristocratic avenues, has a huge collection of art and antiques assembled in a series of boutiques. Seekers after antiques should enjoy the open-air **Mercat Gòtic de Antigüedades** by the cathedral (Metro: Jaume I), held every Thursday 9am to 8pm (except Aug), and more often during holiday periods.

Seeking out small specialty shops is a particular treat. A number of shops offer authentic ceramics from various regions of the country that are known for their pottery. One worthwhile stop is **Itaca,** Carrer Ferrán (✆ **93-301-30-44;** Metro: Jaume I), near Plaça Sant Jaume.

La Manual Alpargatera, Carrer Avinyó 7 (✆ **93-301-01-72;** Metro: Jaume I), is the best shop for the handmade espadrilles seen on dancers of the sardana. It offers many styles and also sells hats and folk art.

Angel Jobal, Princesa 38 (✆ **93-319-78-02;** Metro: Jaume I), offers a variety of teas and spices, along with especially good prices on thread saffron, the world's costliest spice. Find it a block past the turn for the Picasso Museum. **La Boquería,** La Rambla 91–101 (✆ **93-318-25-84**), officially the Mercat de Sant Josep, is Spain's most extensive, most fascinating market, purveying glistening-fresh produce, meats, cheeses, fish, and every imaginable edible daily. An open market of artisan food items, including cheeses, honey, vinegars, pâtés, fruit preserves, and quince pastes, is held on **Plaça del Pi** (Metro: Liceu) on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday.

BARCELONA AFTER DARK

Barcelona's nightlife runs from the campy burlesque of El Molino to the bizarre opulence of the Palau de la Música Catalana. For the latest information on concerts and other musical events, call the **Amics de la Música de Barcelona** at ✆ **93-302-68-70,** Monday to Friday from 10am to 1pm and 3 to 8pm.

For a comprehensive list of evening activities, pick up a copy of the weekly ***Guía del Ocio*** or the entertainment guide offered with the Thursday edition of ***El País.***

THE PERFORMING ARTS

The **Gran Teatre del Liceu** ★★★, La Rambla 51–54 (✆ **93-485-99-13;** www.liceubarcelona.com; Metro: Liceu), is the traditional home to opera and ballet. It suffered a devastating fire in 1994 but has reopened after extensive renovations. The result is glorious, especially considering that only the walls were left standing after the fire. The decision was made to replicate the neobaroque interior, with lashings of gilt, intricate carvings, and swaths of brocade and velvet. Music lovers and balletgoers will find more comfortable seats and better sightlines. The theater presents 8 to 12 operas every season and strives to make them accessible to a wide audience. You can book tickets with credit cards from outside the country daily 10am to 10pm Barcelona time at ✆ **93-274-64-11.** In Barcelona, call ✆ **90/253-33-53** any time up to 3 hours before the performance desired.

A magnificent *modernista* concert hall, the **Palau de la Música Catalana** ★★★, Sant Francese de Paulo 2 (✆ **93-295-72-00;** www.palaumusica.org; Metro: Urquinaona), is the work of Catalán architect Lluís Domènech i Montaner, a rival of Antoni Gaudí. Its distinctive facade is a tour de force of brick, mosaic, and glass. Inside, the interplay of ceramic mosaics, stained glass, and a central skylight build to the stunning crescendo of massive carvings framing the stage. Many of the seats have limited sightlines, but this hall is devoted to music, not opera and dance, and even the cheapest corners enjoy superb sound. The Palau is home to the Orquestra Simfònica de Barcelona, one of whose directors is American Lawrence Foster, and hosts a variety of classical and jazz concerts and recitals. The box office is open Monday to Saturday 10am to 9pm.

Symphonic and chamber music has a new home at **L'Auditori,** Lepant 150 (✆ **93-247-93-00;** www.auditori.org; Metro: Glories), with both large and small performance spaces. The Barcelona Symphony Orchestra, traveling groups, the Joven Orquestra de España (Young Orchestra of Spain), and string quartets all perform here.

LIVE-MUSIC CLUBS

The most popular jazz club, **Jamboree** ★★, Plaça Reial 17 (✆ **93-319-17-89;** Metro: Liceu), is on a raucously diverse plaza off the lower Rambla. The cover charge can be anywhere from 10€ to 12€ ($15–$17), depending on who's playing; you descend to a vaulted brick cellar filled with young to middle-aged natives and visitors. Most shows start at 11pm. Arrive around 9:30pm and you'll probably get in free and might also catch the rehearsal.

A popular old-timer is the **Harlem Jazz Club** ★, Comtessa de Sobradiel 8 (✆ **93-310-07-55**), with live jazz nightly in all its permutations—flamenco fusion, Brazilian salsa, Afro-Caribbean, blues. Admission is free during the week, but costs 6€ ($8.70) on Friday, Saturday, and holidays.

For the best Latino and jazz on weekends, head for **Luz de Gas,** Carrer de Muntaner 246 (✆ **93-209-77-11;** Metro: Diagonal), which has cabaret on other nights. The lower two levels open onto a stage floor and stage. Call to see what the lineup is on any given night—jazz, pop, soul, rhythm and blues, whatever. Open daily from 11pm until 4 or 5am. Cover 20€ to 25€ ($29–$36).

Flamenco is best seen in Seville or Madrid, but if you aren't getting to those cities on your trip, **El Tablao de Carmen** ★, Arcs 9 in Poble Espanyol (✆ **93-325-68-95;** www.tablaodecarmen.com), is the best place in Barcelona to see the passionate dance and music of Andalusia. Admission is 69€ to 94€ ($100–$136) for dinner and the first show, or 35€ ($51) for the first show and a drink. Dinner begins at 9pm; the first show is at 9:30pm, the second at 11:55pm. Closed Monday.

DANCE CLUBS

In the basement of a shopping center, **Bikini** ★, Deu i Mata 105 (✆ **93-322-08-00;** www.bikinibcn.com; Metro: Les Corts or Maria Cristina), covers the bases in a comprehensive entertainment compound that offers up multiple venues for dancing to music of every genre (including funk, rock, and oldies music). Rock and electronica groups perform concerts here nearly every night at 10pm; buy tickets in advance on Bikini's website. The dance club is open Tuesday to Sunday 9pm to 5am. Cover is 12€ to 15€ ($17–$22).

Up and Down ★, Numancia 179 (✆ **93-205-51-94;** Metro: María Cristina), attracts the elite of Barcelona, spanning a couple of generations. The mature black-tie, postopera crowd heads for the upstairs section, leaving the downstairs to the thumping rock meant for their children. In business for many years, Up and Down continues to polish its reputation as the most cosmopolitan club in town. Technically, it is members-only and you can be turned away at the door, so dress well and be nice to the doormen. The club is open Tuesday to Saturday 12:30am to anytime between 5am and 6:30am, depending on business. Cover is 15€ ($22), which includes your first drink.

It's almost impossible to avoid ads for multilevel superclub **Otto Zutz** ★★, Lincoln 15 (✆ **93-238-07-22;** www.ottozutz.com; Metro: Plaça Molina). Go early to avoid the restrictive entrance policy, or pick up one of the little cards at shops around town that give you "guaranteed" entry. There are eight bars, there's dancing everywhere, and there's live rock on Wednesday night. The club is open Tuesday to Saturday 1am to 4am or later, with a 15€ ($22) cover that includes a drink.

BARS & COCTELERIAS

Over in **Poble Nou,** near the Parc de la Ciutadella, the two skyscrapers marking the location of the former Olympic Port also point the way to the site of a frenetic bar scene. The artificial harbor that was the launch point for the Olympic sailing competition is now lined on three sides with more than *200* bars and cafes that pound on until dawn. This is one of the safest nightlife districts.

Located in a *modernista* building, chummy **Velvet,** Balmes 161 (✆ **93-217-67-14;** Metro: Diagonal), has a dance floor and two bars lined with buttocks-shaped stools. Don't miss the bathrooms. The music is mostly retro British and American rock that's older than most of the patrons. It's open daily from 11pm to 5am, with no cover.

An exceptional retreat that eclipses all the rest for elegance and panache is the **Palau Dalmases,** Montcada 20 (✆ **93-310-06-73;** Metro: Jaume I), a 16th-century mansion a few doors down from the Picasso Museum. The multiple archways and ancient stone walls are hung with large copies of florid baroque paintings, and candles are lit on the marble-topped tables. Vivaldi and Bach provide the stereo underscore for murmured confidences and romantic intimacies. It's open Tuesday to Friday 8pm to 2am and Saturday 6 to 10pm; opera singers perform Thursday at 11pm. On those nights, the cover (including a drink) is 20€ ($29). No food is served.

GAY & LESBIAN BARS

Gays have a number of beguiling bars and dance clubs to choose from, but lesbians have relatively few. For the latest on the scene, log on to **www.gaybarcelona.net**. It's in Spanish, but it's not too difficult to decipher. Ads and listings in such weekly guides as ***Guía del Ocio*** referring to *el ambiente* nearly always mean places with a mostly or totally gay clientele.

Metro, Sepulveda 185 (✆ **93-323-52-27;** Metro Universitat), still reigns as one of the most popular gay discos, attracting everyone from startlingly thin male models to beefy macho men. There are two dance floors playing everything from Spanish pop to contemporary house. The gay press called the backroom "a notorious, lascivious labyrinth of lust." Cover is 10€ ($15).

Going strong since the dawn of the millennium, **Salvation,** Ronda de Sant Pere 19–21 (✆ **93-318-06-86;** Metro: Urquinaona), also remains a leading gay dance club. The waiters are the hottest hunks in town. The 16€ ($23) cover includes the first drink.

Women should check in at **Aire-Sala Diana,** Valencia 236 (☎ **93-487-83-42;** Metro: Passeig de Gràcia), the hub of the city's lesbian scene. Patrons and staff can offer advice on what else is happening in town. You'll find a large dance floor and bustling bar packed with Barcelona hotties.

DAY TRIPS FROM BARCELONA

SITGES ★ The most frequented resort of the Costa Dorada, Sitges is packed in summer, mostly with affluent young northern Europeans, many of them gay. For years, the resort, 40km (25 miles) south of Barcelona, was patronized largely by middle-class industrialists from Barcelona, but those rather staid days have gone. Sitges is as lively today as Benidorm and Torremolinos in the south, but it's nowhere near as tacky. By mid-October it goes into hibernation, but its scenic charms and museums may be motive enough for a winter visit. Things pick up with Carnaval in February, a riotously turbulent event with costumed revelers partying for days.

Long known as a city of culture, thanks in part to resident artist/playwright/bohemian mystic Santiago Rusinyol, this was the birthplace of the 19th-century *modernista* movement. The town remained a scene of artistic encounters and demonstrations long after *modernisme,* the Catalán form of Art Nouveau, waned. Salvador Dalí and the poet Federico García Lorca were regular visitors.

Getting There **RENFE**'s (☎ **90-224-02-02;** www.renfe.es) Line C2 commuter trains run from Barcelona-Sants or Passeig de Gràcia to Sitges. From 5:45am to 10pm daily, there's a train at the rate of one every 10 to 15 minutes (trip time: 40 min.). A one-way round-trip fare is 2.50€ ($3.70), with variations depending upon day of the week and other factors.

Sitges is a 45-minute drive from Barcelona along C-246, a coastal road. An express highway, A-7, is faster but less scenic.

Visitor Information The **tourist information office** is at Carrer Sínia Morera 1 (☎ **93-894-42-51;** www.sitges.com). It's open June to September 15, daily 9am to 9pm; September 16 to May, Monday to Friday 9am to 2pm and 4 to 6:30pm, and Saturday 10am to 1pm.

Exploring Sitges The **beaches** attract most visitors. They have showers and changing facilities, and kiosks rent such items as motorboats and floating air cushions. Beaches on the eastern end and those inside the town center are the most peaceful, including **Aiguadoiç** and **Els Balomins. Playa San Sebastián, Fragata Beach,** and **"Beach of the Boats"** (under the church and next to the yacht club) are the area's family beaches. Most young people go to the **Playa de la Ribera,** in the west. The main gay beach is the **Playa del Mort.**

Beaches aside, Sitges has a couple of good museums. **Museu Cau Ferrat,** Fonollar 8 (☎ **93-894-03-64**), is the legacy of wealthy Catalán painter Santiago Rusinyol, a leading light of Belle Epoque Barcelona. His 19th-century house, fashioned of two 16th-century fishermen's homes, not only contains a collection of his works, but also several pieces by Picasso and El Greco, much ornate wrought iron (a Catalán specialty), folk art, and archaeological finds.

Next door is **Museu Maricel de Mar,** Fonollar s/n (☎ **93-894-67-02**), the legacy of Dr. Pérez Rosales, whose impressive accumulation of furniture, porcelain, and tapestries draws largely from the medieval, Renaissance, and baroque periods. Both museums are open Tuesday to Sunday between June 15 and September 30 from 10am to 2pm and 5 to 9pm. During the rest of the year, they're open Tuesday to Friday 10am to 1:30pm and

3 to 6:30pm, Saturday 10am to 7pm, and Sunday 10am to 3pm. Admission to each is 3.50€ ($5.10) adults, 1.80€ ($2.60) students, free for kids 11 and under.

MONTSERRAT ★ The vast **Montserrat Monastery** complex (www.abadiamontserrat.net), 52km (32 miles) northwest of Barcelona, contains a basilica with a venerated Black Virgin, an art museum, hotels, restaurants, and an excess of souvenir shops and food stalls. One of the most important pilgrimage spots in Spain, it's a good place to avoid on weekends.

Getting There The least-expensive transport from Barcelona is the R5 train from Plaça de Espanya. It leaves hourly for the Aeri de Montserrat station, where a funicular carries you to the complex. If you're not in a screaming hurry, though, stay on to Monistrol de Montserrat (another 4 min.), and ride to the monastery on a rack railway (www.cremallerademontserrat.com), which offers the most spectacular views. "Trans Montserrat" tickets, available at any city FGC station, offer round-trip train, Metro, and rack railway use, and unlimited funicular and cable cars rides for 20€ ($29). "Tot Montserrat" tickets include admission to the museum and lunch at the cafeteria for a total of 35€ ($51). Call ✆ **93-205-15-15** or try **www.fgc.es**.

Motorists can take N-2 southwest of Barcelona toward Tarragona, turning west at the junction with N-11. The signposts and exit to Montserrat will be on your right. From the main road, it's 14km (8⅔ miles) to the monastery through dramatic scenery with eerie rock formations.

Visitor Information The **tourist office** is at Plaça de la Creu (✆ **93-877-77-77**), open daily 8:50am to 7:30pm.

Exploring Montserrat The monastery—a 19th-century structure that replaced a former monastery leveled by Napoleon's army in 1812—is 730m (2,400 ft.) up Montserrat. Its name, Montserrat, refers to the serrated peaks of the mountain, bulbous elongated formations that provided shelter for 11th-century Benedictine monks. One of the noted institutions of the monastery is the 50-voice **Escolanía** ★★ or Boys' Choir, begun in the 13th century. The boys sing at 1 and 6:45pm. Their performances are thrilling to the faithful and curious alike and are the best reason for a visit. Admission is free.

The subterranean **Museu de Montserrat** (✆ **93-877-77-77**), near the entrance to the basilica, brings together artworks that were once scattered around the complex. You'll see gold and silver liturgical objects, archaeological artifacts from the Holy Land, and paintings from both the Renaissance and the 20th century. Numerous funiculars and paths lead to **hermitages** and **shrines** higher up the mountain.

Thousands travel here every year to see and touch the 12th-century statue of **La Moreneta (The Black Virgin)** ★, the patron saint of Catalunya at the Benedictine monastery of La Moreneta. To view the statue, enter the church through a side door to the right. The church is open Monday to Friday 9:30am to 6pm, Saturday and Sunday 9:30am to 6:30pm. Admission is 5.50€ ($8) adults, 3.50€ ($5.10) children and students.

3 Andalusia & the Costa del Sol

Andalusia is the Spain of legend, where Moorish princes held court and veiled maidens danced flamenco under fragrant orange trees. The eight provinces of Spain's southernmost region were held, at least in part, by Muslim rulers for 700 years before Ferdinand and Isabella united Spain in 1492. They left a rich heritage of architectural treasures, including Seville's Giralda, Córdoba's Mezquita, and the unforgettable Alhambra in Granada.

This is also the land of the famed *pueblos blancos* ("white villages") and undulating olive groves that roll over tawny hillsides to the skirts of impressive mountain ranges. Give Andalusia a week and you'll still have only skimmed the surface of its many offerings.

Andalusia also embraces the Costa del Sol (Sun Coast), Spain's most noted and visited—inundated—strip of beach resorts. (Málaga, Marbella, and Torremolinos are covered here.) Go to the Costa del Sol for golf, tennis, watersports, after-dark partying, and relaxation, but save some days for the folklore, history, and architectural wonders of the major Andalusian cities.

The mild winter climate and almost-guaranteed sunshine in summer have made the Costa del Sol a year-round attraction. It begins at the western frontier harbor city of Algeciras and stretches east to the port city of Almería. Sandwiched between these points is a rugged coastline backed by the Sierra Nevada. The beaches are no better than poor to fair, it should be said, but there are sandy coves, whitewashed houses, olive and almond trees, phalanxes of new apartment houses, fishing boats, a couple of dozen world-class golf courses, souvenir stands, fast-food outlets catering to the tastes of every national group, and widely varied flora and fauna—both human and vegetable. From June to October the coast is mobbed, so make sure that you've nailed down a reservation.

SEVILLE ★★★

Seville, Andalusia's capital, is a city of operatic passion and romance. It is 550km (342 miles) southwest of Madrid and 217km (135 miles) northwest of Málaga. Mozart's Don Juan, Bizet's Carmen, and Rossini's Figaro all made their homes in the winding streets of Spain's third-largest city, and it's where Christopher Columbus landed and told his queen of a new world beyond the Atlantic. For decades after, the treasure galleons from the New World emptied their cargos here.

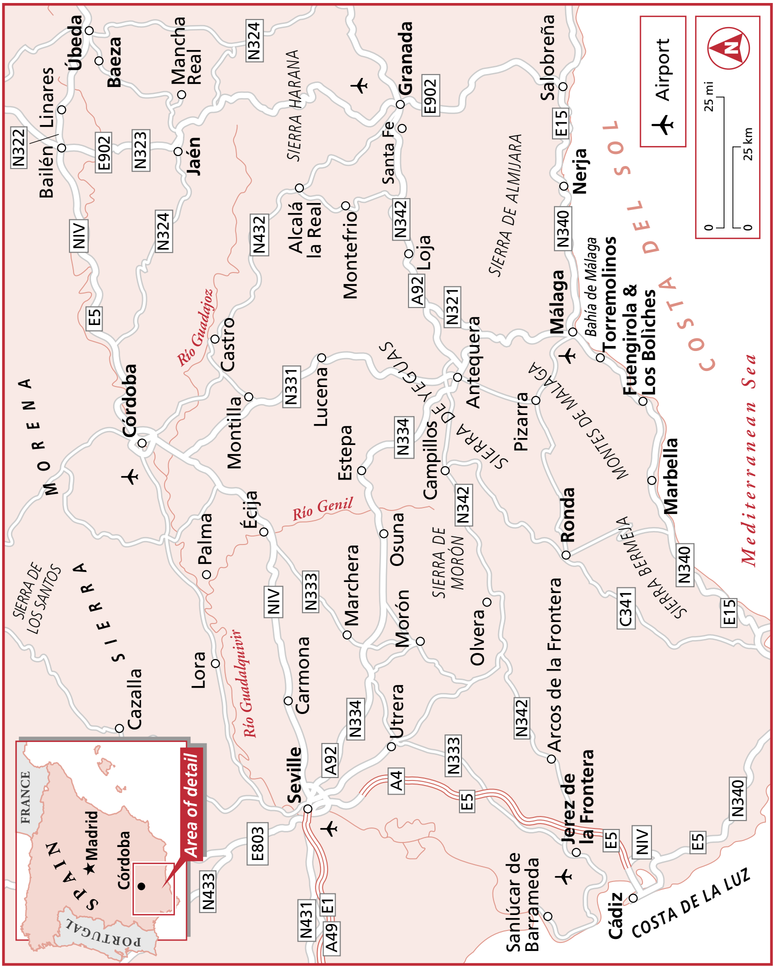
Unlike most Spanish cities, it has fared well under most of its conquerors—the Romans, Arabs, and Christians—in part because its people chose to embrace them rather than fight them. Much of the pleasure of strolling Seville—as with all of Andalusia—isn't necessarily in visiting specific museums or sites, but rather in kicking back over a *very* long lunch and embracing the city's beauty on your own time and pace.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **By Plane** **Iberia** flies several times a day from Madrid and Barcelona to the **Aeropuerto San Pablo** (**✆ 95-444-90-00**), about 13km (8 miles) east of downtown on the Seville-Carmona road. A **taxi** (about 15€/$22) is the easiest way into town, but the Route EA **bus** (**✆ 90-221-03-17**) goes to Puerta de Jerez for only 2.50€ ($3.70) roughly on the hour daily 6:30am to 10:30pm.

By Train Train service into Seville is now centralized at the **Estación Santa Justa,** Avenida Kansas City (**✆ 95-454-02-02;** www.renfe.es for information and reservations). Frequent buses marked C1 connect the train station to the city center. The high-speed AVE train between Madrid and Seville charges 63.60€ to 115€ ($92–$167) each way, subject to frequent change and depending on class and the days and hours of travel (trip time: 2½ hr.). It makes up to 20 runs a day, with a stop in Córdoba. Between Seville and Córdoba, the AVE train takes 40 minutes, costing 20€ ($29).

Andalusia & the Costa del Sol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Lucena
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SIERRA DE YEGUAS
Málaga
Bahía de Málaga
Torremolinos
Fuengirola & Los Boliches
COSTA DEL SOL
MONTES DE MÁLAGA
Pizarra
Estepa
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Campillos
Río Genil
Écija
Palma
SIERRA DE LOS SANTOS
S I E R R A
Osuna
N342
SIERRA DE MORÓN
Ronda
Marbella
SIERRA BERMEJA
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Río Guadalquivir
Cazalla
Carmona
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Utrera
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Arcos de la Frontera
Seville
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Jerez de la Frontera
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PORTUGAL
Area of detail

By Bus Buses from other Andalusian towns arrive and depart from the city's largest **bus terminal,** on the southeast edge of the old city, at Prado de San Sebastián, Calle José María Osborne 11 (✆ **95-441-71-11**). Long-distance lines pick up and discharge passengers at the **Plaza de Armas terminal** (✆ **95-490-80-40**) at the east end of the Chapina Bridge. Many lines also converge on Plaza de la Encarnación, on Plaza Nueva, in front of the cathedral on Avenida Constitución, and at Plaza de Armas (across the street from the old train station, Estación de Córdoba). From here, buses from several companies make frequent runs to and from Córdoba (trip time: 2½ hr.). One prominent bus company is **T. Alsina Graells Sur** (✆ **90-233-04-00;** www.continental-auto.es).

VISITOR INFORMATION The **Oficina de Información del Turismo,** at Av. de la Constitución 21B (✆ **95-478-75-78**), is open Monday to Saturday 9am to 7pm and Sunday and holidays 10am to 2pm.

WHERE TO STAY

Seville hotels have three distinct pricing periods: lowest in winter, middling in summer, and highest during the adjacent celebratory weeks of Semana Santa (Holy Week) and the Fería de Abril (April Fair). During these last events, room rates are doubled or even tripled.

Very Expensive

Alfonso XIII ★★★ At the southwestern corner of the gardens surrounding the Alcázar, this is a near-legendary hotel, Seville's *gran lujo* (grand luxury) address and one of Spain's most expensive lodgings. Run by the U.S. chain Starwood, it reigns supreme as a bastion of glamour and privilege, the site of royal receptions and corporate celebrations. The lobby fountain is the cocktail-hour rallying point for the local Establishment. Built in 1929, the building simulates a Mudéjar palace, its halls lined with lustrous hand-painted tiles, acres of marble and mahogany, and antique furniture embellished with intricately embossed leather. Even if you can't afford to stay here, splurge for a drink in the bar and feel like a head of state.

San Fernando 2, 41004 Sevilla. ☎ **800/221-23-40** in the U.S. and Canada, or 95-491-70-00. Fax 95-491-70-99. www.westin.com. 147 units. 329€–640€ ($477–$928) double; from 854€ ($1,238) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 20€ ($29). **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; 3 bars (1 seasonal); heated outdoor pool; access to nearby health club; car-rental desk; business center; room service; in-room massage; babysitting; laundry service/dry cleaning service. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Moderate/Expensive

Bécquer *Value* A short walk from the action of the Seville bullring and only 2 blocks from the river, Bécquer is on a street full of cafes where you can order tapas and enjoy Andalusian wine. The Museo Provincial de Bellas Artes is also nearby. Built in the 1970s, the hotel was enlarged and much renovated since then. It occupies the site of a former mansion and retains many objets d'art rescued before that building was demolished. You are shown to one of the functionally furnished rooms—a good value in a pricey city, as most units are at the lower end of the price scale.

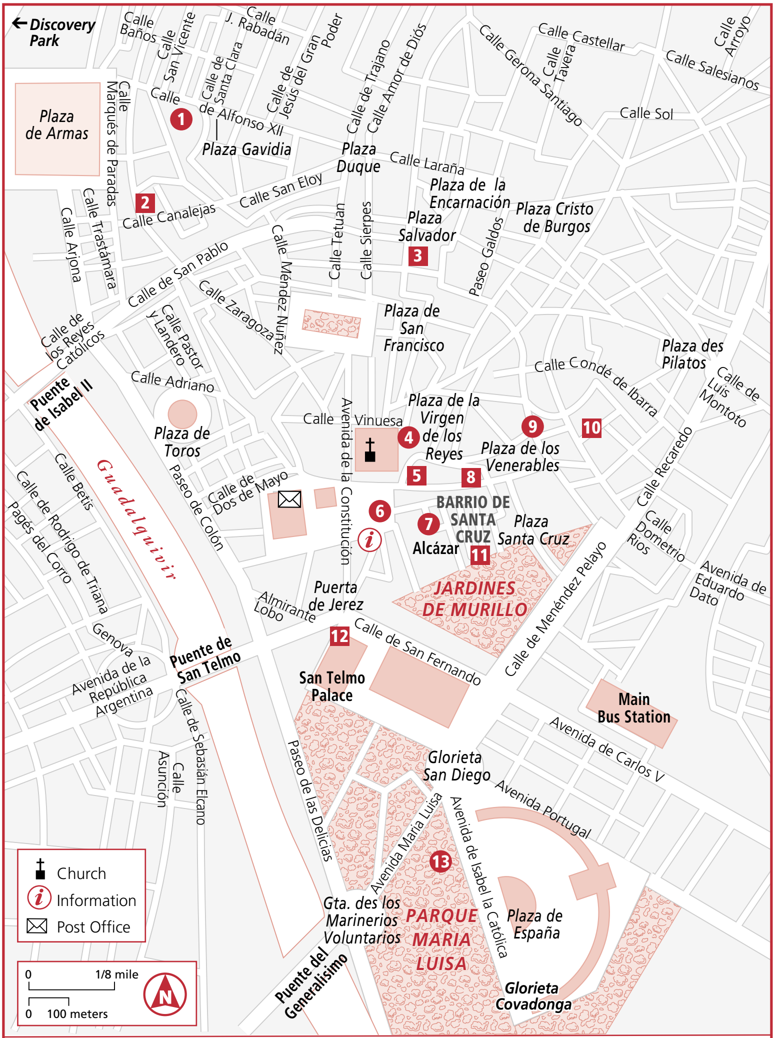
Calle Reyes Católicos 4, 41001 Seville. ☎ **95-422-89-00.** Fax 95-421-44-00. www.hotelbecquer.com. 141 units. 124€–210€ ($180–$305) double; 250€–324€ ($363–$470) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 15€ ($22). Bus: C1, C2, or C4. **Amenities:** Restaurant; 2 bars; rooftop pool; spa; room service; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Doña María ★ Its location around the corner from the cathedral, Giralda, and the Alcázar creates a dramatic view from the rooftop terrace (where the postage-stamp-size pool is located). Originally built in 1969, this compact hotel has undergone needed upgrading. None of the rooms looks exactly like any other, but the decor favors elaborate headboards and some four-poster beds combined with provincial furniture and flowered patterns. Some units are rather small.

Don Remondo 19, 41004 Sevilla. ☎ **95-422-49-90.** Fax 95-421-95-46. www.hdmaria.com. 64 units. 150€–250€ ($218–$363) double. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 20€ ($29). **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; unheated rooftop pool; room service; babysitting; laundry service/dry cleaning service. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Las Casas de la Judería ★★ *Value* Long on charm, short on modernity, this is Old Seville with a vengeance. Expect neither voice mail nor Internet connections. The hotel is constituted of a connected row of noble 16th-century residences, and the exteriors, up a cobblestone lane from a discreet archway, hint at Seville's Moorish past, as do the interior patios and splashing fountains. Some suites have saunas and whirlpools. The genteel staff, many of whom speak English, provides alert but understated attention. A restaurant has been added, and a piano is now played during the

Seville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Calle Gerona Santiago
Calle Tavera
Calle Castellar
Calle Arroyo
Calle Salesianos
Calle Sol
Calle Marqués de Paradas
Calle de Alfonso XII
Plaza Gavidia
Plaza Duque
Calle Laraña
Plaza de la Encarnación
Plaza Cristo de Burgos
Calle San Eloy
Calle Canalejas
Calle Trastámara
Calle Arjona
Calle Tetuan
Calle Sierpes
Plaza Salvador
Paseo Galdos
Calle de San Pablo
Calle Méndez Nuñez
Calle Zaragoza
Calle Pastor y Landero
Calle de los Reyes Católicos
Plaza de San Francisco
Plaza des Pilatos
Calle Condé de Ibarra
Calle de Luis Montoto
Puente de Isabel II
Calle Adriano
Plaza de Toros
Calle Vinuesa
Avenida de la Constitución
Plaza de la Virgen de los Reyes
Plaza de los Venerables
Calle Recaredo
Guadalquivir
Calle Betis
Calle de Rodrigo de Triana
Calle de Pagés del Corro
Paseo de Colón
Calle de Dos de Mayo
BARRIO DE SANTA CRUZ
Plaza Santa Cruz
Alcázar
Calle Dometrio Rios
Avenida de Eduardo Dato
JARDINES DE MURILLO
Puerta de Jerez
Almirante Lobo
Calle de Menéndez Pelayo
Calle de San Fernando
Genova
Avenida de la República Argentina
Puente de San Telmo
San Telmo Palace
Main Bus Station
Avenida de Carlos V
Calle de Sebastián Elcano
Calle Asunción
Paseo de las Delicias
Glorieta San Diego
Avenida Portugal
Avenida Maria Luisa
Avenida de Isabel la Católica
Gta. des los Marinerios Voluntarios
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Plaza de España
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SPAIN
PORTUGAL
Madrid
Seville

ATTRACTIONS ●

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Catedral	6
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evenings in the lounge. Except during the holidays, you should be able to haggle a rate reduction.

Callejón de Dos Hermanas 7 (off Plaza Santa María la Blanca), 41004 Sevilla. ✆ **95-441-51-50.** Fax 95-442-21-70. www.intergrouphoteles.com. 118 units. 128€–265€ ($186–$384) double; 360€–385€ ($522–$558) junior suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 15€ ($22). **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; room service; laundry service/dry cleaning service. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Las Casas de los Mercaderes ★ *Finds* Under the same ownership as Las Casas de la Judería (see above) and demonstrating a similar sensibility, this converted mansion has a far better location than its older sibling. It's right in the middle of things, with many of the best shops and department stores within 2 or 3 blocks and every major sight within walking distance. The grand lobby leads to an 18th-century inner court with a stained-glass skylight. Rooms are larger than usual, with carpeting, a small desk, and an easy chair or two.

Calle Alvarez Quintero 9–13 (1 block south of Plaza del Salvador), 41004 Sevilla. ✆ **95-422-58-58.** Fax 95-422-98-84. www.casasypalacios.com. 47 units. 112€–128€ ($162–$186) double. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 18€ ($26). **Amenities:** Cafe/bar; room service; laundry service/dry cleaning service. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Inexpensive

Hostal Goya Its location, in a narrow-fronted town house in the oldest part of the barrio, is one of the Goya's strongest virtues, but the building's gold-and-white facade, ornate iron railings, and picture-postcard demeanor are all noteworthy. The rooms are cozy and simple. Guests congregate in the marble-floored ground-level salon, where a skylight floods the couches and comfortable chairs with sunlight. No meals are served. Reserve well in advance. Parking is often available along the street.

Mateus Gago 31, 41004 Seville. ✆ **95-421-11-70.** Fax 95-456-29-88. www.hostalgoyasevilla.com. 19 units. 70€–130€ ($102–$189) double. MC, V. Bus: 10, 12, 41, or 42. **Amenities:** Laundry service. *In room:* A/C, TV.

Hotel Murillo Tucked away on a narrow street in the heart of Santa Cruz, the Residencia Murillo (named after the artist who used to live in this district) is very close to the gardens of the Alcázar. Inside, the lounges harbor some fine architectural characteristics and antique reproductions. The guest rooms feature a modern, warm-toned Sevilian decor with hand-carved wooden furniture and marble floors. You can reach this *residencia* from the Menéndez y Pelayo, a wide avenue west of the Parque María Luisa, where a sign leads you through the **Murillo Gardens** on the left.

Calle Lope de Rueda 7–9, 41004 Seville. ✆ **95-421-60-95.** Fax 95-421-96-16. www.hotelmurillo.com. 57 units. 70€–175€ ($102–$254) double; 87€–210€ ($126–$305) triple. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 15€ ($22) nearby. Bus: 21 or 23. **Amenities:** Breakfast room; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer.

WHERE TO DINE

Expensive

Egaña Oriza ★★★ BASQUE/INTERNATIONAL Seville's most stylish restaurant is within the conservatory of a restored mansion adjacent to the Murillo Gardens. Its reputation stems in large part from a game-heavy menu in a region otherwise devoted to seafood. The restaurant was opened by Basque-born owner/chef José Mari Egaña, who combines his passion for hunting with his flair for cooking. Many of the ingredients have been trapped or shot within Andalusia. Specialties depend on the season but might include ostrich carpaccio, casserole of wild boar with cherries and raisins, duck *quenelles* in a potato nest with apple purée, and woodcock flamed in Spanish brandy. The wine list provides an ample supply of hearty Spanish reds.

San Fernando 41. ✆ **95-422-72-11.** Reservations required. Main courses 20€–50€ ($29–$73). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri 1:30–3:30pm and 8:30–11:30pm; Sat 8:30–11:30pm. Closed Aug. Bus: 21 or 23.

Enrique Becerra ★ ANDALUSIAN Off Plaza Nueva near the cathedral, this restaurant has flourished since 1979 and just might provide one of your best meals in Seville. A popular tapas bar occupies the front, with a daily menu of more than 25 possibilities, most of them notches above the usual renditions. The dining rooms upstairs and at the ground level are intimate settings made warmer by the friendly welcome. It's as good a place as any for your first taste of gazpacho and icy sangria. Specialties include roast lamb stuffed with spinach, honey, and pine nuts; rockfish cooked in Amontillado sherry; and oxtail braised in red wine. Many vegetarian dishes are also featured.

Gamazo 2 (2 blocks south of Plaza Nueva). ✆ **95-421-30-49.** Main courses 14€–22€ ($20–$32); fixed-price menus 40€–46€ ($58–$67). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat 1–5pm and 8pm–midnight.

Moderate

La Albahaca BASQUE/SPANISH On a corner of an attractive square in the Barrio de Santa Cruz, this elegant little manse dates from 1929 but looks much older. The high ceilings, many antiques and paintings, and extensive use of *azulejos* (decorative tiles) make it one of the most idyllic dining settings in Seville. In concert with the ministrations of the creative young Basque chef, this makes a most desirable place for a farewell dinner or an amorous proposal. The menu is adjusted seasonally, but look for such intriguing dishes as spicy marinated vegetables *escabeche* with oysters, or pork loin roasted with pear and vanilla sauce. The service is discreet. At the least, stop for a drink in the intimate snuggery.

Plaza de Santa Cruz 12. ✆ **95-422-07-14.** Main courses 18€–22€ ($26–$32). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat noon–4pm and 8pm–midnight.

Taberna del Alabardero ★★ ANDALUSIAN One of Seville's most prestigious restaurants occupies a 19th-century town house 3 blocks from the cathedral. Famous as the dining choice of nearly every politician and diplomat who visits Seville, it has hosted the king and queen of Spain, and the Spanish president. Amid a collection of European antiques and oil paintings, you'll dine in any of two main rooms, and perhaps precede your meal with a drink or tapas on the flowering patio. Tantalizing menu items include spicy peppers stuffed with pulverized thigh of bull, Andalusian fish *(urta)* on a compote of aromatic tomatoes with coriander, cod filet with essence of red peppers, and Iberian beefsteak with foie gras and green peppers.

Calle Zaragoza 20, 41001 Seville. ✆ **95-450-27-21.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 20€–30€ ($29–$44). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 1–4pm and 8pm–midnight. Closed Aug. Bus: 21, 25, 30, or 43.

EXPLORING SEVILLE

Alcázar ★★★ This magnificent 14th-century Mudéjar palace was built by Pedro the Cruel after the reconquest of the city from the Moors. From the Dolls' Court to the Maidens' Court through the domed Ambassadors' Room, it contains some of the finest work of Sevillian artisans, most of them descendants of the former occupants of the palace. In many ways, it evokes the Alhambra at Granada. Isabel and Fernando, who at one time lived in the Alcázar, welcomed Columbus here on his return from America. On the top floor, the Oratory of the Catholic Monarchs has a fine altar in polychrome tiles made by Pisano in 1504.

Plaza del Triunfo. ✆ **95-450-23-23.** Entrance is north of the cathedral. Admission 7€ ($10) adults, free for seniors, students, and children 12 and under. Apr–Sept Tues–Sat 9:30am–7pm, Sun 9:30am–1:30pm; Oct–Mar Tues–Sat 9:30am–5pm, Sun 9:30am–1:30pm.

Moments

Splendid Strolls

What was once a ghetto for Spanish Jews, who were forced out of Spain in the 15th century in the wake of the Inquisition, the **Barrio de Santa Cruz** ★★★ today is Seville's most colorful district. Near the old walls of the Alcázar, winding medieval streets with names like Vida (Life) and Muerte (Death) open onto pocket plazas. Balconies with draping bougainvillea and potted geraniums jut out over this labyrinth, and through numerous wrought-iron gates, you can glimpse tile-lined patios filled with fountains and plants. To enter the Barrio Santa Cruz, turn right after leaving the Patio de Banderas exit of the Alcázar. Turn right again at Plaza de la Alianza and go down Calle Rodrigo Caro to Plaza de Doña Elvira. Use caution when strolling through the area, particularly at night.

About a 7-minute walk northeast of the cathedral on the northern edge of the Barrio de Santa Cruz is the **Casa de Pilatos** ★, Plaza Pilatos 1 (✆ **95-422-52-98**). This 16th-century palace of the dukes of Medinaceli recaptures the splendors of the past, combining Gothic, Mudéjar, and Plateresque styles in its courtyards, fountains, and salons. Don't miss the two old carriages or the rooms filled with Greek and Roman statues. Admission to the museum upstairs is 8€ ($12). The museum and gardens are open daily 9am to 6:30pm.

Parque María Luisa ★★, dedicated to María Luisa, sister of Isabel II, was once the grounds of the Palacio de San Telmo, Avenida de Roma. The former private royal park later became the site of the 1929 Ibero-Americana exposition, for which the vast Plaza de España was created. Running south along the Guadalquivir River, the park attracts those who want to take boat rides, walk along paths bordered by flowers, jog, or go bicycling. The most romantic way to traverse it is by rented horse and carriage, but this can be expensive, depending on your negotiation with the driver. Exercise caution while walking through this otherwise delightful park, as many muggings have been reported.

Catedral ★★★ Alleged to be the largest Gothic building in the world, Seville's cathedral was designed by builders with a stated goal—that "those who come after us will take us for madmen." Construction began in the late 1400s and took centuries to complete. Built on the site of an ancient mosque, the cathedral claims to contain the remains of Columbus, with his tomb mounted on four statues. That claim is in doubt, but it's fairly certain his son Fernando is buried here. Works of art abound, most immediately evident in the side chapels, the 75 stained-glass windows, and the elaborate choir stalls, and also including paintings by Murillo, Goya, and Zurbarán. On the north side you'll find the fresh citrus scents and chirping birds of the Patio of Orange Trees, a relic of the original mosque, as is the Giralda (see below).

Plaza del Triunfo, Av. de la Constitución. ✆ **95-421-49-71.** www.catedrakesevukka.es. Admission including La Giralda 7.50€ ($11) adults, 2€ ($2.90) seniors/students, free for children 12 and under. Free for all Sun. Mon–Sat 11am–5pm; Sun 2:30–6pm.

La Giralda ★★★ Just as Big Ben symbolizes London, La Giralda evokes Seville. This square-sided, 98m (322-ft.) bell tower, next to the cathedral, is the city's most famous monument. It began as a minaret for the mosque, progressing from the austere stonework of the fundamentalist Almohad Dynasty to the decorative brick patterns and pointed arches of their less rigid successors, and culminating in the florid Renaissance-influenced upper floors added by the Catholic bishops. Determined visitors can take the 35 ramps inside up to a **viewing platform** ★★★ at the 70m (230-ft.) level. Make it to the top and you'll have an unsurpassed vista of the city.

Plaza Virgen de los Reyes. Entrance through the cathedral (admission is included with cathedral).

Museo de Bellas Artes de Sevilla ★★ A lovely old convent off Calle de Alfonso XII, this museum houses an important Spanish art collection. Some art experts claim that after the two leading art museums of Madrid, this is the most valuable and significant repository of art in Spain. A whole gallery is devoted to two paintings by El Greco, and works by Zurbarán are also exhibited; however, the devoutly religious paintings of the Seville-born Murillo outnumber all the others. An entire wing is given over to macabre paintings by the 17th-century artist Valdés-Leál. The top floor, which displays modern paintings, is less interesting.

Plaza del Museo 9. ✆ **95-478-64-82.** Admission 1.50€ ($2.20). Tues 2:30–8pm; Wed–Sat 9am–8pm; Sun 9am–2pm. Bus: C3 or C4.

SHOPPING

Seville's major shopping street is the pedestrianized **Calle Sierpes,** which runs from Plaza Magdalena Campaña to the top of Plaza San Francisco. For handmade ceramics, you should also prowl **Calle Alfareria** across the Isabel II bridge from the old town. On Sunday mornings, once the Saturday-night drunks have been cleared away, a huge flea market is held on the **Alameda de Hercules** plaza in the Macarena neighborhood. Close to Seville's town hall, **Ceramics Martian,** Sierpes 74 (✆ **95-421-34-13**), sells a wide array of painted tiles and ceramics, all made in or near Seville. Many pieces reproduce traditional patterns of Andalusia. Along Alfarería, one ceramics merchant to seek out is **Azulejos Santa Isabel,** 12 (✆ **95-434-46-08**). Their merchandise runs from simple tiles and dinner plates to elaborate coffee sets and garden fountains.

Past the north end of Sierpes, over to the left, is the local branch of the preeminent national department store, **El Corte Inglés,** Plaza del Duque de la Victoria 10 (✆ **95-459-70-00**).

SEVILLE AFTER DARK

In the 1990s, Seville finally got its own opera house, **Teatro de la Maestranza,** Núñez de Balboa (✆ **95/422-33-44;** www.teatromaestranza.com), which quickly became a premier venue for world-class operatic performances. Jazz, classical music, and the quintessentially Spanish *zarzuelas* (operettas) are also performed here. The opera house can't be visited except during performances. The box office is open daily from 10am to 2pm and 5:30 to 8:30pm. Tickets vary in cost depending on the performance.

If you're under 35 (or just feel that way), join Seville's youth at the **Alameda de Hercules** just north of the city center, where more than a dozen bars and two dance clubs attract hundreds of college students and a smaller crowd of revelers in their 20s and 30s to chat, drink, flirt, and show off.

CORDOBA ★★★

Ten centuries ago, Córdoba was one of the world's greatest cities. The capital of Muslim Spain, it was Europe's largest city (with a reported population of 900,000) and a prominent cultural and intellectual center. This seat of the Western Caliphate flourished, constructing public baths, mosques, a great library, and palaces. But greedy hordes descended on the city, sacking ancient buildings and carting off art treasures. Despite these assaults, Córdoba retains traces of its former glory—enough to rival Seville and Granada in attraction.

A visit to Andalusia can easily begin in Córdoba, 418km (260 miles) southwest of Madrid. The city lies astride NIV (E-5) connecting Madrid with Seville and is one of the few stops made by the high-speed AVE train, only 1¾ hours out of Madrid. Today, this provincial capital is known chiefly for its great mosque, but it is filled with other artistic and architectural riches, especially its domestic dwellings. The old Arab and Jewish quarters are famous for their narrow streets lined with whitewashed homes and flower-filled patios and balconies; it's perfectly acceptable to walk along gazing into the courtyards.

A showcase for Spanish folk song and dance, **El Patio Sevillano,** Paseo de Cristóbal Colón 11 (✆ **95-421-41-20;** www.elpatiosevillano.com), presents the most widely varied flamenco program in town. Sometimes classical music is inserted, including works by Falla and Chueca. Three shows at 7:30, 10, and 11:45pm are presented nightly March to October. Off season there are two shows nightly at 9 and 11:30pm. The cover of 30€ ($44) includes your first drink.

A less touristy and more authentic flamenco is presented at **Tablao Los Gallos** ★, Plaza de Santa Cruz 11 (✆ **95-421-69-81;** www.tablaolosgallos.com), lying 2 blocks south of Ximénez de Enciso along Santa Teresa. The club lies deep in the heart of Barrio Santa Cruz. Shows are presented nightly at 8pm and 10:30am, costing a cover of 30€ ($44), including your first drink.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **By Train** Córdoba is a railway junction for routes to the rest of Andalusia and Spain. The main rail station is on the town's northern periphery, at Avenida de América 130, near the corner of Avenida de Cervantes. For information about services in Córdoba, contact **RENFE** (✆ **95-740-02-02;** www.renfe.es). There are about 22 Talgo and AVE trains daily between Córdoba and Madrid (trip time: 1½–2 hr.). Other trains take 5 to 8 hours for the same trip. There are also 25 trains from Seville every day (45 min. by AVE).

By Bus Several different bus companies maintain separate terminals. The town's major bus terminal is at Calle Torrito 10, 1 block south of Avenida Medina Azahara 29 (✆ **95-740-40-40**), on the western outskirts of town (just west of the gardens beside Paseo de la Victoria). There are at least 10 buses per day to Seville (trip time: 2 hr.).

VISITOR INFORMATION The **tourist office,** Calle Torrijos 10 (✆ **95-735-51-79;** www.andalucia.org), is open Monday to Friday 9am to 7:30pm, Saturday 10am to 2pm and 5 to 7pm, and Sunday and holidays 10am to 2pm.

WHERE TO STAY

Expensive

Parador de Cordoba ★ About 4km (2½ miles) outside of town, in the suburb of El Brillante, this hotel from around 1960 (named after an Arab word meaning "palm grove") offers the conveniences and facilities of a resort hotel at reasonable rates. Built atop the foundations of a former caliphate palace, with panoramic views, the spacious rooms within have been furnished with fine dark wood pieces; some have balconies.

Avenida de la Arruzafa s/n, 14012 Córdoba. ✆ **95-727-59-00.** Fax 95-728-04-09. www.parador.es. 94 units. 142€–177€ ($206–$257) double; 227€–246€ ($329–$357) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; heated outdoor pool; tennis court; room service; babysitting; laundry service/dry cleaning service. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Moderate/Inexpensive

El Conquistador ★ Benefiting from one of the most evocative locations in Córdoba, this hotel lies just across a narrow street from one side of the Mezquita. It opened in 1986 within the renovated premises of a connected pair of 19th-century villas. The marble-and-granite lobby opens onto an interior courtyard filled with seasonal flowers, a pair of splashing fountains, and a symmetrical stone arcade. The quality, size, and comfort of the rooms have earned the hotel four stars in the government rating system.

Magistral González Francés 15, 14003 Córdoba. ✆ **95-748-11-02.** Fax 95-747-46-77. www.hotelconquistadorcordoba.com. 132 units. 109€–168€ ($158–$244) double. AE, MC, V. Garage parking 15€ ($22). Bus: 12. **Amenities:** Cafe; bar; car-rental desk; room service; babysitting; laundry service/dry cleaning service. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

Hotel Marisa *Value* In front of the Mezquita, this modest hotel is one of the most centrally located in Córdoba, not to mention one of the city's best values. Completed in the early 1970s, ongoing renovations have kept it in good shape. Most recent improvements have been to the bathrooms with showers, where the plumbing was renewed. The rooms are small but cozily comfortable—ask for one with a balcony overlooking either the statue of the Virgin of Rosales or the Patio de los Naranjos. The architecture and furnishings are in a vague Andalusian style.

Cardenal Herrero 6, 14003 Córdoba. ✆ **95-747-31-42.** Fax 95-747-41-44. www.hotelmarisacordoba.com. 28 units. 50€–68€ ($73–$99) double. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 12€ ($17). Bus: 3 or 16. **Amenities:** Cafeteria; room service; laundry/dry cleaning service; rooms available for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C.

Mezquita ★ *Finds* The owners have incorporated ancient columns, arches, and genuinely old paintings for a downright grand effect. Many of the guest rooms carry through with that theme. Opposite the east entrance to the Mezquita, the intriguing parts of the Judería are a mere stroll away. Prices go up during Holy Week and the Feria de Abril.

Plaza Santa Catalina 1, 14003 Córdoba. ✆ **95-747-55-85.** Fax 95-747-62-19. 31 units. 52€–108€ ($75–$157) double. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking nearby 15€ ($22). **Amenities:** Laundry service. *In room:* A/C, TV, hair dryer, safe.

WHERE TO DINE

Moderate

El Caballo Rojo ★ SPANISH Córdoba's best-known restaurant is up an alley opposite the Mezquita's Puerta del Perdón. Hugely popular with both locals and visitors, the place has the noise level you'd expect, but the skilled waiters cope smoothly with all the demands. As soon as you order, they bring a dish of fritters and pour a complimentary aperitif. There are three floors, and enough room to get away from smokers if you wish. In addition to regional dishes, the chef offers centuries-old Sephardic and Mozarabic recipes, an example of the latter being monkfish with pine nuts, currants, carrots, and cream. *Rabo de toro* (oxtail stew) is among the favorites on the long menu.

Cardinal Herrero 28, Plaza de la Hoguera. ✆ **95-747-53-75.** Reservations required. Main courses 12€–27€ ($17–$39). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 1–4:30pm and 8pm–midnight. Bus: 12.

La Almudaina ★ SPANISH/FRENCH Fronting the river in the former Judería—the Jewish Quarter—La Almudaina is widely regarded as the city's top restaurant. That's a reach, in truth, but it's an attractive place, with dining in the central courtyard, with its stained-glass roof, or in one of the lace-curtained salons to the side. In cool weather, braziers under the table warm your feet. Specialties include salmon crepes, *merluza* (hake) with baby clams and shrimp, and spring lamb and pork loin in wine sauce. Meats are the best options, because fish is too often cooked to mushiness.

Plaza de los Santos Mártires 1. ☎ **95-747-43-42.** Reservations required. Main courses 16€–28€ ($23–$41). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat 12:30–4pm and 8:30pm–midnight; Sun 12:30–4pm. Closed Sun mid-June to Aug. Bus: 12.

EXPLORING CORDOBA

Alcázar de los Reyes Cristianos ★ Commissioned in 1328 by Alfonso XI (the "Just"), the Alcázar de los Reyes Cristianos (Fortress of the Christian Kings) is a fine example of military architecture. Fernando and Isabel governed Castile from this fortress on the river as they prepared their assault on Granada, the last Moorish stronghold in Spain. Columbus journeyed here to fill Isabel's ears with his plans for exploration. Two blocks southwest of the mosque, this quadrangular building is notable for mighty walls and a trio of towers: the Tower of the Lions, the Tower of Allegiance, and the Tower of the River. The Tower of the Lions contains intricately decorated ogival ceilings that are the most notable example of Gothic architecture in Andalusia. The beautiful gardens (illuminated May–Sept Tues–Sat 10pm–1am) and the Moorish bathrooms are celebrated attractions. The Patio Morisco is a lovely spot, its pavement decorated with the arms of León and Castile.

Caballerizas Reales. ☎ **95-742-01-51.** Admission 4€ ($5.80) adults, free ages 17 and under. May–Sept Tues–Sat 8:30am–2pm and 6–8pm, Sun 10am–2pm; Oct–Apr Tues–Sat 10am–2pm and 4:30–6:30pm, Sun 9:30am–2:30pm. Bus: 3 or 12.

Mezquita-Catedral ★★★ Dating from the 8th century, this mosque was the crowning Muslim architectural achievement in the West, rivaled only by the architecture at Mecca. Córdoba's mosque boasts a fantastic labyrinth of red-and-white-striped pillars, more than 850 of them, topped with double arches, some of them with scalloped edges. They are made from marble, onyx, granite, limestone, even wood. Of different heights and thickness, many were scavenged from Roman, Carthaginian, and Visigothic sites. They support a flat roof covering almost 3 hectares (7½ acres).

Dropped into this graceful space is a Gothic-baroque cathedral that the bishops of the Church Triumphant ordered built after the reconquest of the city. While it squats awkwardly in the middle of the mosque, it would be impressive in its own right if it stood alone, somewhere else. The mosque's most intriguing feature is the *mihrab,* a domed shrine lined with golden, glittering mosaics. The mihrab once housed a Koran. After exploring the interior, stroll through the Courtyard of the Orange Trees with its beautiful fountain.

Calle Cardenal Herrero. ☎ **95-822-52-45.** Admission 8€ ($12) adults and students 14 and up, 4€ ($5.80) children 10–13, free for children 9 and under. Mar–Sept daily 10am–7pm; Oct–Feb daily 10am–6pm. Bus: 3 or 12.

Museo de Bellas Artes Housed in an old hospital, the Fine Arts Museum contains medieval Andalusian paintings, examples of Spanish baroque art, and works by many of Spain's important 19th- and 20th-century painters, including Goya. The museum is east of the Mezquita, about a block south of the San Francisco (Church of St. Francis).

Plaza del Potro 1. ✆ **95-835-55-50.** Admission 1.60€ ($2.30), free for children 11 and under. June 15–Sept 15 Tues 3–8pm; Wed–Sat 9am–8pm; Sun 9am–3pm (shorter hours during the rest of the year). Bus: 3, 4, or 7.

Museo de Julio Romero de Torres Across the patio from the Museo de Bellas Artes, this museum honors Julio Romero de Torres, a Córdoba-born artist (1874–1930) who was known for his sensual portraits of women. He caused the greatest scandal with his "hyper-realistic nudes," and in 1906 the National Exhibition of Fine Arts banned his *Vivadoras del amor.* On display here is his celebrated *Oranges and Lemons,* and other notable works such as *The Little Girl Who Sells Fuel, Sin,* and *A Dedication to the Art of the Bullfight.* A corner of Romero's Madrid studio has been reproduced in one of the rooms, displaying the paintings left unfinished at his death.

Plaza del Potro 1. ✆ **95-749-19-09.** www.museojulioromero.com. Admission 3€ ($4.40). Oct–Apr Tues–Sat 10am–2pm and 4:30–6:30pm, Sun 9:30am–2:30pm; May–June and Sept 10am–2pm and 5:30–7:30pm, Sun 9:30am–2:30pm; July–Aug Tues–Sat 8:30am–2:30pm, Sun 9:30am–2:30pm.

THE SHOPPING SCENE

The largest and most comprehensive association of craftspeople in Córdoba is **Arte Zoco,** Calle de los Júdios s/n (✆ **95-720-40-33**). Opened in the Jewish quarter as a business cooperative in the mid-1980s, it assembles the creative output of about a half-dozen artisans, whose media include leather, wood, silver, crystal, terra cotta, and iron. Some of the artisans maintain on-premises studios, which you can visit to check out the techniques and tools they use to pursue their crafts. The center is open Monday to Friday 9:30am to 7pm and Saturday and Sunday 9:30am to 2pm. The workshops and studios of the various artisans open and close according to the whims of their occupants, but are usually open Monday to Friday 10am to 2pm and 5:30 to 8pm.

At taller **Meryan,** Calleja de las Flores 2 (✆ **95-747-59-02**), artisans make leather objects in a 250-year-old building. Most items must be custom ordered, but there are some ready-made pieces for sale, including cigarette boxes, jewel cases, attaché cases, book and folio covers, and ottoman covers. Meryan is open Monday to Friday 9am to 8pm and Saturday 9am to 2pm.

GRANADA ★★

Granada, 122km (76 miles) northeast of Málaga, is 670m (2,200 ft.) above sea level. The last stronghold of Moorish Spain, it was finally captured in 1492 by the Catholic monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella. Granada is best known for the castle complex of the **Alhambra** ★★★ (www.alhambra-patronato.es), one of the world's grandest and most elegant monuments, ranking up there with the Acropolis and the Taj Mahal. Author/diplomat Washington Irving lived in a former royal apartment on the grounds before he wrote his *Tales of the Alhambra.*

But Granada itself has much more to offer. The winding, hilly streets of the formerly Jewish Albayzín quarter and the gracious plazas of the 19th-century city below come together into a supremely civilized city, one that rewards wandering.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **By Plane** **Iberia** flies to Granada's small airport once or twice daily from both Barcelona and Madrid. Granada's airport (✆ **90-240-47-04**) is 16km (10 miles) west of the city center. Airline ticketing problems and information are more easily handled at the **Iberia ticketing office** in the city center, at Plaza Isabel la Católica 2 (✆ **90-240-05-00**). A shuttle bus makes runs several times a day between the airport and the city center, at hours that are timed to coincide with the arrivals and departures of flights. The buses meander through the city center before heading out to the airport, but the most convenient and central place to catch one is on the Gran Vía de Colón, immediately in front of the city's cathedral. It costs 5€ ($7.30) each way.

By Train Two trains daily connect Granada with Madrid's Atocha Station (trip time: 6–8 hr.), and there are four trains daily between Seville and Granada (3 hr.). Granada's railway station is on Calle Dr. Jaime García Royo (✆ **90-243-23-43;** www.renfe.es), at the end of Avenida Andaluces.

By Bus Most buses pull into the station on the fringe of Granada at Carretera de Jaen s/n, the extension of Avenida de Madrid. **Carretera de Jean** (✆ **95-818-54-80**) is the most useful company here, offering seven buses per day from Córdoba (3 hr.), 10 per day from Madrid (5 hr.), 17 per day from Málaga (2 hr.), and 8 per day from Seville (3 hr.).

VISITOR INFORMATION The **tourist information office** is at Plaza de Mariana Pineda 10 (✆ **95-824-71-46;** www.turismodegranada.org), open Monday to Saturday 9am to 7pm and Sunday 10am to 2pm.

WHERE TO STAY

Casa de los Migueletes ★★ One of the best known of Granada's historic hotels was built in the 17th century as a slew of houses around a central courtyard; over the years, it became the headquarters for the local police and then a set of slum dwellings, before finally being left in ruins in 1995.

The Migueletes is full of high-tech conveniences, including a rollback roof over the central courtyard and even an electrically heated courtyard floor. The varied rooms come with certifiably antique furniture and well-maintained bathrooms; a few have views of the Alhambra. A 24-hour, ground-floor wine cellar serves as the world's largest minibar. Feel like having some fresh ham and a bottle of *vino tinto*? Just ask. The Migueletes's greatest asset, though, is its staff. All front-line staff speak fluent English and are helpful when it comes to recommending restaurants and attractions, providing the intangible smoothness that creates a luxury experience.

Benelua 11, 18010 Granada. ✆ **95-821-07-00.** Fax 95-821-07-02. www.casamigueletes.com. 25 units. 129€–199€ ($187–$289) double; 250€ ($363) suite. AE, MC, V. **Amenities:** Laundry service/dry cleaning service. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Casa del Capitel Nazari ★ Value The least expensive of a quartet of historic Albayzín hotels brings together charm and affordability in a way no other Granada hotel quite pulls it off. Built in 1503 by workers who remembered the last Moorish rulers of Granada, it was a private home for centuries before being converted to a hotel in 2001.

The rooms, on three floors, cluster around an open-air patio. Yes, that means it rains *inside* the hotel sometimes; the patio has its own drainage system. Rooms are decorated with tapestries and old rugs, with tiny but sparkling bathrooms (shower only, no bathtub). Top-floor rooms have gorgeous wood-beam ceilings, and a few rooms have views of the Alhambra. The staff speaks a bit of English.

Cuesta Aceituneros 6, 18010 Granada. ✆ **95-821-52-60.** Fax 95-821-58-06. www.hotelcasacapitel.com. 17 units. 85€–110€ ($123–$160) double. MC, V. **Amenities:** Breakfast room. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer.

Parador de San Francisco ★★★ The most famous hotel of Spain's "Parador" lodging chain (a distinguished chain of Spanish government-owned hotels, normally set in notable historical buildings) is housed in a 15th-century structure with a modern annex, set within the grounds of the Alhambra. A decidedly Andalusian ambience informs the decor, which is respectful of the rich history of its surroundings. Part of the building is a former convent founded by the Catholic monarchs immediately after they conquered the city in 1492. They were interred in one of its enclosed courts until the cathedral was built downtown. From the hotel's terrace, outside the dining room, there are views of the Alhambra gardens and Albayzín hill. Rooms are generally spacious and comfortable, if not extravagant. The hotel cannot begin to meet demand, though, and reservations must be made months in advance. (In the confusing manner of the Parador chain, this is also known as the "Parador de Granada.")

Real de la Alhambra, 18009 Granada. ✆ **800/343-0020** in the U.S., or 95-822-14-40. Fax 95-822-22-64. www.parador.es. 310€–347€ ($450–$503) double; 481€–598€ ($697–$867) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. Bus: 30. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; room service; laundry service/dry cleaning service. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

WHERE TO DINE

Carmen de San Miguel ANDALUSIAN Located on the hill leading up to the Alhambra, this likable restaurant offers spectacular views over the city center. Meals are served in a glassed-in dining room and patio-style terrace, where the banks of flowers are changed seasonally. Specialties include grilled hake, a pâté of partridge with a vinaigrette sauce, Iberian ham with Manchego cheese, and a casserole of monkfish and fresh clams. The food, although good, doesn't quite match the view. The wines are from throughout the country, with a strong selection of Riojas.

Plaza de Torres Bermejas 3. ✆ **95-822-67-23.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 17€–23€ ($25–$33); 4-course *menu dégustation* 55€ ($80). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat 1:30–4pm and 8:30–11:30pm; winter Sun 1:30–4pm. Bus: 30 or 32.

Las Tinajas ★ ANDALUSIAN This restaurant, a short walk from the cathedral, is named for the huge amphorae depicted on its facade. For more than 3 decades it has been the culinary showcase of José Alvarez. The decor is classical Andalusian, with wood walls adorned with ceramic tiles and pictures of Old Granada. Diners are surrounded by antique ornaments interspersed with modern elements and fixtures. To start, try the cold zucchini-and-almond cream soup or the white beet stuffed with ham and cheese. Follow with a delectable monkfish cooked with local herbs, or the peppered sirloin steak.

Martínez Campos 17. ✆ **95-825-43-93.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 10€–23€ ($15–$33). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily noon–5pm and 8pm–midnight. Closed July 15–Aug 15. Bus: 4 or 6.

EXPLORING GRANADA

Alhambra ★★★ A fortress-palace of grand ambition, built over centuries for the governing caliphs during the long Moorish occupation, the Alhambra was a royal city surrounded by walls. The heart of the Alhambra, the **Palacios Nazaríes (Nasrid Palaces),** is a series of three connected palaces. Here, sultans and emirs conducted state business, concocted conspiracies, raised their families, and were entertained by their harems.

The first structure you'll enter is the **Casa Real,** built between 1335 and 1410. Signs direct visitors through rooms with reliefs of Arabic script and floral motifs carved in the plaster walls. This pathway leads into one of the Alhambra's most-photographed spaces, the **Patio de Comares (Court of the Myrtles),** a long, flat band of water bordered by rows of sculptured myrtle. At one end is the splendid **Salón de Embajadores (Hall of the Ambassadors),** one of the palace's loveliest rooms, with a high vaulted ceiling of carved cedar and walls of lustrous tiles and carved script. Exiting, you soon arrive in the **Patio de los Leones (Court of Lions),** named after its fountain, a basin resting on the haunches of 12 stylized stone lions standing in a circle. This was the heart of the palace, the most private section. Opening onto the court are the Hall of the Two Sisters, where the "favorite" of the moment was kept, and the Gossip Room, a factory of intrigue. In the dancing room in the Hall of Kings, entertainment was provided nightly to amuse the sultan's party. You can see the room where Washington Irving lived (in the chambers of Carlos V).

Carlos V may have been horrified when he saw the cathedral placed in the middle of the great mosque at Córdoba, but he's responsible for his own architectural meddling here, building a ponderous Renaissance palace in the middle of the Alhambra. Today, it houses the **Museo de la Bellas Artes en la Alhambra** (**✆ 95-822-48-83**), a site devoted to painting and sculpture from the 16th to the 19th centuries; and the **Museo de la Alhambra** (**✆ 95-822-62-79**), which focuses on the region's traditions of Hispanic-Muslim art and architecture. Both museums are open Monday to Saturday 9am to 2pm.

Note: The crowds here can be overwhelming during the summer months (though on a rainy Nov day, you may feel as if you have the Alhambra all to yourself). The latest experiment in crowd control restricts entry to the grounds to morning (8:30am–2pm), afternoon (2–6pm), or evening phases (6pm until close), and gives you a precise time when you're allowed to enter the Nasrid palaces. Once inside any area, you can stay as long as you want. To be safe, arrange for tickets in advance. Branches of the **Banco de Bilbao de Vizcaya** (**✆ 91-537-91-78**) across the country sell tickets; you can also book online at www.alhambratickets.com and pick up your ticket at the Alhambra ticket office; if you do, remember to print out and bring the confirmation number the site gives you. Hotel concierges in Granada can also arrange for tickets.

Palacio de Carlos V. **✆ 90-244-12-21.** Comprehensive ticket, including Alhambra and Generalife (see below), 10€ ($15) adults. Free for children 7 and under. Mar–Oct daily 8:30am–8pm, floodlit visits Tues–Sat 10–11:30pm; Nov–Feb daily 8:30am–6pm, floodlit visits Fri–Sat 8–9:30pm. Take bus no. 30 from the Plaza Nueva.

Generalife ★ The sultans used to spend their summers in this palace (pronounced, roughly, hay-nay-rahl-*ee*-fay) with their wives, consorts, and extended families. Built in the 13th century to overlook the Alhambra, the Generalife's glory is in its gardens and courtyards. Don't expect an Alhambra in miniature: There are no major buildings—the Generalife is a place of fragrances and fountains, a retreat even from the splendors of the Alhambra.

Alhambra, Cerro de Sol. For tickets and hours, see the Alhambra, above.

Catedral & Capilla Real ★ This Renaissance-baroque cathedral, with its spectacular altar, is one of the country's architectural highlights, acclaimed for its beautiful facade and gold-and-white decor. It was begun in 1521 and completed in 1714. Behind the cathedral (entered separately) is the Flamboyant Gothic **Capilla Real (Royal Chapel)** where the remains of Isabel and Fernando lie. It was their wish to be buried in recaptured Granada, not their home regions of Castile or Aragón. The coffins are remarkably tiny—a reminder of how short they must have been. Accenting the tombs is a wrought-iron grill masterpiece. In much larger tombs are the remains of their daughter, Joanna the Mad, and her husband, Philip the Handsome. The Capilla Real abuts the cathedral's eastern edge.

Plaza de la Lonja, Gran Vía de Colón 5. ✆ **95-822-29-59.** Admission to cathedral 3€ ($4.40). Daily 10:30am–1:30pm and 3:30–6:30pm (4–8pm in summer).

ALBAYZIN ★

This old Arab quarter (also spelled "Albaicín") occupies one of the two main hills of Granada, but it doesn't belong to the city of 19th-century buildings and wide boulevards beneath it. The district once flourished as the residential section of the Moors, even after the city's reconquest, but it fell into decline when the Christians eventually drove the Moors out. A labyrinth of steep, crooked streets, it escaped the fate of much of Granada, which was torn down in the name of progress. Fortunately, it has been preserved, as have its plazas, whitewashed houses, villas, and the decaying remnants of the old city gate. Here and there, you can catch a glimpse of a private patio filled with fountains and plants—these are home to a traditional and graceful way of life that flourishes today. Car traffic is only allowed 6 hours a day, so walk or take bus no. 31 from the Plaza Nueva deep into the quarter. Many bars and restaurants cluster around the Plaza Larga. You can always get out by walking downhill until you hit the Gran Vía or the river.

THE GYPSY CAVES OF SACROMONTE

Next to Albayzín are the Gypsy caves of Sacromonte. They are tawdry tourist traps, and wouldn't even be mentioned here if so many visitors didn't get conned into going, despite warnings. A few of the caves serve as troglodyte nightclubs. Strung with colored lights and furnished with stubby little tables and chairs, they function as flamenco tablaos. They aren't remotely romantic. With few exceptions, the performances of the singers, guitarists, and dancers are execrable. Patrons are hounded to buy vile sherry, shoddy trinkets, and cassettes, and to tip everyone in sight. You will be encouraged by leaflets scattered around the city and in every hotel lobby to join a "Granada by Night" tour. ***Don't!***

THE SHOPPING SCENE

The **Alcaicería,** once the Moorish silk market, is next to the cathedral in the lower city. The narrow streets of this rebuilt village of shops are filled with vendors selling the arts and crafts of the province. The Alcaicería offers you one of Spain's most diverse assortments of tiles, castanets, and wire figures of Don Quixote chasing windmills. The jewelry found here compares favorably with the finest Toledan work. For the window-shopper in particular, it makes a pleasant stroll.

MALAGA

Málaga is a bustling commercial and residential center whose economy doesn't depend exclusively on tourism. Its chief attraction is the mild off-season climate—summer can be sticky. Málaga's most famous native son is Pablo Picasso, born in 1881 at Plaza de la Merced, in the center of the city.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **Iberia** (✆ **800/772-4642** in the U.S.) has flights every 2 hours into Málaga from Madrid. There are at least five trains a day from Madrid (trip time: 4½ hr.). For rail information in Málaga, contact **RENFE** (✆ **90-224-02-02;** www.renfe.es). Buses from all over Spain arrive at the terminal on Paseo de los Tilos, behind the RENFE office. Málaga is linked by bus to all the major cities of Spain. Call ✆ **90-242-22-42** in Málaga for **bus information** or go to **www.alsa.es**.

VISITOR INFORMATION The **tourist information office** at Plaza de la Marina 11 (✆ **95-221-20-20;** www.malagaturismo.com) is open Monday to Friday 9am to 7pm and Saturday and Sunday 10am to 2pm. The municipal tourist information office at Av. Cervantes 1 (✆ **95-213-47-34**) keeps longer hours, Monday to Friday 8:15am to 2:45pm and 4:30 to 7pm, Saturday 9:30am to 1:30pm.

WHERE TO STAY

Parador de Málaga-Gibralfaro ★ Originally established in 1948, this member of the Parador chain is immediately adjacent to the foundations of a medieval castle. The lodging occupies the steep hill that dominates the city center, providing a vista that takes in the harbor, the bullring, mountains, and beaches. Rooms have sitting areas and wide glass doors opening onto terraces with garden furniture. They're tastefully decorated with modern furnishings and reproductions of Spanish antiques.

Monte Gibralfaro, 29016 Málaga. ✆ **95-222-19-02.** Fax 95-222-19-04. www.parador.es. 38 units. 159€–221€ ($231–$320) double. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; rooftop outdoor pool; room service; laundry service. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

WHERE TO DINE

Café de Paris ★ FRENCH/SPANISH Málaga's best restaurant is in La Malagueta, the district surrounding the Plaza de Toros (bullring). Much of the menu is French cuisine adapted to the Spanish palate, but classic Spanish recipes are also featured. Try crepes gratinées (filled with *angulas*—baby eels) or *lubina* or *dorada a la sal*—fish baked in a hard crust of salt and cracked open at the table; the fish proves to be exceptionally moist and not at all salty. Beef stroganoff is made here, but with *rabo de toro*—oxtail. Other specialties include artichokes stuffed with foie gras and a version of hake wrapped around pulverized shellfish and served with a tomato sauce.

Vélez Málaga 8. ✆ **95-222-50-43.** Reservations required. Main courses 18€–26€ ($26–$38); *menú del día* 40€ ($58). AE, DC, MC, V. Tues–Sat 1–4pm and 8:30–11pm. Closed Holy Week and last 2 weeks of July. Bus: 13.

EXPLORING MALAGA

The remains of the Moorish **Alcazaba** ★, Plaza de la Aduana, Alcazabilla (✆ **95-212-20-20;** bus no. 4, 18, 19, or 24), are within easy distance of the city center, off Paseo del Parque (plenty of signs point the way up the hill). The fortress was erected in the 10th or 11th century, though there have been later additions and reconstructions. Fernando and Isabel stayed here when they reconquered the city. The Alcazaba has extensive gardens and houses a small archaeological museum, with artifacts from cultures ranging from Greek to Phoenician to Carthaginian. Admission is 2€ ($2.90); it's open Tuesday to Sunday from 9:30am to 7pm in the summer and 8:30am to 6pm during the winter.

The 16th-century Renaissance **cathedral,** Plaza Obispo (✆ **95-221-59-17;** bus no. 14, 18, 19, or 24), in Málaga's center, was built on the site of a great mosque. It suffered damage during the Civil War, but it remains vast and impressive, reflecting changing styles of interior architecture. Its most notable attributes are its richly ornamented choir stalls by Ortiz, Mena, and Michael. Admission is 3.50€ ($5.10). It's open Monday to Friday 10am to 6pm, 10am to 5pm on Saturday.

MARBELLA

Though packed with visitors, ranking just behind Torremolinos in numbers, Marbella is still the most exclusive resort along the Costa del Sol—with such bastions of posh as the Hotel Puente Romano. Despite the hordes, Marbella persists as a large, busy, but still mostly pleasant town at the foot of the Sierra Blanca, 80km (50 miles) east of

Gibraltar and 76km (47 miles) east of Algeciras, or 600km (373 miles) south of Madrid.

Traces of the recent and distant past are found in Marbella's palatial town hall, its medieval ruins, and fragments of its Moorish walls. The most attractive area is the **old quarter,** with its narrow cobblestone streets and clustered houses, centering around Plaza de los Naranjos, which is planted with palms, trumpet vines, and orange trees. Seek out the Plaza de la Iglesia and the streets around it, with a church on one side and a rampart of an old fortress on the other.

The biggest attractions in Marbella are **El Fuerte** and **La Fontanilla,** the two main beaches. There are other, more secluded beaches, but you'll need your own transportation to get to them.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE At least 18 buses run between Málaga and Marbella daily. Four buses come in from Madrid and another three come from Barcelona.

VISITOR INFORMATION The **tourist office,** on Glorieta de la Fontanilla (✆ **95-277-14-42;** www.pgb.es/marbella), is open April to October, Monday to Friday 9:30am to 9pm and Saturday 10am to 2pm. Another tourist office is on Plaza Naranjos (✆ **95-282-35-50**), keeping the same hours.

WHERE TO STAY

El Castillo This small 1960s *hostal* is at the foot of the castle in the narrow streets of the old town. The spartan rooms are scrubbed clean and look out onto a small, covered courtyard. No meals are served, but many cafes, suitable for breakfast, are nearby. A tiny bit of English is spoken.

Plaza San Bernabé 2, 29601 Marbella. ✆ **95-277-17-39.** Fax 95-282-11-98. www.hotelcastillo.com. 26 units. 42€–62€ ($61–$90) double. MC, V. No parking. *In room:* No phone.

El Fuerte ★ This is the largest and most recommendable hotel in the center of Marbella. An underground tunnel leads beneath an all-pedestrian, traffic-free promenade to the sands of the beach. Built in 1957, it caters to a sedate clientele of conservative northern Europeans. There's a palm-fringed pool across the street from a sheltered lagoon and a wide-open beach. The hotel offers a handful of terraces, some shaded by flowering arbors.

Av. del Fuerte, 29600 Marbella. ✆ **800/448-8355** in the U.S., or 95-286-15-00. Fax 95-282-44-11. www.fuertehoteles.com. 263 units. 142€–280€ ($206–$406) double; from 258€ ($374) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 6€ ($8.70). **Amenities:** Restaurant; cafe; covered pool; room service; heated outdoor pool; golf nearby; lighted outdoor tennis courts; fitness room; laundry service; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi (in some).

Marbella Club ★★★ The first luxury hotel on the coast, this exclusive enclave was established in 1954 and has been renovated and refreshed many times since to keep up with newer competitors. It sprawls over a generously landscaped property that slopes from a roadside reception area down to the beach, incorporating small clusters of garden pavilions, bungalows, and small-scale annexes. Elegantly furnished rooms have private balconies or terraces. Golf can be arranged nearby, and tennis courts are within a 2-minute walk.

Bulevar Príncipe Alfonso von Hohenlohe, 29600 Marbella. ✆ **800/448-8355** in the U.S., or 95-282-22-11. Fax 95-282-98-84. www.marbellaclub.com. 121 units. 250€–690€ ($363–$1,001) double; from 345€ ($500) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; 3 pools; health club and spa; bike rental; business center; room service; babysitting; laundry service/dry cleaning service. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Puente Romano ★★★ This hotel began life as a condo annex of the older Marbella Club, down the road, but it soon surpassed its sibling in luxe and panache. There is no finer resort on the Costa. Like many of its fellows, the exterior style is mock Andalusian pueblo. A set of 27 small buildings encloses luxuriant gardens, with a brook spanned at one point by the Roman bridge that inspired the hotel's name. The always-stylish international clientele is afforded a beach club, twice-daily maid service, and reassuring security patrols. Rooms are vast and airy, with ground-floor units opening onto the gardens. Service excels: Order breakfast as you step into the shower and it arrives before you've reached for the towel.

Carretera de Cádiz, Km 177, 29600 Marbella. ✆ **95-282-09-00.** Fax 95-277-57-66. www.puenteromano.com. 293 units. 220€–419€ ($319–$608) double; from 446€ ($647) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Limited free parking. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; 2 bars; 2 large heated outdoor pools; golf nearby; 7 lighted tennis courts; health club; watersports equipment; car-rental desk; secretarial services; room service; in-room massage; babysitting; laundry service/dry cleaning service; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

WHERE TO DINE

Altamirano SPANISH Take the trouble to seek out this fine little tapas bar on a quiet square in the old town, up a narrow lane from Avenida de Nabeul. Conventional meals aren't the point. Put together a selection from the long list of traditional dishes available as *tapas* (small), *media raciones* (medium), and *raciones* (full plate). Beware the choices that list only their weight in grams—they're costly. *Almejas*—baby clams in garlicky wine sauce—are good starters. *Gambas pil-pil*—spicy shrimp—are another, and, if you're acclimated to calamari back home, discover a similar texture but new flavor in the *navajas*—grilled razor clams. It's smoky inside, so grab one of the tables outside if you're not a smoker.

Plaza Altamirano 3. ✆ **95-282-49-32.** Tapas and *raciones* 5.50€–12€ ($8–$17). MC, V. Thurs–Tues 1–4pm and 7:30pm–midnight.

Cipriano SPANISH Puerto Banús, a satellite of Marbella centered on a large marina, has become a small city since the 1970s. At the harbor, yachts have Mercedes in attendance to take their owners to dinner. This is one of their destinations, a crisply corporate enclave in a glass office building. With its burnished wood paneling, marble floors, and platoon of uniformed waiters, you'll not want to show up in shorts and T-shirts. Otherwise, everyone, even single diners, is made to feel special. Service is polished, balanced between warmth and professionalism, a pleasure to experience. Fish is your best bet, especially the classic *dorada a la sal,* sea bass baked in a hard salt shell. There are two main rooms and a terrace that seats more than 200 diners.

Avenida Playas del Duque. ✆ **95-281-10-77.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 18€–25€ ($26–$36). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 1:30–4pm and 8pm–midnight. Closed mid-Jan to mid-Feb.

El Balcón de la Virgen SPANISH Set in the historic core of old Marbella, this restaurant is named after a 200-year-old statue of the Virgin that adorns a wall niche. The ancient house is all but hidden under a blanket of flowering vines. You'll find it within a short walk of the Plaza de los Naranjos. Regardless of when you arrive, it's likely to be well patronized. The interior is regionally inspired, with amphorae and antique farm tools hanging on the white plaster walls. The menu is mostly Andalusian, which means lots of seafood, such as the mixed grill of three shrimp, three cuttlefish, and three fish filets. The food is unremarkable but prices are fair, the service attentive, and the setting entrancing. Note that it is open only for dinner.

Remedios 2. ✆ **95-277-60-92.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 10€–18€ ($15–$26). AE, MC, V. Daily 7pm–midnight.

La Hacienda ★ MEDITERRANEAN La Hacienda, 13km (8 miles) east of Marbella, has long enjoyed a reputation for serving some of the best food along the Costa del Sol. In cooler months, dine in the rustic tavern before an open fireplace; in fair weather, meals are served on a patio. The chef may offer foie gras with leeks, Serrano ham with green gazpacho, and saddle of hare with mushrooms and juniper, but the menu changes frequently. The expert kitchen knows how to heighten the flavors of the fresh ingredients, and the food presentation is stylish. Several items—guinea fowl, roast lamb, wild duck—are for two persons. Although the food is admirable, the service is sometimes lacking.

Urbanización Hacienda Las Chapas, Carretera de Cádiz, Km 193. ✆ **95-283-12-67.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 16€–42€ ($23–$61); *menu dégustacion* 50€–60€ ($73–$87). AE, DC, MC, V. Summer daily 8:30pm–midnight; winter Wed–Sun 1–3:30pm and 8:30–11:30pm. Closed Nov 12–Dec 7.

MARBELLA AFTER DARK

Near Puerto Banús, **Casino Nueva Andalucía Marbella,** Urbanización Nueva Andalucía (✆ **95-281-40-00;** www.casinomarbella.com), is on the lobby level of the Andalucía Plaza Hotel. It stands in an upscale development surrounded by foreign-owned condos and lush golf courses, 7km (4⅓ miles) from Marbella's center beside the road leading to Cádiz. Gambling includes individual games such as French and American roulette, blackjack, punto y banco, craps, and chemin de fer. Entrance to the casino is 5€ ($7.30), and you'll have to present a valid passport. You can dine in the Casino Restaurant before or after gambling. The casino is open daily from 8pm to 4 or 5am.

TORREMOLINOS

This is the most famous—which isn't to say the finest—Mediterranean beach resort in Spain. It's a gathering place for international visitors, a stew of northern Europeans and North and South Americans. The once tranquil fishing village of Torremolinos has been engulfed in concrete-walled resort hotels. Some travelers relax here after whirlwind tours of Spain—the living is easy, the people are in a party mood, and there are no historic monuments to visit. Torremolinos is often a cacophonous refuge for people with nothing more elevated in mind than an all-over tan by Sunday. The sands along the beachfront tend to be gritty and grayish. The best beaches are **El Bajondillo** and **La Carihuela,** the latter bordering an old fishing village. All beaches here are public, but don't expect changing facilities. Many women go topless on the beaches. ***Note:*** If for some reason you find yourself here in December, January, or February, expect many restaurants, hotels, and casinos to be closed.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE Torremolinos is served by the nearby Málaga airport, 14km (8⅔ miles) west. There are frequent rail departures from the terminal at Málaga; for information, contact **RENFE** (✆ **90-224-02-02;** www.renfe.es). Buses run frequently between Málaga and Torremolinos; for information, call ✆ **90-214-31-44.**

VISITOR INFORMATION The **tourist information office** is at Plaza de las Comunidades Autonomas (✆ **95-237-19-09**). It's open daily 8am to 3pm (Mon–Fri 9:30am–2:30pm in winter).

WHERE TO STAY

Meliá Costa del Sol Admittedly nothing memorable, this massive chain hotel provides most everything expected of it. The beach is just across the street and the attached Centro de Talasoterapia purveys that nontiring, nondietary route to robust health so dear to Europeans—water therapy. The facility offers massages, a mud bath, a whirlpool, a sauna, a pool, and a Turkish bath. Forgive the management the stunningly unattractive sand-colored stucco exterior—it's better inside.

Paseo Marítimo 11, 29620 Torremolinos. ✆ **95-238-66-77.** Fax 95-238-64-17. www.meliacostadelsol.solmelia.com. 540 units. 76€–202€ ($110–$293) double; from 150€ ($218) suite. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, MC, V. Free parking. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; 2 bars; outdoor pool; health club and spa; car-rental desk; babysitting; laundry service/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

Parador de Málaga Golf ★ Also known as the Parador de Torremolinos and other variations thereof, this resort hotel was created by the Spanish government. The hacienda-style hotel is flanked by a golf course on one side and the Mediterranean on another. It's 3km (1¾ miles) from the airport, 10km (6¼ miles) from Málaga, and 4km (2½ miles) from Torremolinos. Rooms have balconies with a view of the golfing greens, the circular pool, or the water; some are equipped with Jacuzzis. Long tiled corridors lead to the air-conditioned public areas and graciously furnished lounges.

Carretera de Málaga, Torremolinos, 29080 Apartado 324, Málaga. ✆ **95-238-12-55.** Fax 95-238-89-63. www.parador.es. 60 units. 159€–209€ ($231–$303) double; 239€–272€ ($347–$394) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; outdoor pool; golf course; tennis court; room service; babysitting; laundry service/dry cleaning service. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Sol Aloha Puerto Heralded as one of the most modern hotels along the Costa del Sol when it was built in 1972, this now-aging hotel stands on the seashore in the residential suburb of El Saltillo, on the southwestern edge of Torremolinos. Away from the noise of the town center, it offers spacious rooms, all facing the sea, the Benalmádena marina, or the beach. There's live entertainment most nights in a vast lounge with row after row of tub chairs. During the day, you can take part in activities like darts, shuffleboard, archery, and Spanish classes.

Salvador Allende 45, 29620 Torremolinos. ✆ **800/336-3542** in the U.S., or 95-238-70-66. Fax 95-238-57-01. www.solalohapuerto.solmelia.com. 370 units. 78€–170€ ($113–$247) double. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 15€ ($22). **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; 2 pools; tennis court; car-rental desk; room service; laundry service/dry cleaning service. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Sol Don Pablo ★ Kids Despite its undistinguished exterior, this is one of the most desirable resort hotels in Torremolinos, a minute from the beach and surrounded by its own garden and playground. The surprise is the glamorous interior, which borrows heavily from Moorish palaces and medieval castles. Splashing fountains are found in the arched-tile arcades, and niches with life-size stone statues of nude figures line the grand staircase. The comfortably furnished rooms have sea-view terraces and private bathrooms. Live entertainment is staged inside and out most days and nights, with dancing to a live band as well as a separate disco. A variety of activities, including group games and fitness classes, is offered.

Paseo Marítimo, s/n, 29620 Torremolinos. ✆ **95-238-38-88.** Fax 95-238-37-83. www.solmelia.com. 443 units. 78€–145€ ($113–$210) double. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; indoor pool w/whirlpool; large circular outdoor pool; golf nearby; tennis court; children's program; room service; babysitting; laundry service/dry cleaning service. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, Wi-Fi.

WHERE TO DINE

Antonio ★ SPANISH Facing the quiet west end of La Carihuela beach, across a paved promenade, the glass sides of this large room open wide in summer to accept the sea breezes. On the face, the menu looks indistinguishable from those of hundreds of others along the coast; but the execution and presentation here are decidedly superior to most. The *lenguado al champan,* for one, is a large filet of sole in a champagne sauce scattered with red peppercorns and mushroom bits—simple, pretty, tasty. While meat dishes are available, go for the seafood—that's the Mediterranean out there.

Plaza del Remo 6. ✆ **95-205-07-35.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 12€–32€ ($17–$46). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 1pm–2am. Closed Nov.

Casa Juan SEAFOOD Nautical decor, such as boat models and brass-bordered windows, not to mention a lavish display of lobsters and company near the door, make clear the objectives of this restaurant. With that in mind, you have some difficult choices to make. *Gazpachuelo,* a warm, creamy chowder crowded with fish and vegetables, is a splendid way to begin. Then, perhaps, the *fritura mixta*—lightly fried fish, squid, and other creatures—or paella, or *zarzuela,* a tomato-based fish stew. The restaurant is in a modern building in the old-fashioned satellite hamlet of La Carihuela, west of Torremolinos center. Whenever it gets busy (which is frequently), the staff is inclined to impatience. There are outdoor tables.

San Ginés 20, La Carihuela. ✆ **95-237-35-12.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 10€–42€ ($15–$61); fixed-price menus 30€–84€ ($44–$122). AE, DC, MC, V. Tues–Sun 1–4:30pm and 7pm–midnight. Closed Dec 11–Jan 11.

TORREMOLINOS AFTER DARK

One of the major casinos along the Costa del Sol, **Casino Torrequebrada,** Avenida del Sol s/n, Benalmádena Costa (✆ **95-244-60-00;** www.casinotorrequebrada.net), is on the lobby level of the Hotel Torrequebrada. The Torrequebrada combines a nightclub/cabaret, a restaurant, and an array of tables devoted to blackjack, chemin de fer, punto y banco, and two kinds of roulette. The nightclub presents a flamenco show from Tuesday to Saturday at 10:30pm. Many visitors prefer to just attend the show, paying 35€ ($51), including the first drink. Dinner is served Wednesday to Saturday at 9pm and costs 65€ ($94), which includes admission to the show. The casino is especially lively in midsummer. The casino, its facilities, and its gaming tables are open daily 9pm to 5am. The entrance fee to the gaming rooms is 4€ ($5.80). You need a passport to enter.

18

Sweden

by Darwin Porter & Danforth Prince

Although it was founded 7 centuries ago, Stockholm didn't become Sweden's capital until the mid–17th century. Today it's the capital of a modern welfare state with a strong focus on leisure activities and access to nature only a few minutes away.

Stockholm is the most regal, elegant, and intriguing city in Scandinavia, although don't tell our Danish and Norwegian friends that we said that. Stockholm presides over a country the size of California without the massive population of that state.

Because of Sweden's neutrality in World War II, it was spared from aerial bombardment, so much of what you see today is antique, especially the historical heart, Gamla Stan (Old Town). In contrast, Stockholm is one of the world's leading exponents of modern architecture.

1 Stockholm & Environs

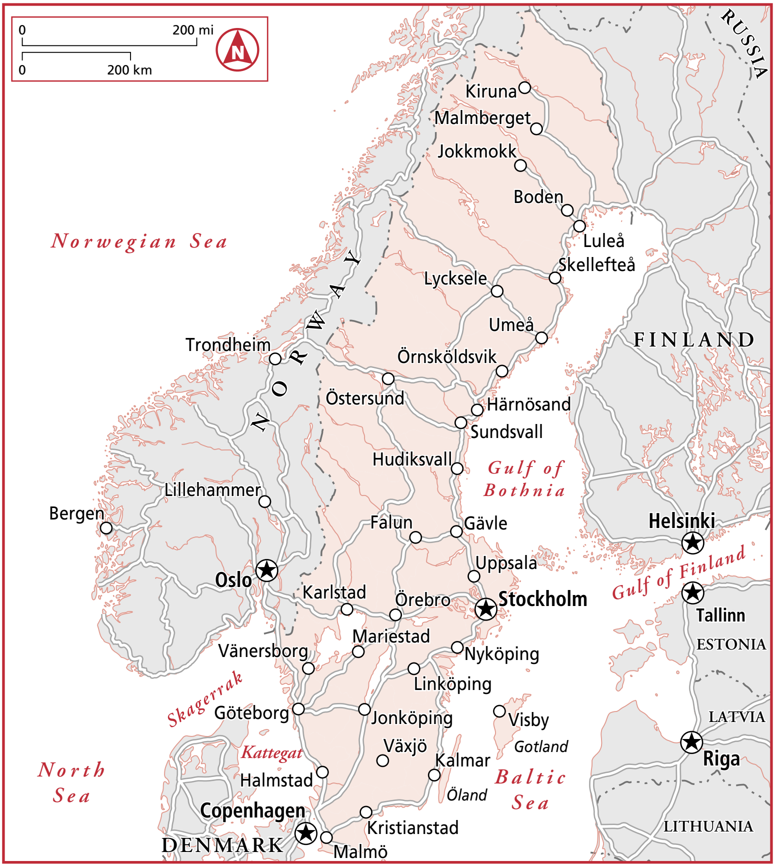
Stockholm is built on 14 islands in Lake Mälaren, marking the beginning of an archipelago of 24,000 islands, skerries, and islets that stretches all the way to the Baltic Sea. It's a city of bridges and islands, towers and steeples, cobblestone squares and broad boulevards, Renaissance splendor and steel-and-glass skyscrapers. The medieval walls of Gamla Stan (Old Town) no longer stand, but the winding streets have been preserved. You can even go fishing in downtown waterways, thanks to a long-ago decree from Queen Christina.

Once an ethnically homogeneous society, Stockholm has experienced a vast wave of immigration in the past several years. More than 10% of Sweden's residents are immigrants or children of immigrant parents, with most coming from other Scandinavian countries. Because of Sweden's strong stance on human rights, the country has also become a major destination for political and social refugees from Africa, the Middle East, and the former Yugoslavia as well.

An important aspect of Stockholm today is a growing interest in cultural activities. Over the past quarter of a century, attendance at live concerts has grown, book sales are up, and more and more people are visiting museums.

ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE **By Plane** You'll arrive at **Stockholm Arlanda Airport** (✆ **08/797-60-00;** www.lfv.se), about 45km (28 miles) north of Stockholm on the E-4 highway. **SAS** (✆ **800/221-2350;** www.flysas.com) is the most common carrier. The fastest and cheapest way to go from the airport to the Central Station in Stockholm is on the **Arlanda Express** (www.arlandaexpress.com) train, which takes only 20 minutes and is covered by the Eurailpass. This high-speed link is the finest option for the



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Bergen
Falun
Gävle
Helsinki
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Oslo
Gulf of Finland
Karlstad
Örebro
Stockholm
Tallinn
Mariestad
ESTONIA
Vänersborg
Nyköping
Linköping
Skagerrak
Göteborg
Jonköping
Visby
LATVIA
Växjö
Gotland
Kattegat
Riga
North Sea
Kalmar
Halmstad
Baltic Sea
Öland
Copenhagen
Kristianstad
LITHUANIA
DENMARK
Malmö

rail traveler. Trains run every 15 minutes daily from 5am to midnight (six times an hour during rush hour Mon–Fri). If you don't have a rail pass, the cost of a one-way ticket is 220SEK ($35/£18) for adults and 110SEK ($18/£9) for seniors and students (those under 7 ride free). For more information, call ✆ **020/22-22-24.** A **bus** (✆ **08/686-10-10;** www.flybussarna.se), called **Flybussarna,** outside the terminal building also goes to the City Terminal, Klarabergsviadukten, in the city center every 10 to 15 minutes (trip time: 40 min.), for 95SEK ($15/£7.50). A taxi to or from the airport is expensive, costing 400SEK to 500SEK ($64–$80/£32–£40) or more. ***Travelers beware:*** Smaller taxi companies may charge up to 695SEK ($111/£56) for the same ride. Be sure to ask in advance what the price is to your destination. For the name of a reputable company, see "Getting Around," below.

By Train The first high-speed train between Stockholm and Oslo has reduced travel time to 4 hours and 50 minutes between these two once remotely linked Scandinavian capitals. Depending on the day, there are two to three trains daily in each direction. This high-speed train now competes directly with air travel. Trains arrive at

Stockholm's **Centralstationen (Central Station)** on Vasagatan 14, in the city center (✆ **07/717-57-575**). There you can make connections to Stockholm's subway, the T-bana. Follow the TUNNELBANA sign.

By Bus Buses arrive at the **Centralstationen** on Vasagatan, and from here you can catch the T-bana (subway) to your Stockholm destination. For information in the Stockholm area, call ✆ **08/440-85-70.** Ticket office hours are Sunday to Friday 9am to 6pm; Saturday 9am to 4pm.

By Car Getting into Stockholm by car is relatively easy because the major national expressway from the south, E-4, joins with the national express highway, E-18, coming in from the west and leads right into the heart of the city. Stay on the highway until you see the turnoff for Central Stockholm or Centrum.

VISITOR INFORMATION **Tourist Offices** The **Tourist Centre** is at Sweden House, Hamngatan 27, off Kungsträdgården (Box 7542), S-103 93 Stockholm (✆ **08/508-31-508**). It's open Monday to Friday 9am to 7pm, Saturday 10am to 5pm, and Sunday 10am to 4pm. Closed December 24, 25, and January 1. Maps and other free materials are available.

Kulturhuset, Sergels Torg 3 (✆ **08/508-314-00;** http://kulturhuset.stockholm.se), distributes information about cultural activities and organizations throughout Sweden and Europe. The largest organization of its kind in Sweden, it was built in 1974 by the city of Stockholm as a showcase for Swedish and international art and theater. There are no permanent exhibits; display spaces hold a changing array of paintings, sculpture, photographs, and live performance groups. Inside are a snack bar, a library (which has newspapers in several languages), a reading room, and a collection of recordings. Admission is 50SEK ($8/£4) for adults, 25SEK ($4/£2) for children 12 to 18, free for children 11 and under. It's open Tuesday to Friday 11am to 6pm, and Saturday and Sunday 11am to 5pm.

Websites Go to the Scandinavian Tourism Board website at **www.goscandinavia.com** for maps, sightseeing information, ferry schedules, and other advice. Other useful sites are **www.stockholmtown.com**, for updated events listings and advice on dining, lodging, and museums, and **www.visitsweden.com**.

CITY LAYOUT On the island of Norrmalm north of the Old Town are Stockholm's major streets, such as **Kungsgatan** (the main shopping street), **Birger Jarlsgatan,** and **Strandvägen** (leading to the Djurgården—home of many of the city's top sights). **Stureplan,** at the junction of the major avenues Kungsgatan and Birger Jarlsgatan, is the city's commercial hub.

About 4 blocks west of the Stureplan rises **Hötorget City,** a landmark of modern urban planning. Its main traffic-free artery is the **Sergelgatan,** a 3-block shoppers' promenade that eventually leads to the modern sculptures in the center of the **Sergels Torg.** About 9 blocks south of the Stureplan, at **Gustav Adolfs Torg,** are the Royal Dramatic Theater and the Royal Opera House. A block east of the flaming torches of the Royal Opera House is the verdant north-south stretch of **Kungsträdgården,** part avenue, part public park, which serves as a popular gathering place for students and as a resting perch for shoppers. Three blocks southeast, on a famous promontory, lie the landmark Grand Hotel and the National Museum.

Kungsholmen, King's Island, is across a narrow canal from the rest of the city, a short walk west of the Central Station. It's visited chiefly by those wanting to tour Stockholm's elegant Stadshuset (City Hall). South of the island where **Gamla Stan**

Value The Stockholm Card

Stockholmskortet (Stockholm Card) is a discount card that allows unlimited travel by bus (except airport buses), subway, and local trains throughout the city and county of Stockholm. Admission to 75 attractions is included in the package. You can also take a sightseeing tour with City Sightseeing, getting on and off as often as you please. Tours are available daily from mid-June to mid-August. The card is good for a 50% discount on a boat trip to the Royal Palace of Drottningholm.

You can buy the card at several places in the city, including the Tourist Centre in Sweden House, HotellCentralen, the Central Station, the tourist information desk in many hotels, City Hall (summer only), the Kaknäs TV tower, SL-Center Sergels Torg (subway entrance level), and Pressbyrån newsstands. The cards are stamped with the date and time at the first use. A 24-hour card costs 330SEK ($53/£27) for adults, 160SEK ($26/£13) for children 7 to 17. Other cards are good for 48 hours, costing adults 460SEK ($74/£37) or children 190SEK ($30/£15). Yet another card, valid for 72 hours, goes for 580SEK ($93/£47) for adults, 220SEK ($35/£18) for children. The card is a bargain if you plan to make a lot of use of it, running around all over the city, with an action-filled agenda. Of course, if you're more of a leisurely touring type, it would be much less of a bargain.

(Old Town) is located—and separated from it by a narrow but much-navigated stretch of water—is **Södermalm,** the southern district of Stockholm. Quieter than its northern counterpart, it's an important residential area with a distinctive flavor of its own.

To the east of Gamla Stan, on a large and forested island completely surrounded by the complicated waterways of Stockholm, is **Djurgården (Deer Park).** The rustically unpopulated summer pleasure ground of Stockholm, it's the site of many of the city's most popular attractions: the open-air museums of Skansen, the *Vasa* man-of-war, Gröna Lund's Tivoli, the Waldemarsudde estate of the "painting prince" Eugen, and the Nordic Museum.

GETTING AROUND Walking is the best way to get to know the city. In any case, you have to explore Gamla Stan on foot, as cars are banned from most of the streets. Djurgården and Skeppsholmen are other popular haunts for strolling.

By Public Transportation You can travel throughout Stockholm county by bus, local train, subway (T-bana), and tram, going from Singö in the north to Nynäshamn in the south. The routes are divided into zones, and one ticket is valid for all types of public transportation in the same zone within 1 hour of being stamped.

Regular Fares The basic fare for public transportation (subway, tram, streetcar, or bus) is 20SEK ($3.20/£1.60). Purchase a ticket for a tram or streetcar at the tollbooth on the subway platform. On buses you pay the driver. To travel in most of Stockholm, all the way to the borders of the inner city, requires two tickets. The maxi-mum ride, to the outermost suburbs, requires five tickets. You can transfer free (or double back and return to your starting point) within 1 hour of your departure. Day passes can be purchased at the SL Center.

Special Discount Tickets Your best transportation bet is a **tourist season ticket.** A 1-day card costs 90SEK ($14/£7) and is valid for 24 hours of unlimited travel by

T-bana (subway), bus, and commuter train within Stockholm. It also includes passage on the ferry to Djurgården. Most visitors will probably prefer the 3-day card for 190SEK ($30/£15), valid for 72 hours in Stockholm and the adjacent county. The 3-day card is also valid for admission to the Kaknäs tower, Gröna Lund Tivoli, and a 50% discount to the Skansen museum. A day card for a child 8 to 17 costs 55SEK ($8.80/£4.40); kids 7 and under travel free with an adult. Tickets are available at tourist information offices, in subway stations, and from most news vendors. Call ✆ **08/689-10-00** for more information.

You can also opt for the **Stockholm Card;** see the box above for full details.

By T-bana (Subway) Subway entrances are marked with a blue T on a white background. Tickets are bought on the platform. For information about schedules, routes, and fares, phone ✆ **08/600-10-00.**

By Bus Where the subway line ends, the bus begins. If the subway doesn't reach an area, a bus will. Many visitors ride the bus to Djurgården (although you can walk), where the T-bana doesn't go. If you're staying long enough to warrant it, you can buy the *SL Stockholmskartan* booklet for 80SEK ($13/£7) at the Tourist Centre at Sweden House, Hamngatan 27, off Kungsträdgården (✆ **08/789-24-95** for a list of bus routes).

By Ferry Ferries from Skeppsbron on Gamla Stan (near the bridge to Södermalm) can take you to Djurgården if you don't want to walk or go by bus. They leave every 20 minutes Monday to Saturday, and about every 15 minutes on Sunday, from 9am to 6pm. The fare is 25SEK ($4/£2) for adults, 20SEK ($3.20/£1.60) for seniors and children 7 to 12. Free for children 6 and under.

By Taxi Taxi fares in Stockholm are the most expensive in the world and vary with different taxi companies. In Stockholm, even a short ride can cost 100SEK ($16/£8). You can hail those that display the sign LEDIG, or you can request one by phone. **Taxi Stockholm** (✆ **08/15-00-00**) is a large, reputable company.

By Car In general, you can park in marked spaces Monday through Friday from 8am to 6pm, but these spaces are hard to come by. Consider leaving your car in a parking garage—there are several in the city center and on the outskirts—and using public transportation. Parking exceptions or rules for specific areas are indicated on signs in the area. At Djurgården, parking is always prohibited, and from April to mid-September, it's closed to traffic Friday to Sunday.

Avis (✆ **07/70-82-00-62**) and **Hertz** (✆ **08/797-99-00**) maintain offices at Arlanda Airport. Hertz's downtown office is at Vasagatan 26 (✆ **08/454-62-50**); Avis's central office is at Vasagatan 10B (✆ **08/20-20-60**). Rentals at both organizations are usually cheaper if you reserve them by phone before leaving North America.

FAST FACTS: Stockholm

American Express For local 24-hour customer service call ✆ **08/429 5429.**

Currency You'll pay your way in Sweden with Swedish krone (singular, krona), or crowns, which is universally abbreviated SEK. These are divided into 100 øre. The exchange rate used throughout this chapter was $1 = 6.44SEK. Note that although Sweden is a member of the E.U., in 2002 it opted not to adopt the euro as its national currency.

Dentists In an emergency, go to **Sct. Eriks Hospital,** Fleminggatan 22 (✆ **08/654-11-17**), open daily from 8am to 5pm.

Doctors For 24-hour emergency medical care, check with **Medical Care Information** (✆ **08/672-10-00**). There's also a private clinic, **City Akuten,** Apelberg Sq. 481, 4th Floor (✆ **08/412-29-61**).

Drugstores One 24-hour pharmacy is **C. W. Scheele,** Klarabergsgatan 64 (✆ **08/454-81-00;** T-bana: Centralen).

Embassies & Consulates The embassy of the **United States** is at Daghammarskjölds väg 31, S-115 89 Stockholm (✆ **08/783-53-00;** T-bana: Östermalmstorg); the embassy of the **United Kingdom** (✆ **08/671-30-00**) is at Skarpügatan 6–8 (mailing address: P.O. Box 27819, S-115 93 Stockholm); the embassy of **Canada** is at Tegelbacken 4, S-103 23 Stockholm (✆ **08/453-30-00;** T-bana: Centralen); the embassy of **Ireland** (✆ **08/661-80-05;** T-bana: Östermalmstorg) is at Östermalmsgatan 97 (mailing address: P.O. Box 10326, S-100 55 Stockholm); the embassy of **Australia** (✆ **08/613-29-00;** T-bana: Hötorget) is at Sergels Torg 12 (mailing address: P.O. Box 7003, S-103 86 Stockholm); the embassy of **South Africa** is at Linnégaten 76, S-115 00 Stockholm (✆ **08/24-39-50;** T-bana: Östermalmstorg); and the General Consulate of **New Zealand** is at Stureplan 2, S-102 27 (✆ **08-506-32-00;** T-bana: Östermalmstorg). Call for hours.

Emergencies Call ✆ **211** or 90-000 for the police, ambulance service, or the fire department.

Internet One of the best places for receiving e-mail or checking messages is **Matrix Web World,** Hötorget X (✆ **08/200-293;** T-bana: Hötorget). It charges only 1SEK (15¢/10p) per minute, and is open Monday to Thursday daily from 10am to midnight, Friday and Saturday 10am to 3am.

Post Office The main post office is at Sveavagen 31 (✆ **08/411-61-17**), open Monday to Friday 9am to 6pm and Saturday 9am to noon.

Taxes Sweden imposes a "value-added tax," called *moms,* on most goods and services. Visitors from North America can beat the tax, however, by shopping in stores with the yellow-and-blue tax-free shopping sign. There are more than 15,000 of these stores in Sweden. To get a refund, your total purchase must cost a minimum of 200SEK ($32/£16). Tax refunds range from 14% to 18%, depending on the amount purchased. Moms begins at 12% on food items, but is 25% for most goods and services. The tax is part of the purchase price, but you can get a tax-refund voucher before you leave the store. When you leave Sweden, take the voucher to a tax-free Customs desk at the airport or train station you're leaving from. They will give you your moms refund (minus a small service charge) before you wing off to your next non-Swedish destination. Two requirements: You cannot use your purchase in Sweden (it should be sealed in its original packaging), and it must be taken out of the country within 1 month after purchase. For more information, call **Global Refunds** at ✆ **20/741741;** www.globalrefunds.com.

Telephone The **country code** for Sweden is **46.** The **city code** for Stockholm is **8;** use this code when you're calling from outside Sweden. If you're within Sweden but not in Stockholm, use **08.** If you're calling within Stockholm, simply leave off the code and dial the regular phone number.

Instructions in English are posted in **public phone boxes,** which can be found on street corners. Very few phones in Sweden are coin operated; most require the purchase of a phone card (called a **Telekort**). You can obtain phone cards at most newspaper stands and tobacco shops.

You can make international calls from the **TeleCenter Office** on the Central Station's ground floor (✆ **08/789-24-56**), open daily from 8am to 9pm, except major holidays. Long-distance rates are posted.

For directory listings or other information for Stockholm or other parts of Sweden only, dial ✆ **118118;** for other parts of Europe, dial ✆ **118119.**

To charge a call to your calling card, dial **AT&T** (✆ 020/799-111); **MCI** (✆ 0-200/895-438); **Sprint** (✆ 020/799-011); **Canada Direct** (✆ 020/799-015); **British Telecom** (✆ 0800/799-144); or **Telecom New Zealand** (✆ 020/799-064).

Tipping Hotels include a 15% service charge in your bill. Restaurants, depending on their class, add 13% to 15% to your tab. Taxi drivers are entitled to 8% of the fare, and cloakroom attendants usually get 75SEK ($12/£6).

WHERE TO STAY

By the standards of many U.S. and Canadian cities, hotels in Stockholm are very expensive. If the prices make you want to cancel your trip, read on. Dozens of hotels offer reduced rates on weekends all year and daily from around mid-June to mid-August. For further information, inquire at a travel agency or the tourist office (see "Visitor Information," above). In the summer, it's best to make reservations in advance just to be on the safe side.

Most medium-priced hotels are in Norrmalm, north of the Old Town, and many of the least expensive lodgings are near the Central Station. There are comparably priced inexpensive accommodations within 10 to 20 minutes of the city, easily reached by subway, streetcar, or bus. We'll suggest a few hotels in the Old Town, but they're limited and more expensive.

Note: In most cases a service charge ranging from 10% to 15% is added to the bill, plus the inevitable 25% moms. Unless otherwise indicated, all our recommended accommodations come with a private bathroom.

IN THE CITY CENTER

Very Expensive

Grand Hotel ★★★ Opposite the Royal Palace, this hotel—a bastion of elite hospitality since 1874 and a member of the Leading Hotels of the World—is the finest in Sweden. By late in 2006, the hotel will have expanded with another 78 new rooms, including 21 suites. Guest rooms come in all shapes and sizes, all elegantly appointed with traditional styling. The priciest rooms overlook the water. The hotel's ballroom is an exact copy of Louis XIV's Hall of Mirrors at Versailles.

Södra Blasieholmshamnen 8, S-103 27 Stockholm. ✆ **800/745-8883** in the U.S. and Canada, or 08/679-35-60. Fax 08/679-35-61. www.grandhotel.se. 300 units. 3,900SEK–6,800SEK ($624–$1,088/£312–£544) double; from 7,500SEK ($1,200/£600) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 395SEK ($63/£32). T-bana: Kungsträdgården. Bus: 46, 55, 62, or 76. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; fitness center; sauna; business center; room service; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C (in some), TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

Tips Native Behavior

Although not as common as it once was, partaking in a Swedish smörgåsbord is the most typical of Swedish culinary delights. Some restaurants and hotels still stage this lavish banquet. The secret of surviving it is to go gracefully to the table that's groaning with heaping platters of food and not overload your plate. You can always return for more of the *gravad lax* (thinly sliced salmon cured in dill) or Swedish meatballs.

And when you've had too much smörgåsbord or other Swedish food delicacies, and joined in too many toasts fueled by the lethal aquavit, you can also always do as the Swedes do and retire to the nearest sauna bath to revitalize yourself for yet more revelry in the evening to come.

Expensive

Berns Hotel ★★ During its 19th-century heyday, this was the most elegant hotel in Sweden, with an ornate Gilded Age interior that was the setting for many a legendary rendezvous. In 1989, following years of neglect, it was rebuilt in the original style, and the restaurant facilities were upgraded. Although the dining and drinking areas are usually crowded with club kids and bar patrons, the guest rooms are soundproof and comfortably isolated from the activities downstairs. Each room has a bathroom sheathed in Italian marble; the bathrooms are small but have neatly maintained shower units. The **Red Room** is the setting and namesake of Strindberg's novel *Röda Rummet.*

Näckströmsgatan 8, S-111 47 Stockholm. ✆ **08/566-322-22.** Fax 08/566-322-01. www.berns.se. 65 units. 2,800SEK–4,100SEK ($448–$656/£224–£328) double; 4,800SEK–6,500SEK ($768–$1,040/£384–£520) suite. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 375SEK ($60/£30). T-bana: Östermalmstorg. **Amenities:** Restaurant; 2 bars; fitness center; sauna; room service; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* TV, minibar, beverage maker, hair dryer, trouser press, Wi-Fi.

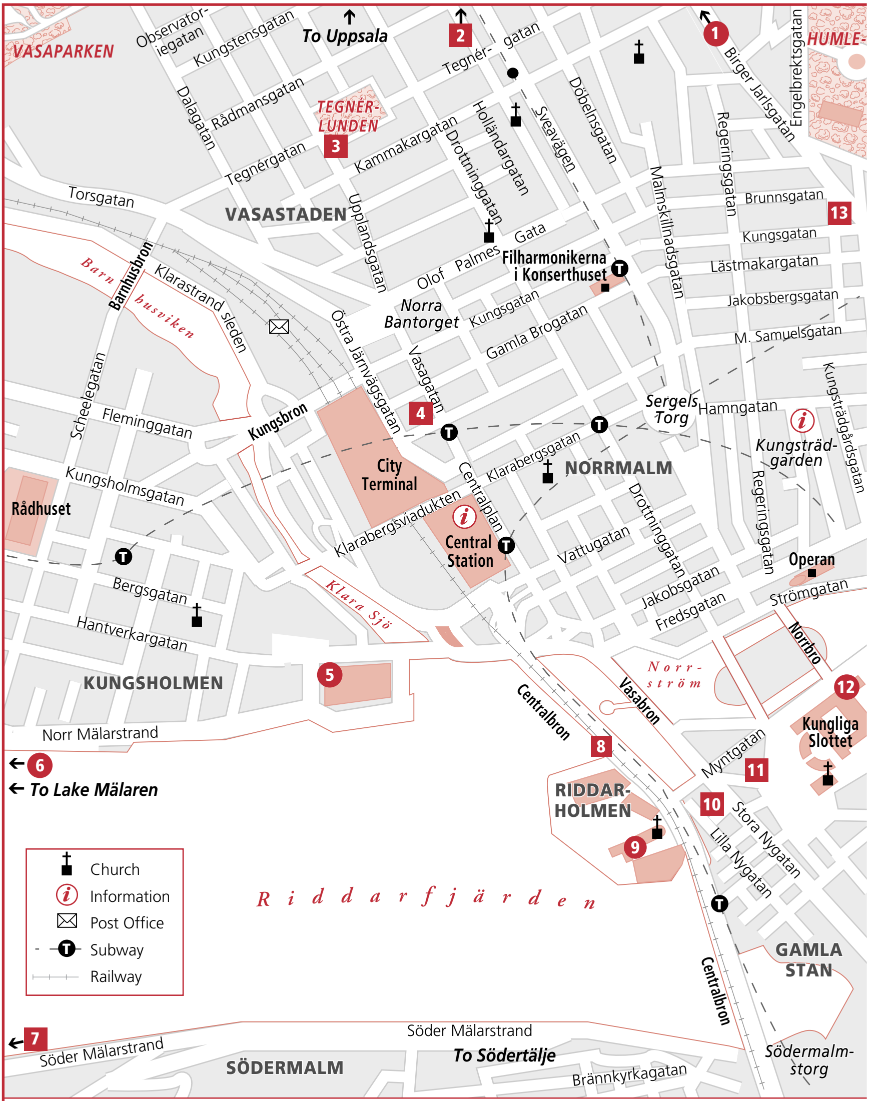
Nordic Hotel ★★ *Finds* There's nothing in Scandinavia quite like this hotel, named "The World's Sexiest Hotel" by *Elle UK* magazine. It's sort of a split personality—its astrological sign is definitely Gemini. You're given a choice of a room of "watery calm" in the 367-room Nordic Sea or "postminimalist luminescence" in the 175-room Nordic Light. Each hotel has its own individual design. Nordic Sea, of course, turns to the ocean for its inspiration and features a 530-liter aquarium. Nordic Light is filled with sun-shaped projections that guarantee a bright light even in the darkest winter days. The suggestive light patterns projecting from the walls re-create the ever-changing patterns of the lights of the north. This hotel is not just about gimmicks, however—it offers real comfort. Nordic Light guest rooms have the best sound insulation in town. Wood, steel, and glass create both clublike and maritime auras in Nordic Sea rooms.

4–7 Vasaplan. ✆ **800/337-4685** in the U.S., or 08/50-56-30-00. Fax 08/50-56-30-40. www.nordicseahotel.se. 367 units in Nordic Sea, 175 units in Nordic Light. 1,550SEK–3,400SEK ($248–$544/£124–£272) double; June 20–Aug 17 and during selected Fri–Sun nights throughout the winter, rates are reduced. AE, DC, MC, V. T-bana: Centralen. **Amenities:** Restaurant; 2 bars; minigym; spa treatments; sauna; steam bath; room service; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* TV, minibar, coffeemaker, hair dryer, iron, safe.

Moderate

Clas på Hörnet ★★ *Finds* Built in the 1730s as a private house, this small, upscale, and charming inn is less than a kilometer (about 1km/½ mile) north of the commercial heart of Stockholm. Its attention to period detail—whose installation was supervised by

Stockholm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Döbelnsgatan
Regeringsgatan
Malmskillnadsgatan
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Torsgatan
VASASTADEN
Upplandsgatan
Olof Palmes Gata
Filharmonikerna i Konserthuset
Kungsgatan
Lästmakargatan
Jakobsbergsgatan
M. Samuelsgatan
Barnhusbron
Barnhusviken
Klarastrandsleden
Östra Järnvägsgatan
Norra Bantorget
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Gamla Brogatan
Vasagatan
Scheelegatan
Fleminggatan
Kungsbron
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Sergels Torg
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Kungsträdgårdsgatan
City Terminal
Centralplan
Klarabergsgatan
NORRMALM
Drottninggatan
Regeringsgatan
Kungsholmsgatan
Rådhuset
Klarabergsviadukten
Central Station
Vattugatan
Operan
Bergsgatan
Jakobsgatan
Fredsgatan
Strömgatan
Hantverkargatan
Klara Sjö
Norrbro
Norrström
Vasabron
5
KUNGSHOLMEN
Centralbron
12
Kungliga Slottet
Norr Mälarstrand
8
Myntgatan
11
6
To Lake Mälaren
RIDDAR-HOLMEN
10
Stora Nygatan
Lilla Nygatan
9
Church
Information
Post Office
Subway
Railway
Riddarfjärden
GAMLA STAN
Centralbron
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Söder Mälarstrand
Söder Mälarstrand
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Brännkyrkagatan
Södermalmstorg

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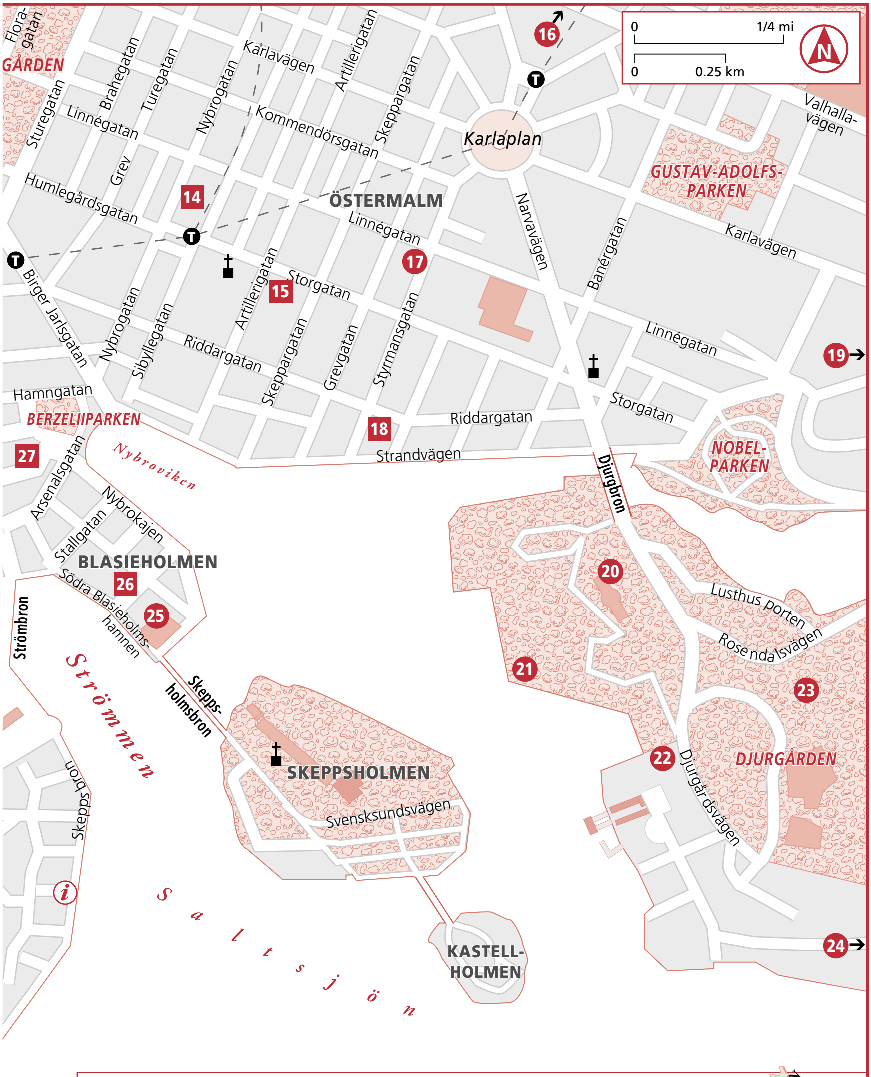
Skansen	**23**
Stadshuset	**5**
Vasa Museum & the Royal Warship Vasa	**21**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Kommendörsgatan
Skeppargatan
Karlaplan
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GUSTAV-ADOLFS-PARKEN
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BERZELIIPARKEN
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Riddargatan
Strandvägen
NOBEL-PARKEN
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Nybroviken
Djurgbron
Arsenalsgatan
Nybrokajen
Stallgatan
BLASIEHOLMEN
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Lusthus porten
Rosendalsvägen
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SWEDEN
Stockholm

the curators of the Stockholm City Museum—lends a distinctive country-inn ambience that's enhanced with bedrooms outfitted in the late 18th-century style of Gustavus III. Each of the bedrooms is outfitted in a different color scheme and motif, and wide floor boards and antiques. Many have four-poster beds.

Surbrunnsgatan 20, S-113 48 Stockholm. ✆ **08/16-51-36.** Fax 08/612-53-15. www.claspahornet.se. 10 units. Sun–Thurs 1,695SEK ($271/£136) double, Fri–Sat 1,195SEK ($191/£96) double; Sun–Thurs 2,395SEK ($383/£192) double suite, Fri–Sat 1,195SEK ($191/£96) double suite. Rates include breakfast. Parking 220SEK ($35/£18). Bus: 46 or 53. **Amenities:** Breakfast room; lounge; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV, minibar, Wi-Fi.

Comfort Hotel Wellington ★ This is a good, safe address—the type of place your great aunt wants you to stay in Stockholm. The nine-story Wellington sounds like something you'd find in London. Built in the late 1950s, it maintains some English decorative touches and lies in a convenient neighborhood. The public rooms are filled with engravings of English hunting scenes and leather-covered chairs. Some of the small but stylish guest rooms overlook a flower-filled courtyard, and units on higher floors have panoramic views.

Storgatan 6, S-11451 Stockholm. ✆ **08/667-09-10.** Fax 08/667-12-54. www.wellington.se. 60 units. Aug–June 3,195SEK–3,295SEK ($511–$527/£256–£264) double; July Fri–Sat 1,495SEK–1,895SEK ($239–$303/£120–£152) double. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 225SEK ($36/£18). T-bana: Östermalmstorg. **Amenities:** Breakfast room; bar; sauna; laundry service; dry cleaning; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* TV, hair dryer, trouser press (in some), iron (in some), Wi-Fi.

Elite Hotel Stockholm Plaza ★ Built on a triangular lot that might remind some visitors of New York's Flatiron Building, this first-class hotel is a well-run and inviting choice in the city center. From the time of its construction in 1903, the building had many uses—a run-down rooming house, private apartments, and offices. The light, fresh guest rooms have firm beds and tiled bathrooms.

Birger Jarlsgatan 29, S-103 95 Stockholm. ✆ **08/566-220-00.** Fax 08/566-220-20. www.elite.se. 151 units. 1,500SEK ($240/£120) double; from 3,000SEK ($480/£240) suite. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 260SEK ($42£21). T-bana: Hötorget or Östermalmstorg. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; dance club; sauna; room service; laundry/dry cleaning service; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer.

Esplanade Hotel ★ This informal hotel, next to the more expensive Diplomat, attracts representatives from the nearby embassies and others who like its comfortable charm and traditional atmosphere. Constructed in 1910, it became a family-style hotel in 1954. Many of the rooms, furnished in old-fashioned style, have minibars. Single rooms are minuscule. Most doubles have double-glazed windows and extralong beds. Four rooms open onto a water view, and the English lounge features a balcony with a view of Djurgården. Only breakfast is served.

Strandvägen 7A, S-114 55 Stockholm. ✆ **08/663-07-40.** Fax 08/662-59-92. www.hotelesplanade.se. 34 units. Mon–Thurs 1,995SEK–2,295SEK ($319–$367/£160–£184) double; Fri–Sun 1,695SEK ($271/£136) double. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking nearby 250SEK ($40/£20). T-bana: Östermalmstorg. Bus: 47 or 69. **Amenities:** Lounge; sauna; laundry/dry cleaning service. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer.

Hotell Örnsköld The five-story building that contains this hotel was built in 1910, and today the nearby Royal Dramatic Theater uses most of it for prop storage and staff housing. The hotel is situated on the second floor. High-ceilinged rooms have simple, contemporary furnishings, and more expensive units are big enough to hold extra beds if necessary.

Nybrogatan 6, S-114 34 Stockholm. ✆ **08/667-02-85.** Fax 08/667-69-91. www.hotelornskold.se. 27 units. 1,295SEK–2,195SEK ($207–$351/£104–£176) double. Rates include breakfast. AE, MC, V. T-bana: Östermalmstorg. **Amenities:** Lounge; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer, iron, Wi-Fi.

Ramada Hotel Tegnérlunden ★ *Kids* In a 19th-century building at the edge of a city park, this hotel has a few public rooms, a lobby, and a bar. The best feature is the tasteful, functionally furnished rooms, many suitable for families. They're blissfully quiet, especially those opening onto the rear. The rooms vary in size and shape, and those we inspected were well maintained. The hotel offers comfort but not a lot of style. The bathrooms equipped with shower units are small but beautifully kept.

Tegnérlunden 8, S-113 59 Stockholm. ✆ **08/545-455-50.** Fax 08/545-455-51. www.hoteltegnerlunden.se. 102 units. 1,480SEK–1,610SEK ($200–$217/£100–£109) double; 2,300SEK ($311/£156) junior suite. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 195SEK ($26/£13) in nearby garage. Bus: 47, 53, or 69. **Amenities:** Bar; sauna; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms; solarium; 1 room for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* TV, hair dryer, iron.

IN GAMLA STAN (OLD TOWN)

Expensive

Lady Hamilton Hotel ★ *Finds* This hotel, which celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2005, consists of three connected buildings, and stands on a quiet street surrounded by antiques shops and restaurants—a very desirable location indeed. Dozens of antiques are scattered among the well-furnished guest rooms. Most rooms have beamed ceilings. The beds (queen-size or double) are of high quality. Top-floor rooms have skylights and memorable views over the Old Town. You'll get a sense of the 1470 origins of this hotel when you use the luxurious sauna, which encompasses the stone-rimmed well that formerly supplied the building's water. The ornate staircase wraps around a large model of a clipper ship suspended from the ceiling.

Storkyrkobrinken 5, S-111 28 Stockholm. ✆ **08/506-401-00.** Fax 08/506-401-10. www.lady-hamilton.se. 34 units, some with shower only. 1,850SEK–1,950SEK ($296–$312/£148–£156) double with shower; 2,650SEK–2,850SEK ($424–$456/£212–£228) double with tub/shower. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 395SEK ($63/£32). T-bana: Gamla Stan. Bus: 48. **Amenities:** Bistro; sauna; room service; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer.

Victory Hotel ★★ A small but stylish hotel, the Victory offers warm, inviting rooms, each named after a prominent sea captain. They sport a pleasing combination of exposed wood, antiques, and 19th-century memorabilia. Many rooms are smoke free, and the beds are comfortable. The hotel rests on the foundations of a 1382 fortified tower. In the 1700s the building's owners buried a massive silver treasure under the basement floor—you can see it in the Stockholm City Museum. From the stairs you'll see one of Sweden's largest collections of 18th-century nautical needlepoint, much of it created by the sailors during their long voyages.

Lilla Nygatan 3–5, S-111 28 Stockholm. ✆ **08/506-400-50.** Fax 08/506-400-10. www.victory-hotel.se. 45 units, some with shower only (single and double rooms). 1,960SEK–2,120SEK ($314–$339/£157–£170) double; 2,360SEK–7,500SEK ($378–$1,200/£189–£600) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 395SEK ($63/£32). T-bana: Gamla Stan. Bus: 48. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; small pool; sauna; room service; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe.

Moderate

Mälardrottningen ★ *Finds* During its heyday, this was the most famous motor yacht in the world, the subject of gossip columns everywhere, thanks to the complicated friendships that developed among the passengers and, in some cases, the crew. Built in 1924 by millionaire C. K. G. Billings, it was the largest (72m/236 ft.) motor yacht in the world, and was later acquired by the Woolworth heiress, Barbara Hutton. The below-deck space originally contained only seven suites. The yacht was converted into a hotel in the early 1980s, and was permanently moored beside a satellite island of Stockholm's Old Town. The cabins are now cramped and somewhat claustrophobic.

Most have bunk-style twin beds. Considering the hotel's conversation-piece status, and its location close to everything in the Old Town, it might be worth an overnight stay.

Riddarholmen, S-111 28 Stockholm. ☎ **08/545-187-80.** Fax 08/24-36-76. www.malardrottningen.se. 60 units. Sun–Thurs 1,250SEK–2,300SEK ($200–$368/£100–£184) double; Fri–Sat 1,050SEK–2,300SEK ($168–$368/£84–£184) double. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 220SEK ($35/£18) per hour. T-bana: Gamla Stan. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; sauna; laundry/dry cleaning service. *In room:* TV, hair dryer.

ON LÅNGHOLMEN

Långholmen Hotel Beginning in 1724, on the little island of Långholmen, this structure was a state penitentiary for women charged with "loose living." The last prisoner was released in 1972, and today it's a newly restored and reasonably priced accommodation that, in addition to comfortable but small rooms, also houses a museum of Sweden's prison history and one of the best restaurants in the country. Instead of a prison induction area, you get the hotel's reception area and a 24-hour snack bar. Accommodations were carved from some 200 cells, creating cramped but serviceable rooms. Eighty-nine of the rooms are rented only to solo travelers, making this one of the best hotels in Stockholm for the single visitor on a budget. Just 13 rooms are large enough to accommodate two persons.

Längholm, S-102 72 Stockholm. ☎ **08/720-85-00.** Fax 08/720-85-75. www.langholmen.com. 102 units. Sun–Thurs 1,435SEK ($230/£115) single, 1,740SEK ($278/£139) double; Fri–Sat 975SEK ($156/£78) single, 1,370SEK ($219/£110) double. Extra bed 250SEK ($40/£20) per person. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. T-bana: Hornstul. Bus: 4, 40, or 66. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; laundry/dry cleaning service; all nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* TV, hair dryer.

IN SÖDERMALM

Rival Hotel ★★ *Finds* Stockholm's first boutique hotel is a little charmer, and it's also home to a restaurant, bar, and bistro, and even a cinema, cocktail lounge, cafe, and a bakery. A partnership with Sony allowed the hotel to get 32-inch plasma TVs and DVD players in all of its rooms and to install a wireless communication system that runs throughout the building. The art deco designs and film theme combine harmoniously. The hotel's owner, Benny Anderson, wanted to re-create the aura of the Aston Hotel, which opened on this site in the 1930s. Some of the bedrooms are small, others much larger, and some have a French-style balcony. Movie scenes can be seen above the bed in each room.

Mariatorget 3, S-118 91 Stockholm. ☎ **08/545-78900.** Fax 08/545-78924. www.rival.se. 99 units. Sun–Thurs 2,190SEK–3,090SEK ($350–$494/£175–£247) double; Fri–Sat 1,390SEK–2,890SEK ($222–$462/£111–£231) double. AE, DC, MC, V. T-bana: Mariatorget. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bistro; cafe; bar; 24-hr. room service. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

WHERE TO DINE

IN THE CITY CENTER

Very Expensive

If you're into gourmet and ethnic foods, stop at **Hötorgshallen** (www.hotorgshallen.se; T-bana: Hötorget), an indoor market that contains 32 cafes and stores. Food specialties from all over the world are sold here, including delectable lamb, bitter orange marmalade, fresh shellfish, rare jams (some from Nordic climes), cheeses, and all kinds of meats. The market dates from the 13th century, although the present building is more recent. It's an ideal place to grab something to eat and take in the cultural diffusion of Sweden.

Operakällaren (The Opera House) ★★★ FRENCH/SWEDISH Opposite the Royal Palace, this is the most famous and unashamedly luxurious restaurant in Sweden. Its elegant decor and style are reminiscent of a royal court banquet. The service and house specialties are impeccable. Many come here for the elaborate fixed-price menus; others prefer the classic Swedish dishes or the modern French ones. A house specialty that's worth the trip is the platter of northern delicacies, with everything from smoked eel to smoked reindeer, along with Swedish red caviar. Salmon and game, including grouse from the northern forests, are prepared in various ways. There's a cigar room, too.

Operahuset, Kungsträdgården. ☎ **08/676-58-01** or 08/676-58-00. Reservations required. Main courses 210SEK–450SEK ($34–$72/£17–£36); 4-course fixed-price menu 975SEK ($156/£78); 7-course *menu dégustation* with wine 1,800SEK ($288/£144). AE, DC, MC, V. Tues–Sat 6–10pm. Closed July. T-bana: Kungsträdgården.

Paul & Norbert ★★★ CONTINENTAL In a patrician residence dating from 1873, adjacent to the Hotel Diplomat, this is the finest and most innovative restaurant in Stockholm. Seating only 30 people, it has vaguely Art Deco decor, beamed ceilings, and dark paneling. To start, they prepare a tantalizing terrine of scallops in saffron sauce. The foie gras is the finest in town. Perfectly prepared main dishes include sautéed medallion of fjord salmon, scallops, and scampi in lobster sauce; crisp breast of duck with caramelized orange sauce; and juniper-stuffed noisettes of reindeer immersed in caraway sauce with portobello mushrooms.

Strandvägen 9. ☎ **08/663-81-83.** Reservations required. Main courses 245SEK–310SEK ($39–$50/£20–£25); 5-course meal 800SEK ($128/£64), 9-course meal 1,100SEK ($176/£88). AE, DC, MC, V. Mid-Aug to June Tues–Fri noon–2pm; Mon–Sat 6–11pm. Closed Dec 24–Jan 6. T-bana: Östermalmstorg.

Expensive

Franska Matsalen (French Dining Room) ★★ FRENCH Widely acclaimed as one of the greatest restaurants in Stockholm, this elegant establishment is on the street level of the city's finest hotel. The dining room is appointed with polished mahogany, ormolu, and gilt accents under an ornate plaster ceiling. Tables on the enclosed veranda overlook the Royal Palace and the Old Town. Begin with a cannelloni of foie gras with crepes, or perhaps mousseline of scallops with sevruga caviar. Main dishes include seared sweetbreads served with artichokes; *langoustines* (prawns) and frogs' legs with broad beans; and veal tartare with caviar. Fresh Swedish salmon is also featured. The chefs—highly trained professionals working with the finest ingredients—have pleased some of Europe's more demanding palates.

In the Grand Hotel, Södra Blasieholmshamnen 8. ☎ **08/679-35-84.** Reservations required. Main courses 400SEK–500SEK ($64–$80/£32–£40); 6-course meal 1,300SEK ($48/£24). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat 6–11pm. T-bana: Kungsträdgården. Bus: 46, 55, 62, or 76.

Wedholms Fisk ★★★ SWEDISH/FRENCH This is one of the classic—and one of the best—restaurants in Stockholm. It has no curtains in the windows and no carpets, but the display of modern paintings by Swedish artists is riveting. You might begin with marinated herring with garlic and bleak roe, or tartare of salmon with salmon roe. The chef has reason to be proud of such dishes as perch poached with clams and saffron sauce, prawns marinated in herbs and served with Dijon hollandaise, and grilled filet of sole with Beaujolais sauce. The cuisine is both innovative and traditional—for example, chèvre mousse accompanies simple tomato salad, but the menu also features homey, comforting cream-stewed potatoes.

Nybrokajen 17. ✆ **08/611-78-74.** Reservations required. Main courses 75SEK–225SEK ($12–$36/£6–£18) lunch, 265SEK–535SEK ($42–$86/£21–£43) dinner. AE, DC, MC, V. Mon 11:30am–3pm and 6–11pm; Tues–Fri 11:30am–11pm; Sat 5–11pm. In July, only open for dinner. T-bana: Östermalmstorg.

Moderate

Bakfickan ★ *Finds* SWEDISH Tucked away behind the Operakällaren, the "Back Pocket" is a chic place to eat for a moderate price. It shares a kitchen with its glamorous neighbor Operakällaren (see above), but its prices are more bearable. Main dishes may include salmon in several varieties, including boiled with hollandaise and salmon roe. You might also try beef Rydberg (thinly sliced tenderloin). In season you can order reindeer and elk. In the summer, nothing's finer than the rich ice cream with a sauce of Arctic cloudberries. Many patrons like to dine at the horseshoe-shaped bar.

Jakobs Torg 12. ✆ **08/676-58-09.** Reservations not accepted. Main courses 98SEK–245SEK ($16–$39/£8–£20). AE, DC, MC, V. Aug–June Mon–Sat noon–12:30am. T-bana: Kungsträdgården.

Eriks Bakfica *Value* SWEDISH Although other restaurants in Stockholm bear the name Eriks, this one is relatively inexpensive and offers particularly good value. Established in 1979, it features a handful of Swedish dishes from the tradition of *husmanskost* (wholesome home cooking). A favorite opener is toast Skagen, with shrimp, dill-flavored mayonnaise, spices, and bleak roe. There's also a daily choice of herring appetizers. Try the tantalizing "archipelago stew," a ragout of fish prepared with tomatoes and served with garlic mayonnaise. Marinated salmon is served with hollandaise sauce. You might also try Eriks's cheeseburger with the special secret sauce, but you have to ask for it—you won't find it on the menu.

Fredrikshovsgatan 4. ✆ **08/660-15-99.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 120SEK–295SEK ($19–$47/£10–£24). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri 11:30am–midnight; Sat–Sun 5–11pm. Bus: 47.

KB Restaurant SWEDISH/CONTINENTAL A traditional artists' rendezvous in the center of town, KB Restaurant features good Swedish food as well as Continental dishes. Fish dishes are especially recommended. You might begin with salmon trout roe and Russian caviar, followed by boiled turbot or lamb roast with stuffed zucchini in thyme-flavored bouillon. Dishes usually come with aromatic, freshly baked sourdough bread. Desserts include sorbets with fresh fruits and berries, and a heavenly lime soufflé with orange-blossom honey. There's also a relaxed and informal bar.

Smålandsgatan 7. ✆ **08/679-60-32.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 170SEK–295SEK ($27–$47/£14–£24); fixed-price meals 295SEK ($47/£24) lunch, 400SEK–480SEK ($64–$77/£32–£39) dinner. AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri 11:30am–11:30pm; Sat 5–11pm. Closed June 23–Aug 7. T-bana: Östermalmstorg.

Lisa Elmquist ★ *Kids* SEAFOOD Under a soaring roof, amid the food stalls of Stockholm's produce market (the Östermalms Saluhall), you'll find this likable cafe and oyster bar. Because of its good, affordable food, this is the most popular choice for Stockholm families visiting the market. It's owned by one of the city's largest fish distributors, so its menu varies with the catch. Some patrons come here just for shrimp with bread and butter. Typical dishes include fish soup, salmon cutlets, and sautéed filet of lemon sole. It's not the most refined cuisine in town—it's an authentic "taste of Sweden," done exceedingly well.

Östermalms Saluhall, Nybrogatan 31. ✆ **08/553-404-10.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 70SEK–500SEK ($11–$80/£6–£40). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri 11am–6pm; Sat 10am–3:30pm. T-bana: Östermalmstorg.

Sturehof ★ SWEDISH This is the most classic French-style brasserie in all of Stockholm, and it's been going strong since the day it opened in 1897. It remains the best spot in central Stockholm for dining at almost any time of the day or night. In summer you can sit out on the terrace and watch Stockholmers pass by. Or else you can chill out in the Upper lounge, with the sweet young things. The dining room is more formal and elegant with uniformed waiters and stiffly pressed white linen tablecloths.

Seafood and shellfish have been a century-long tradition here, and so it continues to this day. Expect a daily changing menu of husmanskost. Or, else try the locally famous *sotare* (small grilled Baltic herring). This is also one of the few places around still serving boiled salt veal tongue, a local delicacy.

Stureplan 2. ✆ **08-440-57-30.** Main courses 135SEK–425SEK ($22–$68/£11–£34). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri 11am-2am; Sat noon–2am; Sun 1pm–2am. T-bana: Östermalmstorg.

Prinsens SWEDISH A 2-minute walk from Stureplan, this artists' haunt has become increasingly popular with foreign visitors. It has been serving people since 1897. You can dine outdoors in summer. The fresh, flavorful cuisine is basically Swedish food prepared in a conservative French style. It includes such traditional Swedish dishes as veal patty with homemade lingonberry preserves, sautéed fjord salmon, and roulades of beef. For dessert, try the homemade vanilla ice cream. Later in the evening, the restaurant becomes something of a drinking club.

Mäster Samuelsgatan 4. ✆ **08/611-13-31.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 199SEK–279SEK ($32–$45/ £16–£23). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri 11:30am–11pm; Sat 1–11pm; Sun 5–10pm. T-bana: Östermalmstorg.

IN GAMLA STAN (OLD TOWN)

Expensive

Den Gyldene Freden ★ SWEDISH "Golden Peace" is said to be Stockholm's oldest tavern. The restaurant opened in 1722 in a structure built the year before. The Swedish Academy owns the building, and members frequent the place every Thursday night. The cozy dining rooms are named for Swedish historical figures who were patrons. Today it's popular with artists, lawyers, and poets. You get good traditional Swedish cooking, especially fresh Baltic fish and game from the forests. Herring is a favorite appetizer. More imaginative appetizers include a pan-seared foie gras with red-wine glazed chicory and brown sugar–fried pear, and smoked salmon with bleak roe, corn cream, and horse radish dressing. Notable main courses are grilled pike perch with crayfish bouillabaisse, and loin of reindeer with a bean and bacon casserole. A particular delight is homemade duck sausage with three kinds of mushrooms in black-pepper sauce. Want something different for dessert? How about cloudberry soup with caramelized crouton and vanilla ice cream?

Österlånggatan 51. ✆ **08/24-97-60.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 135SEK–335SEK ($22–$54/£11–£27). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri 5pm–midnight; Sat 1pm–midnight. Dec 1–21 Mon–Sat noon–3pm. Closed Dec 26–Jan 2. T-bana: Gamla Stan.

Inexpensive

Cattelin Restaurant *Value* SWEDISH This restaurant on a historic street opened in 1897 and continues to serve fish and meat in a boisterous, convivial setting. Don't expect genteel service—the clattering of china can sometimes be almost deafening, but few of the regular patrons seem to mind. First-rate menu choices include various preparations of beef, salmon, trout, veal, and chicken, which frequently make up the daily specials often preferred by lunch patrons. This restaurant has survived wars, disasters, and changing food tastes, so it must be doing something right. It remains a sentimental favorite—and not just for the memories. In a city where people have been known to faint when presented with their dining tabs, it has always been a good, reasonably priced choice.

Storkyrkobrinken 9. ✆ **08/20-18-18.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 159SEK–210SEK ($25–$34/£13–£17); *dagens* (daily) menu 75SEK ($12/£6). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri 11am–10pm; Sat noon–3pm. T-bana: Gamla Stan.

IN DJURGÅRDEN

Ulla Winbladh ★ SWEDISH Since it opened in 1994, this restaurant has enjoyed an explosion of publicity, which has impressed even the most jaded of Stockholm's restaurant aficionados. It's in a white stone structure, built as part of Stockholm's International Exposition of 1897. There's a large dining room decorated with works by Swedish artists, and a summer-only outdoor terrace laced with flowering plants. The menu focuses on conservative Swedish cuisine, all impeccably prepared. In 1996 the king presented a medal to chef Emel Ahalen for his proficiency in preparing Swedish cuisine. Menu choices include fried venison with scorzonova, and fried pigeon with apples. Fish selections might be platters of poached halibut with Parmesan cheese sauce; divine turbot with bordelaise; and salmon with scampi and pumpkin, avocado, and cabbage salad; and others that vary with the season.

Rosendalsvägen 8. ✆ **08/534-89-701.** Reservations required. Main courses 110SEK–255SEK ($18–$41/£9–£21); 2-course business lunch 255SEK ($41/£21). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon 11:30am–10pm; Tues–Fri 11:30am–11pm; Sat noon–11pm; Sun noon–10pm. Bus: 47 or 69.

EXPLORING STOCKHOLM

Everything from the *Vasa* Ship Museum to the changing of the guard at the Royal Palace to the Gröna Tivoli amusement park will keep you intrigued. Even just window-shopping for well-designed Swedish crafts can be a great way to spend an afternoon.

SIGHTSEEING SUGGESTIONS FOR FIRST-TIME VISITORS

If You Have 1 Day Take a ferry to Djurgården to visit the **Royal Warship *Vasa,*** Stockholm's most famous attraction, and to explore the open-air **Skansen** folk museum. In the afternoon, walk through **Gamla Stan (Old Town)** and have dinner at one of its restaurants.

If You Have 2 Days On day 2, get up early and visit the **Kaknästornet** TV tower for a panoramic view of Stockholm, its many islands, and the archipelago. Go to the **Nordic Museum** for insight into 5 centuries of life in Sweden. After lunch, visit the **Millesgården** of Lidingü, the sculpture garden and former home of Carl Milles.

If You Have 3 Days Spend your third morning walking through the center of Stockholm and doing some shopping. At noon (1pm on Sun), return to Gamla Stan to see the **changing of the guard at the Royal Palace.** View this French-inspired building that has been the residence of Swedish kings for more than 700 years. In the afternoon, see the attractions at the **National Museum.**

If You Have 4 or 5 Days On day 4, take one of the many tours of the **Stockholm archipelago.** Return to Stockholm and spend the evening at the **Gröna Tivoli** amusement park on Djurgården. On your last day, visit **Drottningholm Palace** and its 18th-century theater. In the afternoon, explore the university town of **Uppsala,** north of Stockholm, easily reached by public transportation.

THE TOP ATTRACTIONS

At Djurgården

Nordiska Museet ★★ This museum houses an impressive collection of implements, costumes, and furnishings of Swedish life from the 1500s to the present. The highlights are the period costumes ranging from matching garters and ties for men to purple flowerpot hats from the 1890s. In the basement is an extensive exhibit of the tools of the Swedish fishing trade, plus relics from nomadic Lapps.

Djurgårdsvägen 6–16, Djurgården. ✆ **08/519-54-60** or 08/457-06-60. www.nordiskamuseet.se. Admission 60SEK ($9.60/£4.80) adults, 50SEK ($8/£4) seniors, free for children 18 and under. Mon–Fri 10am–4pm; Sat–Sun 11am–5pm. Bus: 44 or 47.

Prins Eugens Waldemarsudde ★★ This once-royal residence is today an art gallery and a memorial to one of the most famous royal artists in recent history, Prince Eugen (1865–1947). The youngest of King Oscar II's four children, he is credited with making innovative contributions to the techniques of Swedish landscape paintings, specializing in depictions of his favorite regions in central Sweden. Among his most visible works are the murals on the inner walls of the Stadshuset.

Prins Eugens Väg 6. ✆ **08/545-837-00.** www.waldemarsudde.se. Admission 85SEK ($14/£7) adults, 65SEK ($10/£5) seniors and students, free for children 17 and under. Tues–Sun 11am–5pm (until 8pm Thurs). Bus: 47 to the end of the line.

Skansen ★★★ Often called "Old Sweden in a Nutshell," this 35-hectare (86-acre) open-air museum and zoological park, near Gröna Lund's Tivoli, contains more than 150 dwellings, most from the 18th and 19th centuries. Exhibits range from a windmill to a manor house to a complete town quarter. Browsers can explore the old workshops and see where the early book publishers, silversmiths, and pharmacists plied their trade. Handcrafts (glass blowing, for example) are demonstrated here, along with peasant crafts like weaving and churning. Folk dancing and open-air symphonic concerts are also featured.

Djurgården 49–51. ✆ **08/442-80-00.** www.skansen.se. Depending on time of day, day of the week, and season, admission is 65SEK–120SEK ($10–$19/£5–£10) adults, 30SEK–50SEK ($4.80–$8/£2.40–£4) children 6–15, free for children 5 and under. Historic buildings Jan–Apr daily 11am–4pm; May daily 10am–8pm; June–Aug daily 10am–10pm; Sept 10am–4pm; Oct–Dec Mon–Fri 10am–3pm (until 4pm Sat–Sun). Bus: 47 from central Stockholm. Ferry from Slussen.

Vasa Museum & the Royal Warship *Vasa* ★★★ This 17th-century man-of-war is the number-one attraction in Scandinavia—and for good reason. Housed in a museum specially constructed for it at Djurgården near Skansen, the *Vasa* is the world's oldest identified and complete ship. In 1628, on its maiden voyage and in front of thousands of horrified onlookers, the ship capsized and sank to the bottom of Stockholm harbor. When it was salvaged in 1961, more than 4,000 coins, carpenters' tools, and other items of archaeological interest were found onboard. Best of all, 97% of the ship's 700 original sculptures were retrieved. Carefully restored and preserved, they're back aboard the ship, which looks stunning now that it once again carries grotesque faces, lion masks, fish-shaped bodies, and other carvings, some with their original paint and gilt.

Galärvarvsvägen, Djurgården. ✆ **08/519-548-00.** www.vasamuseet.se. Admission 95SEK ($15/£7.50) adults, 40SEK ($6.40/£3.20) seniors and students, free for children 17 and under. Wed 5–8pm 60SEK ($9.60/£4.80). June 10–Aug 20 daily 10am–7pm; Aug 21–June 9 Wed 10am–8pm, Thurs–Tues 10am–5pm. Closed Jan 1, May 1, Dec 23–25, and Dec 31. Bus: 44, 47, or 69. Ferry from Slussen year-round, from Nybroplan in summer only.

Moments The Changing of the Royal Guard

It may not have the pomp of a similar show in London, but the **Changing of the Royal Guard** in Stockholm at least provides a photo op. In summer you can watch the parade of the military guard daily. In winter it takes place on Wednesday and Sunday; on the other days there's no parade, but you can see the changing of the guard. For information on the time of the march, ask at the Tourist Centre in Sweden House. The changing of the guard takes place June to August, Monday to Saturday 12:15pm, Sunday 1:15pm; April, September, and October, Wednesday and Saturday 12:15pm, Sunday 1:15pm; November to March, Wednesday and Saturday noon, Sunday 1pm; May, Monday to Saturday 12:15pm, Sunday 1:15pm, in front of the Royal Palace.

On Gamla Stan & Neighboring Islands

Kungliga Slottet (Royal Palace) & Museum ★★ Severely dignified, even cold looking on the outside, this palace has a lavish interior designed in the Italian baroque style. Kungliga Slottet is one of the few official residences of a European monarch that's open to the public. Although the Swedish king and queen prefer to live at Drottningholm, this massive 608-room showcase, built between 1691 and 1754, remains their official address. The most popular rooms are the **State Apartments** ★★; look for at least three magnificent baroque ceiling frescoes and fine tapestries. In the building's cellar is the **Stattkammaren (Treasury)** ★★, the repository for Sweden's crown jewels. Most intriguing to any student of war and warfare is the **Royal Armoury,** whose entrance is on the castle's rear side, at Slottsbacken 3. Gustavus III's collection of sculpture from the days of the Roman Empire can be viewed in the **Antikmuseum (Museum of Antiquities).**

Kungliga Husgerådskammaren. ☎ **08/402-61-30** for Royal Apartments and Treasury, 08/402-61-30 for the Skattkammaren, or 08/402-61-30 for Museum of Antiquities. www.royalcourt.se. Royal Apartments 110SEK ($18/£9) adults, 35SEK ($5.60/£2.80) seniors and students, free for children 6 and under; Museum of Antiquities 50SEK ($8/£4) adults, 35SEK ($5.60/£2.80) seniors and students, free for ages 18 and under; Treasury 90SEK ($15/£7.50) adults, 35SEK ($5.60/£2.80) seniors and students, free for children 6 and under. Combination ticket to all parts of palace 130SEK ($21/£11) adults, 65SEK ($10/£5) seniors, students, and children. Apartments and Treasury Feb–May 14 Tues–Sun noon–3pm; May 15–30 and Sept 1–14 daily 10am–4pm; June–Aug daily 10am–4pm; closed during government receptions. Royal Armory Sept–May Tues–Sun 11am–4pm (closes at 8pm on Thurs); June–Aug daily 10am–5pm. Museum of Antiquities May 15–May 31 and Sept 1–14 daily 10am–4pm, June–Aug daily 10am–5pm. T-bana: Gamla Stan. Bus: 43, 46, 59, or 76.

Riddarholm Church ★ The second-oldest church in Stockholm is on the tiny island of Riddarholmen, next to Gamla Stan. It was founded in the 13th century as a Franciscan monastery. Almost all the royal heads of state are entombed here, except for Christina, who is buried in Rome. There are three principal royal chapels, including one, the Bernadotte wing, that belongs to the present ruling family.

Riddarholmen. ☎ **08/402-61-30.** Admission 30SEK ($4.80/£2.40) adults, 10SEK ($1.60/80p) students, children under 7 free. May 15–Sept 14 daily 10am–4pm. T-bana: Gamla Stan.

In the City Center

Historiska Museet (Museum of National Antiquities) ★★ If you're interested in Swedish history, especially the Viking era, here you'll find the nation's finest repository of relics left by those legendary conquerors who once terrorized Europe. Many relics have been unearthed from ancient burial sites. The collection of artifacts ranges from prehistoric to medieval times, including Viking stone inscriptions and 10th-century coins, silver and gold jewelry, large ornate charms, elaborate bracelet designs found nowhere else in the world, and a unique neck collar from Färjestaden.

Narvavägen 13–17. ✆ **08/519-556-00.** www.historiska.se. Free admission. May 2–Sept 30 daily 10am–5pm; Oct 1–Apr 30 daily 11am–5pm (until 8pm on Thurs). T-bana: Karlaplan or Östermalmstorg. Bus: 44, 47, 56, 69, or 76.

Moderna Museet (Museum of Modern Art) ★ Renovated in 2004, this museum focuses on contemporary works by Swedish and international artists, including kinetic sculptures. Highlights are a small but good collection of Cubist art by Picasso, Braque, and Léger; Matisse's *Apollo* decoupage; the famous *Enigma of William Tell* by Salvador Dalí; and works by Brancusi, Max Ernst, Giacometti, and Arp, among others.

Klaravergsviadukten 61. ✆ **08/5195-5200.** www.modernamuseet.se. Admission 80SEK ($13/£6.50) adults, 60SEK ($9.60/£4.80) children 19 and under. Tues–Wed 10am–8pm; Thurs–Sun 10am–6pm. T-bana: Kungsträdgården. Bus: 65.

Nationalmuseum (National Museum of Art) ★★ At the tip of a peninsula, a short walk from the Royal Opera House and the Grand Hotel, is Sweden's state treasure house of paintings and sculpture, one of the oldest museums in the world. The first floor is devoted to applied arts (silverware, handcrafts, porcelain, furnishings), but first-time visitors may want to head directly to the second floor to the painting collection with works by Rembrandt and Rubens, Lucas Cranach's most amusing *Venus and Cupid,* and a rare collection of mid-16th-century Russian icons. The most important room in the gallery has one whole wall devoted to Rembrandt, and features his *Portrait of an Old Man, Portrait of an Old Woman,* and *Kitchen Maid.*

Södra Blasieholmshamnen. ✆ **08/519-543-00.** www.nationalmuseum.se. Admission 80SEK ($13/£6.50) adults, 60SEK ($9.60/£4.80) children 19 and under. Additional fees for special exhibitions. Tues and Thurs 11am–8pm; Wed and Fri–Sun 11am–5pm. T-bana: Kungsträdgården. Bus: 46, 62, 65, or 76.

Stadshuset (Stockholm City Hall) ★★ Built in what is called the "National Romantic Style," the Stockholm City Hall, on the island of Kungsholmen, is one of Europe's finest examples of modern architecture. Designed by Ragnar Ostberg, the red-brick structure is dominated by a lofty square tower, topped by three gilt crowns and the national coat of arms. The Nobel Prize banquet is held annually in the Blue Hall. About 18 million pieces of gold and colored mosaics made of special glass cover the walls, and the southern gallery contains murals by Prince Eugen, the painter prince.

Hantverksgatan 1. ✆ **08/508-290-58.** www.stockholm.se/cityhall. Admission 60SEK ($9.60/£4.80) adults, 50SEK ($8/£4) students and seniors, 30SEK ($4.80/£2.40) children 12–18, free for children 11 and under. Tower additional 20SEK ($3.20/£1.60). May–Sept daily 10am–4:15pm. City Hall tours (subject to change) Sept–May at 10am and noon; several times a day in summer (call or check the website for details). T-bana: Centralen or Rådhuset. Bus: 3 or 62.

JUST OUTSIDE STOCKHOLM

Drottningholm Palace ★★★ Conceived as the centerpiece of Sweden's royal court, this regal complex of stately buildings sits on an island in Lake Mälaren. Dubbed the "Versailles of Sweden," Drottningholm (Queen's Island) lies about 11km (6¾ miles) west of Stockholm. The palace, loaded with courtly art and furnishings, sits amid fountains and parks, and still functions as one of the royal family's official residences.

On the grounds is one of the most perfectly preserved 18th-century theaters in the world, **Drottningholm Court Theater** (✆ **08/759-04-06;** www.dtm.se). Between June and August, 30 performances are staged. Devoted almost exclusively to 18th-century opera, it seats only 450 for one of the most unusual entertainment experiences in

Sweden. Many performances sell out far in advance to season-ticket holders. The theater can be visited only as part of a guided tour, which focuses on the original sets and stage mechanisms. For tickets to the evening performances, which range in cost from 170SEK to 610SEK ($27–$98/£14–£49), call ✆ **08/660-82-25.**

Ekerö, Drottningholm. ✆ **08/402-62-80.** Palace 70SEK ($11/£5.50) adults, 35SEK ($5.60/£2.80) students and persons under 26, free for children 6 and under; theater guided tour 60SEK ($9.60/£4.80) adults, 40SEK ($6.40/£3.20) students, free 16 and under. Palace Oct–Apr Sat–Sun noon–3pm; May–Aug daily 10am–4:30pm; Sept daily noon–3pm. Theater guided tours May noon–4:30pm; June–Aug 11am–4:30pm, Sept 1–3:30pm; Oct–Apr Sat–Sun noon, 1pm, and 2pm. T-bana: Brommaplan, and then bus 301 or 323 to Drottningholm or 177 or 178. Ferry from the dock near City Hall.

Millesgården ★★ On the island of Lidingö, northeast of Stockholm, is Carl Milles's former villa and sculpture garden beside the sea, now a museum. Many of his best-known works are displayed here (some are copies), as are works of other artists. Milles (1875–1955), who relied heavily on mythological themes, was Sweden's most famous sculptor.

Carl Milles Väg 2, Lidingö. ✆ **08/446-75-90.** www.millesgarden.se. Admission 80SEK ($13/£6.50) adults; 60SEK ($9.60/£4.80) seniors, students, and children under 19; free for children 6 and under. May 15–Sept 30 daily 11am–5pm (Thurs closes at 8pm); Oct 1–May 14 Tues–Sun noon–5pm (Thurs closes at 8pm). T-bana: Ropsten, and then bus to Torsviks Torg or train to Norsvik.

A VIEW ON HIGH

Kaknästornet (Kaknäs Television Tower) *Moments* Situated in the northern district of Djurgården is the tallest constructed structure in Scandinavia—a radio and television tower that stands 155m (509 ft.) high. Two elevators take visitors to an observation platform, where you can see everything from the cobblestone streets of Gamla Stan (Old Town) to the city's modern concrete-and-glass structures and the archipelago beyond.

Mörkakroken. ✆ **08/667-21-05.** Admission 30SEK ($4.80/£2.40) adults, 15SEK ($2.40/£1.20) children 7–15, free for children 6 and under. Sun–Wed 10am–5pm; Thurs–Sat 10am–9pm. Closed Jan 1 and Dec 24–25. Bus: 69.

AN AMUSEMENT PARK

Gröna Lund Tivoli *Kids* For those who like Coney Island–type thrills, this is a good nighttime adventure. Unlike its Copenhagen namesake, this is an amusement park, not a fantasyland. You'll find everything here from bumper cars to the Tunnel of Love to the Hall of Mirrors. The Blue Train takes you on a classic horror trip.

Djurgården. ✆ **08/587-501-00.** www.gronalund.com. Admission 60SEK ($9.60/£4.80); free for children 6 and under. All-day ride pass 140SEK ($22/£11). Late Apr to Sept daily noon–midnight (hours subject to weekly variation). Bus: 44 or 47. Djurgården ferry from Nybroplan.

ORGANIZED TOURS

CITY TOURS The quickest and most convenient way to see the highlights of Stockholm is to take one of the bus tours that leave from Karl XII Torg, near the Kungsträdgården. **City Sightseeing** (✆ **08/587-140-20**) operates a 24-hour Hop-on, Hop-off Sightseeing Tour of the city, including the Nybro Ferry. The tour costs 210SEK adults ($34/£17); half price ages 6 to 11; free for kids 5 and under. The bus takes you to all the highlights of Stockholm, and you can get off, see whatever you want to, and then continue on the next bus.

Stockholm Sightseeing, Skeppsbron 22 (✆ **08/587-140-20**), offers a variety of tours, mostly in the summer. The most popular is the 1-hour "royal Canal Tour," for 130SEK ($21/£11). It leaves daily 10:30am to 3:30pm year-round from the shady canal of Djurgården. "Under the Bridges" takes 2 hours and goes through two locks and two bodies of water. Departures are from Stromkajen (near the Grand Hotel), daily from June 4 to mid-September. The cost is 170SEK ($27/£14). The 45-minute "Sightseeing Anno 1935" explores the Stockholm harbor in an open-topped wooden boat, with a captain in period uniform. The tour costs 130SEK ($21/£11). Daily departures, from June 28 to mid-August, are from the statue of Gustavus III by the Royal Palace.

THE SHOPPING SCENE

A whopping 25% goods tax makes shopping in Sweden expensive, and you can get most items at home for less money. On the positive side, Swedish stores usually stock items of the highest quality. Swedish glass is world famous. The wooden items are outstanding, and many people love the functional furniture in blond pine or birch. Other items to look for include children's playsuits, silver necklaces, reindeer gloves, hand-woven neckties and skirts, sweaters and mittens in Nordic patterns, clogs, and colorful handicrafts from the provinces. The most famous souvenir is the Dala horse from Dalarna.

For full details on **tax rebates** on local goods, go to the "Fast Facts: Stockholm" section, earlier in this chapter.

For the best shopping and window-shopping, explore the many boutiques, art galleries, and jewelry stores along the streets of **Gamla Stan** (especially **Västerlånggatan**). Attractive shops and galleries can also be found along the **Hornsgats-Puckeln** (the Hornsgatan-Hunchback, a reference to the shape of the street), on **Södermalm.** Other good browsing streets are **Hamngatan, Birger Jarlsgatan, Biblioteksgatan,** and **Kungsgatan,** all in **Norrmalm.**

In the center of Stockholm, the largest department store in Sweden is **Åhlesns City,** Klarabergsgatan 50 (✆ **08/676-60-00;** T-bana: T-Centralen), with a gift shop, a restaurant, and a famous food department. Also seek out the fine collection of home textiles and Orrefors and Kosta crystal ware. **Nordiska Kompanient (NK),** Hamngatan 18–20 (✆ **08/762-80-00;** T-bana: Kungsträdgården), is another high-quality department store. Most of the big names in Swedish glass are displayed at NK. Swedish handcrafted items are in the basement.

At **Loppmarknaden i Skärholmen (Skärholmen Shopping Center),** Skärholmsvagen, Skärholmen (✆ **08/710-00-60;** T-bana: 13 or 23 to Skärholmen), the biggest flea market in northern Europe, you might find *anything.* Try to go on Saturday or Sunday (the earlier the better) when the market is at its peak. The location is 10km (6¼ miles) southwest of the center in the suburb of Skärholmen. Hours are Monday to Friday 11am to 6pm, when admission is free; Saturday 9am to 3pm, costing 15SEK ($2.40/£1.20); and Sunday, 10am to 3pm, with the entrance going for 10SEK ($1.60/80p).

STOCKHOLM AFTER DARK

Pick up a copy of ***Stockholm This Week,*** distributed at the Tourist Centre in the Sweden House (see "Visitor Information," earlier in this chapter), to see what's on.

THE PERFORMING ARTS

All the major opera, theater, and concert seasons begin in autumn, except for special summer festival performances. Fortunately, most of the major opera and theatrical performances are funded by the state, which keeps the ticket price reasonable.

Founded by Gustavus III in 1766, the **Drottningholm Court Theater,** Drottningholm (✆ **08/759-04-06;** www.dtm.se; T-bana: Brommaplan, then bus no. 301 or 323; boat from the City Hall in Stockholm), is on an island in Lake Mälaren, 11km

(6¾ miles) from Stockholm. It stages operas and ballets with full 18th-century regalia, period costumes, and wigs. Its machinery and 30 or more complete theater sets are intact and in use. The theater, a short walk from the royal residence, seats only 450, which makes it difficult to get tickets. Eighteenth-century music performed on antique instruments is a perennial favorite. The season is from May to September. Most performances begin at 8pm and last 2½ to 4 hours. You can order tickets in advance by phone with an American Express card. Tickets cost 170SEK to 610SEK ($27–$98/£14–£49).

Filharmonikerna I Konserthuset (Concert Hall), Hötorget 8 (✆ **08/50-66-77-88;** T-bana: Hötorget), home of the **Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra,** is the principal place to hear classical music in Sweden. (The Nobel Prizes are also awarded here.) Box office hours are Monday to Friday noon to 6pm, Saturday 11am to 3pm. Tickets are 100SEK to 520SEK ($16–$83/£8–£42).

Founded in 1773 by Gustavus III (who was later assassinated here at a masked ball), the **Operahuset (Royal Opera House),** Gustav Adolfs Torg (✆ **08/24-82-40;** T-bana: Kungsträdgården; www.operan.se), is the home of the Royal Swedish Opera and the Royal Swedish Ballet. The building dates from 1898. Performances are usually Monday to Saturday at 7:30pm (closed mid-June to August). The box office is open Monday to Friday 10am to 6pm (until 7:30pm on performance nights), Saturday noon to 3pm (✆ **08/24-82-40**). Tickets cost from 80SEK to 475SEK ($13–$76/£6.50–£38); ask about the 10%-to-30% senior and student discounts.

NIGHTCLUBS

Café Opera, Operahuset, Kungsträdgården (✆ **08/676-58-07;** T-bana: Kungsträdgården)—Swedish Beaux Arts at its best—functions as a brasserie-style restaurant during dinner hours and one of the most popular nightclubs in Stockholm late at night. Near the entrance of the cafe is a stairway leading to one of the Opera House's most beautiful corners, the clublike Operabaren (Opera Bar). Café Opera is open December, Tuesday to Saturday 6pm to 3am, Sunday 7pm to 3am; January to May, Tuesday to Saturday 5pm to 3am, Saturday to Sunday 2pm to 3am. There's no cover before 10pm, 140SEK ($24/£12) after.

Göta Källare, in the Medborgplatsen subway station, Södermalm (✆ **08/642-08-28;** T-bana: Medborgplatsen), is the largest and most successful supper-club-style dance hall in Stockholm. Large, echoing, and paneled with lots of wood in a *faux-Español* style, it has a large terrace that surrounds an enormous tree, and a restaurant. Expect a crowd of people ages 45 and older, and music from a live orchestra (a DJ on Fri and Sat nights). The place is open every night from 8:30pm. Cover is 130SEK ($21/£11) after 11pm only.

ROCK & JAZZ CLUBS

Some of Sweden's and the world's best-known jazz musicians regularly play **Fasching,** Kungsgatan 63 (✆ **08/534-829-60;** T-bana: T-Centralen). Small, cozy, and well-known among jazz fans throughout Scandinavia, this is one of the most visible of the jazz clubs of Stockholm, with artists appearing from North America, Europe, and around the world. Cramped to the point of claustrophobia, it gives you the feeling that you're very, very close to the men and women producing the music. The venue varies according to the night of the week and the availability of the artists performing, but after the end of most live acts, there's likely to be dancing to salsa, soul, and perhaps R&B. With many exceptions, varying with the acts being presented, the club is usually open every night from 7pm until at least 1am. Cover costs vary from 100SEK to 250SEK ($16–$40/£8–£20).

Pub Engelen and **Nightclub Kolingen,** Kornhamnstorg 59B (✆ **08/20-10-92;** T-bana: Gamla Stan), share a single address. The restaurant, which serves some of the best steaks in town, is open Sunday to Thursday 5 to 11:30pm, Friday and Saturday 5pm to 1:30am. Prices for platters of bar food run from 150SEK to 220SEK ($24–$35/£12–£18). Live performances, usually soul, funk, and rock by Swedish groups, take over the pub daily from 8:30pm to midnight. The pub is open daily from 4pm to 3am. Beer begins at 42SEK ($6.70/£3.35), and items on the bar menu cost 29SEK to 100SEK ($4.65–$16/£2.35–£8). The Nightclub Kolingen is a dance club nightly from 10pm to about 3am. It charges the same food and drink prices as the pub, and you must be at least 23 to enter. Cover runs from 50SEK to 80SEK ($8–$13/£4–£6.50) after 8pm.

BARS

One of the most talked-about bars in Stockholm, **Blue Moon Bar,** 18 Kungsgatan (✆ **08/20-14-11;** T-bana: Östermalmstorg), attracts a bevy of supermodels and TV actors. The street level has black leather upholstery and an atmosphere of postmodern cool. The clean, modern decor of the basement-level bar draws an equally chic crowd. On both levels, everybody's favorite drink seems to be the Russian-inspired *caprinoshka,* concocted from vodka and limes. You might hear anything from recorded dance hits (Friday to Saturday at midnight) to live salsa and merengue (Wed 9pm–5am). The place is open Monday to Saturday 7pm to 3am. Incidentally, no one will object if you light up a cigar. Cover is 120SEK ($19/£10).

Cadierbaren (Cadier Bar), Södra Blasieholmshamnen 8 (✆ **08/679-35-85;** T-bana: Kungsträdgården), is one of the most sophisticated places in Stockholm. From the bar, which is situated in the Grand Hotel—one of the most famous hotels in Europe—you'll have a view of the harbor and the Royal Palace. Light meals—open-faced sandwiches and smoked salmon—are served all day in the extension overlooking the waterfront. Drinks run 98SEK to 122SEK ($16–$20/£8–£10). It's open Monday to Saturday 7pm to 2am, Sunday 7pm to 1am; a piano player performs Wednesday to Saturday 9:30pm to 1:30am.

GAY & LESBIAN STOCKHOLM

Looking for a nonconfrontational bar peopled with regular guys who happen to be gay? Consider a round or two at **Sidetrack,** Wollmar Yxkullsgatan 7 (✆ **08/641-16-88;** T-bana: Mariatorget). Small and committed to shunning trendiness, it's named after the founder's favorite gay bar in Chicago. It's open every night from 6pm to 1am. Tuesday here seems to be a gay Stockholm institution. Other nights are fine, too—Sidetrack is something like a Swedish version of a bar and lounge at the local bowling alley where everyone happens to be into same-sex encounters.

Many gays and lesbians gather at **Torget,** Mälartorget 13 (✆ **08/20-55-60;** T-bana: Gamla Stan), a cozy, Victorian-era cafe and bar in the Old City (Gamla Stan) that's open for food every afternoon and for drinks around 5pm until around midnight. A gay place with a greater emphasis on food, but with a busy and crowded bar area and a particularly helpful and informative staff, is **Babs Kök n bar,** Birger Jarlsgatan 37 (✆ **08-23-61-01;** T-bana Östermalmstorg). It's open daily 5pm to 1am.

For an online version of the online gay and lesbian magazine *QX,* which is available in hard copy in newsstands, click on www.qx.se.

DAY TRIPS FROM STOCKHOLM

SKOKLOSTER CASTLE ★★ Skokloster, S-746 96 Skokloster (✆ **018/38-60-77**), is a splendid 17th-century castle and one of the most interesting baroque museums in Europe. It's next to Lake Mälaren, 64km (40 miles) west of Stockholm and 40km (25 miles) south of Uppsala. Original interiors aside, the castle is noted for its rich collections of paintings, furniture, applied art, tapestries, arms, and books. Admission is 50SEK ($8/£4); free ages 18 and under. Guided tours are conducted from May to August daily every hour from 12:15 to 3:15pm. In September the guided tours are given from Monday to Friday at 1:15pm; Saturday and Sunday every hour from 12:15 to 3:15pm. The site is closed from November 5 to April 30.

Skokloster Motor Museum (✆ **018/38-61-06**), on the palace grounds, contains the largest collection of vintage automobiles and motorcycles in the country. One of the most notable cars is a 1905 eight-horsepower De Dion Bouton. Admission costs 50SEK ($8/£4) adults, 20SEK ($3.20/£1.60) children 7 to 14, free for children 6 and under. It's open from May to August, daily from noon to 4pm.

Getting There From Stockholm take a **train** to the hamlet of Bålsta, which lies 19km (12 miles) from the castle. At the village train station, you can either take **bus** no. 894 directly to Skokloster, or call for a **taxi** from a direct telephone line that's prominently positioned just outside the railway station.

UPPSALA ★★ The major university city of Sweden, Uppsala, 68km (42 miles) northwest of Stockholm, is the most popular destination for day-trippers from Stockholm, and for good reason. Uppsala has not only a great university, but also a celebrated 15th-century cathedral. Even in the time of the Vikings, this was a religious center, the scene of animal and human sacrifices in honor of the old Norse gods. And it was once the center of royalty as well; Queen Christina occasionally held court here. The church is still the seat of the Swedish archbishop, and the first Swedish university was founded here in 1477.

Getting There The **train** from Stockholm's Central Station takes about 40 minutes. Trains leave about every hour during peak daylight hours. Some visitors spend the day in Uppsala and return to Stockholm on the commuter train in the late afternoon. Eurailpass holders ride free. **Boats** between Uppsala and Skokloster depart Uppsala Tuesday through Sunday at 11:30am, returning to Uppsala at 5:15pm. Round-trip passage costs 150SEK ($24/£12). For details, check with the tourist office in any of the towns.

Visitor Information The **Tourist Information Office** is at Fyris Torg 8 (✆ **018/727-48-00;** www.uppsala.se), open Monday to Friday 10am to 6pm and Saturday from 10am to 3pm.

Exploring Uppsala At the end of Drottninggatan is the **Carolina Rediviva (University Library)** ★ (✆ **018/471-39-00;** bus no. 6, 7, 9, 18, 20, or 22), with its more than five million volumes and 40,000 manuscripts, among them many rare works from the Middle Ages. But the manuscript that really draws visitors is the *Codex Argenteus* (Silver Bible), translated into the old Gothic language in the middle of the 3rd century and copied in about A.D. 525. It's the only book extant in the old Gothic script. Also worth seeing is the original woodblock engraving of the *Carta Marina,* the first printed map of the Nordic countries (1539), a fairly accurate rendering of Sweden and its neighboring countries. Admission is 20SEK ($3.20/£1.60), free for children 11 and under. The library's exhibition room is open Monday to Friday 9am to

9pm and Saturday 10am to 5pm; June 13 to August 14, Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm, Saturday 10am to 5pm; May 15 to September 4, Sunday 11am to 4pm.

Linnaeus Garden & Museum, Svartbäcksgatan 27 (✆ **018/471-28-38** for the museum, or 018/471-25-76 for the garden; walk straight from the rail station to Kungsgatan, and proceed for about 10 min. to Svartbäcksgatan), is the former home of Swedish botanist Carl von Linné, also known as Carolus Linnaeus, who developed a classification system for the world's plants and flowers. This museum is on the spot where he restored Uppsala University's botanical garden, which resembles a miniature baroque garden. His detailed sketches and descriptions of the garden have been faithfully followed. Admission to the museum is 50SEK ($8/£4) adults, free for ages 15 and under. A donation is suggested for admission to the gardens. The museum is open from May to September 1, Tuesday to Sunday 11 to 5pm. The gardens are open from May to August daily from 11am to 8pm and September daily from 9am to 7pm.

The largest cathedral in Scandinavia at nearly 120m (395 ft.) tall, the twin-spired Gothic **Uppsala Domkyrka** ★, Domkyrkoplan 5 (✆ **018/18-71-53;** www.uppsaladomkyrka.se; bus no.1 or 2), was founded in the 13th century. It was severely damaged in 1702 in a disastrous fire that swept over Uppsala, and then was restored near the turn of the 20th century. Among the regal figures buried in the crypt is Gustavus Vasa. The remains of St. Erik, patron saint of Sweden, are entombed in a silver shrine. Botanist Linnaeus and philosopher-theologian Emanuel Swedenborg are also buried here. A small museum displays ecclesiastical relics of Uppsala. Admission to the cathedral is free; museum admission is 30SEK ($4.80/£2.40) adults, 15SEK ($2.40/£1.20) seniors and students, and 10SEK ($1.60/80p) children 7 to 15, free for children 6 and under. Open Sunday to Friday 8am to 6pm, Saturday 10am to 6pm. The gift shop and Treasure Chamber Museum are open May to August Monday to Saturday 10am–5pm, Sunday 12:30–5pm; September Monday to Friday from 10am to 4pm, Saturday from 10am to 5pm, and Sunday from 12:30–5pm; October to April Monday to Saturday from 11am to 3pm and Sunday from 12:30 to 3pm. During church services, movement around the church may be limited.

GRIPSHOLM CASTLE ★★ On an island in Lake Mälaren, Gripsholm Slottsförvaltning (Gripsholm Castle), P.O. Box 14, 64721 Mariefred (✆ **0159/101-94**)—the fortress built by Gustavus Vasa in the late 1530s—is one of the best-preserved castles in Sweden. It lies near Mariefred, an idyllic small town known for its vintage narrow-gauge railroad.

Even though Gripsholm was last occupied by royalty (Charles XV) in 1864, it's still a royal castle. Its outstanding features include a large collection of portrait paintings depicting obscure branches of the Swedish monarchy, its brooding architecture, and its 18th-century theater built for the amusement of the 18th-century actor-king Gustavus III. It's open September 16 to May 14 Saturday and Sunday noon to 3pm; May 15 to September 15 daily 10am to 4pm. Admission is 60SEK ($9.60/£4.80) adults, 30SEK ($4.80/£2.40) children 7 to 15, free for ages 6 and under.

Getting There Gripsholm Castle is 68km (42 miles) southwest of Stockholm. By **car,** follow E20 south; you can drive directly to the castle parking lot. The Eskilstuna **bus** runs to the center of Mariefred, as do the boats. **Boats** leave from mid-May to September at 10am from Klara Mälarstrand Pier. The castle is a 10-minute walk from the center of Mariefred.

19

Switzerland

by Darwin Porter & Danforth Prince

Switzerland evokes images of towering peaks, mountain lakes, lofty pastures, and alpine villages, but it also offers a rich cultural life in cities such as sophisticated Geneva and perfectly preserved medieval Bern.

1 Geneva

Many patriotic French feel this French-speaking city of elegance and charm should belong in France. It does indeed sit on the doorstep of France. But in some respects Geneva is international, belonging to the world with its 250 international organizations based here, the most important being the European headquarters for the United Nations, the World Health Organization, and the International Red Cross.

It's the most orderly and serene of all major European cities (or most sterile, in the view of those who'd like more local color, nightlife, and excitement). As one local and very wealthy lady told us, "Geneva is one of the few places on the planet I can walk around in my white sable without fear I'll be hit by a rotten tomato by an animal rights fanatic, or else have it stolen from me by some poor wretched down and out." She actually said that.

Surrounded by French territory, Geneva is connected to Switzerland only by the lake and a narrow corridor. The city's strong French influence shows in its mansard roofs, iron balconies, sidewalk cafes, and French signs.

ORIENTATION

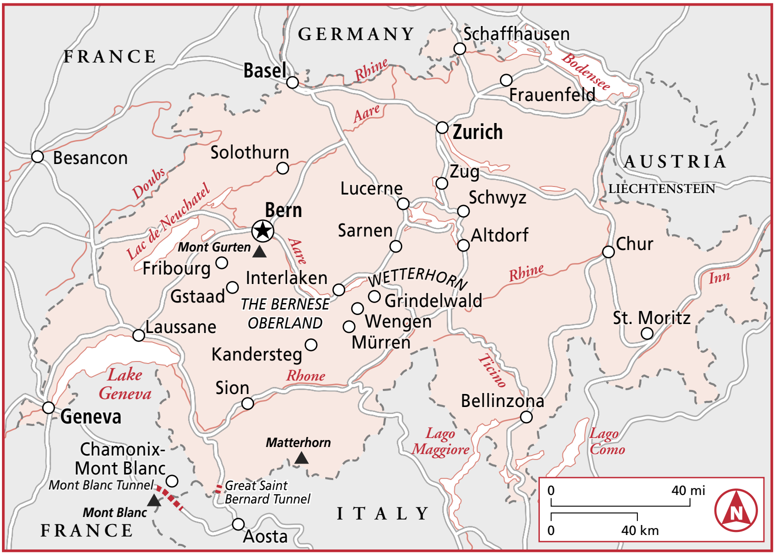
ARRIVING

BY PLANE The **Geneva-Cointrin Airport** (✆ **022/717-71-11;** www.gva.ch), although busy, is quite compact and easily negotiated. **Swiss International Air Lines** (✆ **877/359-7947** from the U.S.; www.swiss.com) serves Geneva more frequently than any other airline and offers the best local connections, connecting Geneva with Lugano, Zurich, and Bern, plus flying in from several European capitals. Other international airlines flying into Geneva include **Air France** (✆ **800/237-2747** from the U.S.; www.airfrance.com) and **British Airways** (✆ **800/217-9297;** www.britishairways.com).

To get into the center of Geneva, there's a train station linked to the air terminal with trains leaving about every 8 to 20 minutes from 5:25am to 12:25am for the 7-minute trip; the one-way fare is 10F ($8.20/£4.25) in first class and 7F ($5.75/£3) in second class. A taxi into town will cost between 30F and 40F ($25–$33/£13–£17), or you can take bus no. 10 for 12F ($9.85/£5.10).

BY TRAIN Geneva's CFF (Chemins de Fer Fédéraux) train station in the town center is **Gare Cornavin,** place Cornavin (✆ **0900/300-300** for ticket information). A

Switzerland


GERMANY
FRANCE
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Frauenfeld
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Doubs
Zug
Lucerne
Schwyz
Lac de Neuchatel
Bern
Sarnen
Altdorf
Mont Gurten
Aare
Chur
Fribourg
Interlaken
WETTERHORN
Rhine
Inn
Gstaad
THE BERNESE OBERLAND
Grindelwald
Wengen
St. Moritz
Laussane
Mürren
Kandersteg
Lake Geneva
Ticino
Sion
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Bellinzona
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ITALY
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small tourist office branch is at the train station. ***Note:*** When the Lausanne-Geneva railroad line was extended to Cointrin Airport, a second "main" railroad station was built here with both long-distance and intercity trains. To avoid having to make the trip back to the center from the airport, be sure you get off the train at the Cornavin station.

BY CAR From Lausanne, head southwest on N1 to the very end of southwestern Switzerland.

BY LAKE STEAMER There are frequent daily arrivals by Swiss lake steamer year-round from Montreux, Vevey, and Lausanne (you can use your Eurailpass for the trip). If you're staying in the Left Bank (Old Town), get off at the Jardin Anglais stop in Geneva; Mont Blanc and Pâquis are the two Right Bank stops. For more information, call ✆ **0848/811-848** or visit www.cgn.ch.

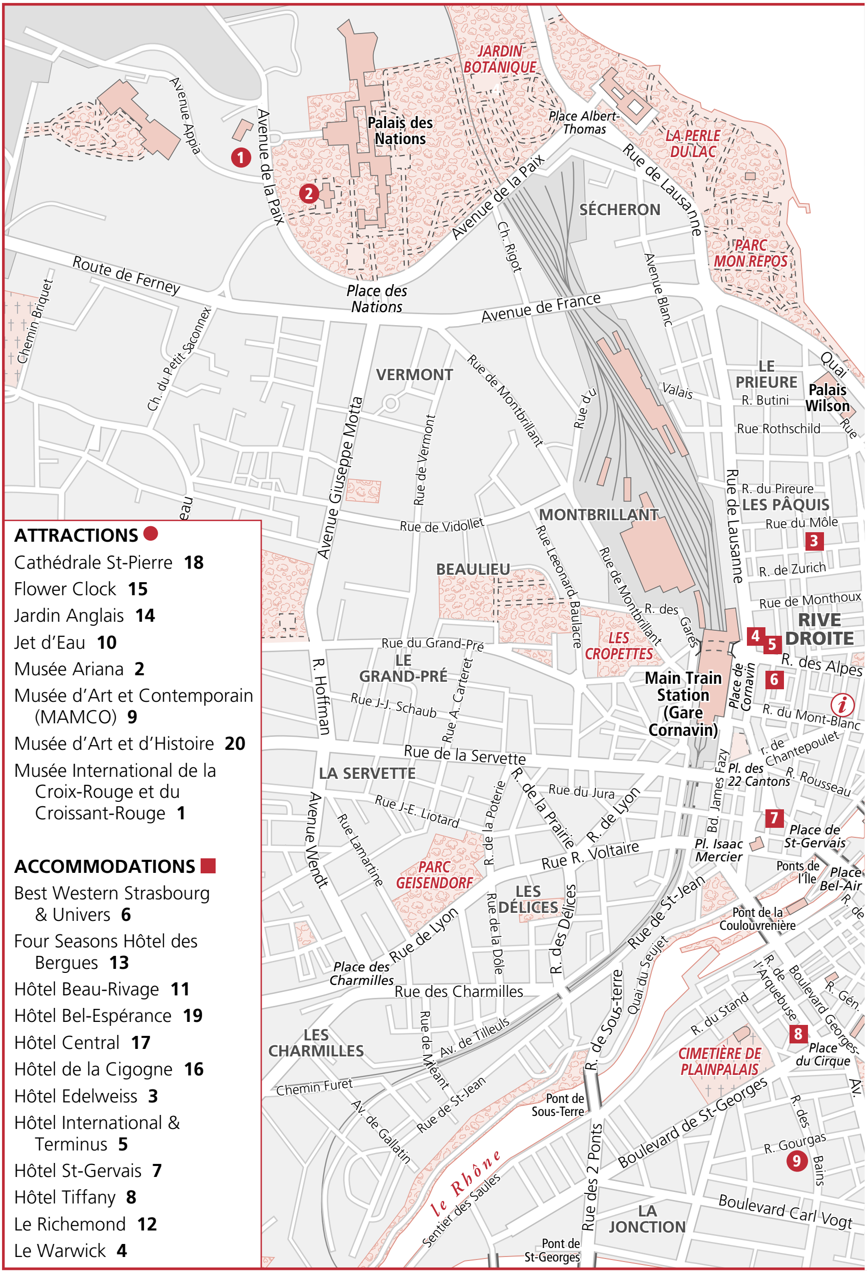
VISITOR INFORMATION

Geneva's tourist office, the **Office du Tourisme de Genève,** is located at 18, rue du Mont-Blanc (✆ **022/909-70-00;** www.geneve-tourisme.ch), and is open daily year-round from 9am to 6pm. The staff provides information about the city and also gives you details about audio-guided visits to the Old Town.

CITY LAYOUT

Geneva is a perfect city to explore on foot. It's divided by Lake Geneva (Lac Léman) and the Rhône River into two sections: the Right Bank and the Left Bank. You may rent an audio-guided tour in English from the tourist office (see above) for 10F ($8.20/£4.25). This tour covers more than two dozen highlights in the Old Town, and comes complete with cassette, player, and map. Its estimated duration is 2 hours. A 50F ($41/£21) deposit is collected prior to your receipt of a cassette player.

Geneva



JARDIN BOTANIQUE
Palais des Nations
Avenue Appia
Avenue de la Paix
Place Albert-Thomas
LA PERLE DU LAC
Rue de Lausanne
SÉCHERON
Avenue de la Paix
Ch. Rigot
PARC MON REPOS
Route de Ferney
Place des Nations
Avenue de France
Avenue Blanc
Chemin Briquet
Ch. du Petit Saconnex
VERMONT
Rue de Montbrillant
Rue du
Valais
LE PRIEURE
R. Butini
Palais Wilson
Quai
Rue
Rue Rothschild
Avenue Giuseppe Motta
Rue de Vermont
R. du Pireure
LES PÂQUIS
Rue de Lausanne
Rue du Môle
Rue de Vidollet
MONTBRILLANT
Rue Léonard Baulacre
Rue de Montbrillant
R. de Zurich
BEAULIEU
Rue de Monthoux
R. des Gares
RIVE DROITE
LES CROPETTES
Rue du Grand-Pré
LE GRAND-PRÉ
R. Hoffman
Rue A.-Carteret
Rue J-J. Schaub
R. des Alpes
Main Train Station (Gare Cornavin)
Place de Cornavin
R. du Mont-Blanc
Rue de la Servette
r. de Chantepoulet
LA SERVETTE
Rue du Jura
Pl. des 22 Cantons
Bd. James Fazy
R. Rousseau
Rue J-E. Liotard
R. de la Poterie
R. de la Prairie
R. de Lyon
Place de St-Gervais
Avenue Wendt
Rue Lamartine
Rue R. Voltaire
Pl. Isaac Mercier
PARC GEISENDORF
LES DÉLICES
R. des Délices
Ponts de l'Île
Place Bel-Air
R. de
Rue de la Dôle
Rue de St-Jean
Pont de la Coulouvrenière
Rue de Lyon
Place des Charmilles
Rue des Charmilles
Quai du Seujet
R. de l'Arquebuse
Boulevard Georges-
R. Gén.
LES CHARMILLES
Rue de Miléant
Av. de Tilleuls
R. de Sous-terre
R. du Stand
CIMETIÈRE DE PLAINPALAIS
Place du Cirque
Av.
Chemin Furet
Av. de Gallatin
Rue de St-Jean
Pont de Sous-Terre
Boulevard de St-Georges
R. des Bains
R. Gourgas
le Rhône
Sentier des Saules
Rue des 2 Ponts
LA JONCTION
Boulevard Carl Vogt
Pont de St-Georges
1
2
3
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5
6
7
8
9

ATTRACTIONS ●

Cathédrale St-Pierre **18**

Flower Clock **15**

Jardin Anglais **14**

Jet d'Eau **10**

Musée Ariana **2**

Musée d'Art et Contemporain (MAMCO) **9**

Musée d'Art et d'Histoire **20**

Musée International de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge **1**

ACCOMMODATIONS ■

Best Western Strasbourg & Univers **6**

Four Seasons Hôtel des Bergues **13**

Hôtel Beau-Rivage **11**

Hôtel Bel-Espérance **19**

Hôtel Central **17**

Hôtel de la Cigogne **16**

Hôtel Edelweiss **3**

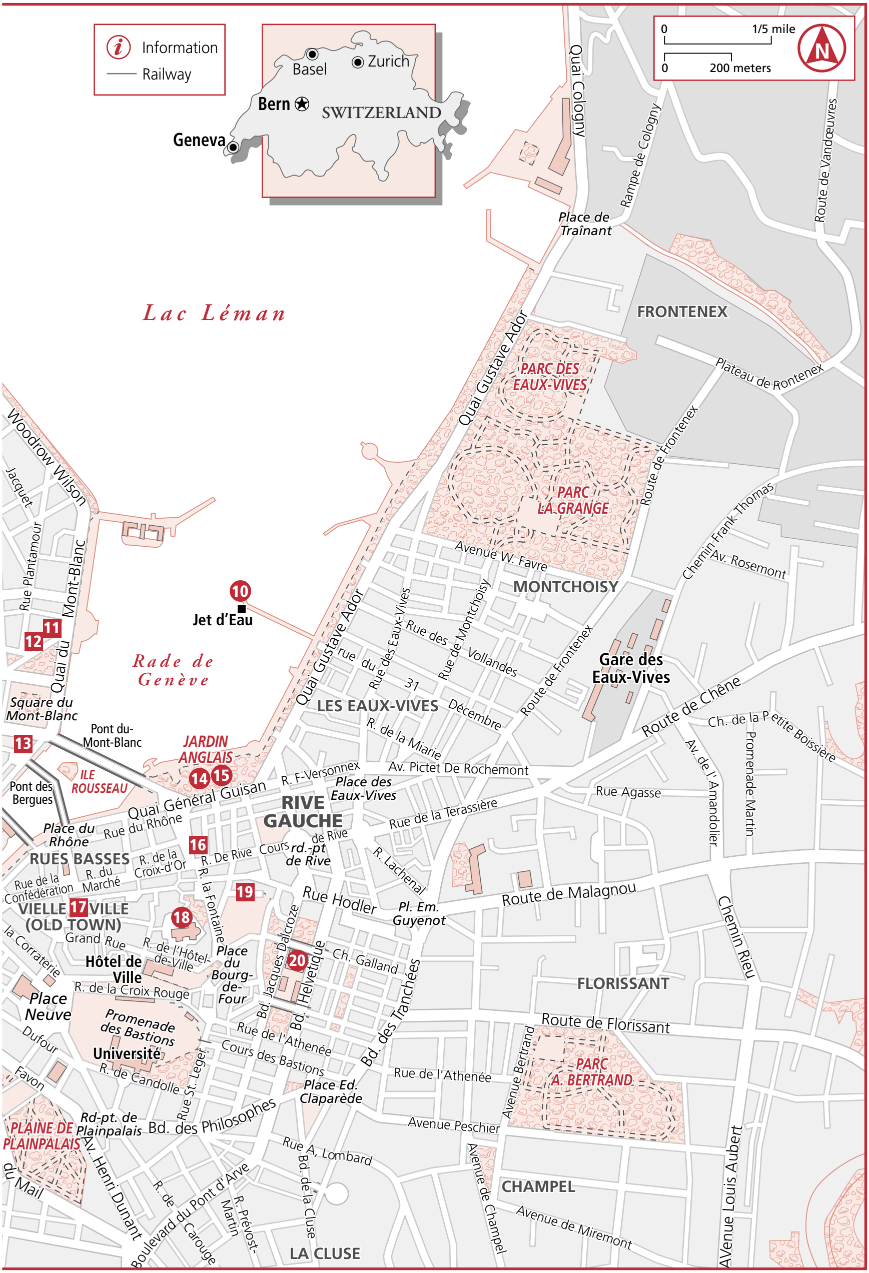
Hôtel International & Terminus **5**

Hôtel St-Gervais **7**

Hôtel Tiffany **8**

Le Richemond **12**

Le Warwick **4**


Information
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Quai Cologny
Rampe de Cologny
Route de Vandœuvres
Place de Traînant
Lac Léman
FRONTENEX
Plateau de Frontenex
Quai Gustave Ador
PARC DES EAUX-VIVES
PARC LA GRANGE
Route de Frontenex
Chemin Frank Thomas
Av. Rosemont
Avenue W. Favre
MONTCHOISY
Woodrow Wilson
Jacquet
Rue Plantamour
Mont-Blanc
Quai du
11
12
10
Jet d'Eau
Rade de Genève
Square du Mont-Blanc
Pont du-Mont-Blanc
13
JARDIN ANGLAIS
14
15
ILE ROUSSEAU
Pont des Bergues
Quai Général Guisan
Rue du Rhône
Place du Rhône
RUES BASSES
R. de la Croix-d'Or
R. du Marché
Rue de la Confédération
16
R. De Rive
Cours de Rive
rd.-pt de Rive
R. F-Versonnex
Place des Eaux-Vives
RIVE GAUCHE
Quai Gustave Ador
rue du 31 Décembre
Rue des Eaux-Vives
Rue des Vollandes
Rue de Montchoisy
Route de Frontenex
Gare des Eaux-Vives
LES EAUX-VIVES
R. de la Miarie
Av. Pictet De Rochemont
Route de Chêne
Ch. de la Petite Boissière
Av. de l'Amandolier
Promenade Martin
Rue Agasse
Rue de la Terassière
R. Lachenal
Pl. Em. Guyenot
Route de Malagnou
Rue Hodler
Ch. Galland
Bd. des Tranchées
Chemin Rieu
FLORISSANT
Route de Florissant
19
VIELLE 17 VILLE (OLD TOWN)
18
R. la Fontaine
Grand Rue
R. de l'Hôtel-de-Ville
Hôtel de Ville
la Corraterie
R. de la Croix Rouge
Place du Bourg-de-Four
Bd. Jacques Dalcroze
20
Bd. Helvetique
Place Neuve
Promenade des Bastions
Université
Dufour
R. de Candolle
Rue St. Leger
Rue de l'Athenée
Cours des Bastions
Place Ed. Claparède
Rue de l'Athenée
Avenue Bertrand
PARC A. BERTRAND
Avenue Peschier
Favon
Rd-pt. de Plainpalais
PLAINE DE PLAINPALAIS
Bd. des Philosophes
Av. Henri Dunant
du Mail
R. de Carouge
Boulevard du Pont d'Arve
R. Prévost-Martin
Rue A. Lombard
Bd. de la Cluse
LA CLUSE
Avenue de Champel
CHAMPEL
Avenue de Miremont
Avenue Louis Aubert

RIVE GAUCHE (LEFT, or SOUTH BANK) This compact and colorful area is the oldest section of the city. Here you'll find Old Town, some major shopping streets, the famous Flower Clock, the university, and several important museums.

Grand-Rue is the well-preserved main street of Old Town. It's flanked by many houses dating from the 15th and 18th centuries. The street winds uphill from the ponts de l'Ile; at place Bel-Air it becomes rue de la Cité, then Grand-Rue, and finally rue de l'Hôtel-de-Ville. Eventually it reaches **place du Bourg-de-Four**—one of the most historic squares of Geneva. South of this street is **promenade des Bastions,** a greenbelt area overlooking the Arve. Directly to the west, in the northern corner of promenade des Bastions, is **place Neuve,** which is the finest square in Geneva.

From place Neuve, you can take rue de la Corraterie, which was once surrounded by the city wall, to the Rhône and the **ponts de l'Ile.** On this bridge is the **Tour-de-l'Ile,** what's left of the 13th-century bishops' castle.

On the shore of Lake Geneva is the **Jardin Anglais (English Garden)** with its Flower Clock and, farther out, the **Parc La Grange** and the nearby **Parc des Eaux-Vives.**

RIVE DROITE (RIGHT, or NORTH BANK) You can cross to the other side of the Rhône on any of several bridges, including pont du Mont-Blanc, pont de la Machine, pont des Bergues, and ponts de l'Ile. The Right Bank is home to Gare Cornavin, the major international organizations, and several attractive parks.

Place St-Gervais is in the St-Gervais district; this has been the area for jewelers and watchmakers since the 18th century. Along the northern shore of Lake Geneva is **quai du Président-Wilson,** named for the U.S. president who helped found the League of Nations. The Right Bank is surrounded by parks, from the tree-shaded promenades along the Rhône to the **Parc de la Perle du Lac, Parc Barton,** and on the city outskirts, **Parc Mon-Repos.**

RUES BASSES Rues Basses (translated either as "low streets" or figuratively as "lower town") is found between Old Town and the south bank of the Rhône. It's the major commercial and shopping district of Geneva.

OLD TOWN (VIEILLE VILLE) At an altitude of 398m (1,305 ft.), Old Town is the most history-rich section of Geneva. This is Left Bank Geneva, with its narrow streets, flower-bedecked fountains, and architectural blends of Gothic, Renaissance, and 18th-century features. The twin towers of the Cathedral of St. Pierre dominate Old Town, whose geographical and spiritual center is place du Bourg-de-Four.

THE PROMENADES OF GENEVA These streets almost constitute a "neighborhood" in themselves. One of the most scenic walks is from the Parc des Eaux-Vives on the Left Bank to the Parc de Mon-Repos on the Right Bank. Along the way is a clear view of Geneva's most famous and visible monument, the Jet d'Eau. Set a few inches above the surface of the lake, this fountain spurts a plume of shimmering water that rises to heights of between 140m and 145m (459–476 ft.).

GETTING AROUND

Walking is the cheapest, most practical form of transportation in Geneva. It's also the most advantageous from a tourist's point of view. Tree-shaded promenades line the edges of the lake, and you can browse many chic shops walking at a moderate pace along streets that include rue du Rhône. Savor the measured tempo of life here that makes this city particularly alluring to the foreign visitor.

BY PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Most of Geneva's public tram and bus lines begin either at the very central place Cornavin in front of the main railroad station, or, to a lesser extent, on the opposite bank of the river, at the Place du Bel Air. Local buses and trams operate daily from 5am to midnight, and you can purchase a ticket from a vending machine before you board. Instructions are also given in English. **Transport Publics Genevois** (✆ **0900/022-021;** www.tpg.ch), next to the tourist office in Gare Cornavin, offers free maps of local bus routings. Trips that stay within zone 10, enveloping most of Geneva, cost 3F ($2.45/£1.25), and unlimited use of all zones costs 10F ($8.20/£4.25) for 1 day.

BY TAXI

The meter on whatever cab you take in Geneva will automatically begin calculating your fare at 7F ($5.75/£3), and then add between 2.90F ($2.40/£1.25) and 3.50F ($2.85/£1.50) for every kilometer you travel, depending on the time of day or night. The fare from the airport to the center of town ranges from 30F to 40F ($25–$33/£13–£17). No tipping is required, but extra baggage may cost 1F (80¢/40p). To call for a **taxi,** call ✆ **022/331-41-33** or 022/320-20-20.

BY CAR

Driving is not recommended; parking is difficult and the many one-way streets make navigation complicated. However, should you wish to rent a car and tour Lake Geneva, you'll find many car-rental companies represented in the arrivals hall of the airport and in the center of the city. Major car-rental companies in Geneva include **Avis,** 44, rue de Lausanne (✆ **022/731-90-00,** or at the airport 022/929-03-30); **Budget,** at the airport (✆ **022/717-86-75**); **Hertz,** at the airport (✆ **022/717-80-80**); and **Europcar,** 37 rue de Lausanne (✆ **022/909-69-90**).

BY BIKE

Touring the city by bicycle isn't particularly practical because of the steep cobblestone streets, speeding cars, and general congestion. However, you might want to consider renting a bike for touring the countryside around Geneva. The major rental outlet is at the baggage desk at **Gare Cornavin** (✆ **022/791-02-50**), where city bikes cost 32F ($26/£14). Another major outlet, charging from 15F to 35F ($12–$29/£6.25–£15) per day, depending on the degree of sophistication of the bicycle, is **Genève Roule,** 17, place Montbrillant (✆ **022/740-13-43**).

FAST FACTS: Geneva

Babysitters A list of agencies is available at the tourist office. Most middle- and upper-bracket hotels will also secure an English-speaking babysitter for you, or you can call **Chaperones Rouges** (✆ **022/304-04-86**), an organization associated with the Red Cross responsible for teaching young girls about child-care rituals; the service is particularly pertinent for sick children.

Bookstore One of the largest in Geneva is the well-stocked **Payot,** 5, rue Chantepoulet (✆ **022/731-89-50**), with a good selection of books in French, German, and English.

Business Hours Most banks are open Monday to Friday from 8:30am to 4:30pm (until 5:30pm Wed). Most offices are open Monday to Friday from 8:30am to 5:30pm, although this can vary. It's always best to call first.

Car Rentals See "By Car," above.

Consulates If you lose your passport or have other business with your home government, go to your nation's consulate: **United States,** 7, rue Versonnex (✆ **022/840-51-60**); **Australia,** 2, chemin des Fins (✆ **022/799-91-00**); **Canada,** 5, av. de L'Ariana (✆ **022/919-92-00**); **New Zealand,** 2, chemin des Fins (✆ **022/929-03-50**); the **United Kingdom,** 37-39, rue de Vermont (✆ **022/918-24-00**).

Currency Exchange In a city devoted to banking and the exchange of international currencies, you'll find dozens of places to exchange money in Geneva. Three of the most visible outlets, however, are run by **UBS-SA,** one of the country's largest banking conglomerates. You'll find a branch at the **Gare Cornavin,** 12, place Cornavin (✆ **022/375-33-47**), that's open Monday to Friday from 8:30am to 4:30pm; a branch at the **Cointrin Airport** (✆ **022/306-14-88**) that's open Monday to Friday from 8:30am to 4:30pm; and a downtown branch at 75, rue de la Servette (✆ **022/375-75-75**) that's open Monday to Friday from 8am to 4pm. The branches in the airport and in the railway station also house "money-automats"—you receive an equivalent amount of Swiss francs for every $20, $50, or $100 bill you insert into the machine.

Dentist English-speaking dentists are available at one of the ***cliniques dentaires*** at 5, chemin de Malombré (✆ **022/346-64-44**), open daily from 8am to 7pm.

Doctor If you become ill and want to consult a doctor, including one who will travel to your hotel, call ✆ **022/322-20-20;** or arrange an appointment with an English-speaking doctor at the **Hôpital Cantonal,** 24, rue Micheli-du-Crest (✆ **022/372-33-11**).

Drugstores Each night a different set of four drugstores stays open either till 9 or 11pm. Call ✆ **144** or 111 to find out which drugstore will be open. One of the world's biggest drugstores, **Pharmacie Principale,** in Confédération-Centre, 8, rue de la Confédération (✆ **022/318-66-60**), offers everything from medicine to clothing, perfumes, optical equipment, cameras, and photo supplies. It's open daily from 9am to 9pm.

Emergencies In an emergency, dial ✆ **117** for the police, ✆ **144** for an ambulance, or ✆ **118** to report a fire.

Eyeglasses You can go to **Visi-Lab** in the Confédération-Centre, 8, rue de la Confédération (✆ **022/318-66-80**).

Hospitals A prime choice for medical aid is the **Geneva University Hospital,** 24, rue Micheli-du-Crest (✆ **022/372-60-19;** www.hug-ge.ch). Most physicians speak English and German but are unlikely to be available on Thursday afternoons.

Lost Property Go to the **Service Cantonal des Objets Trouvés,** 5, rue des Glacis-de-Rive (✆ **022/327-60-00**), open Monday to Friday from 7:30am to 4pm.

Luggage Storage/Lockers Luggage can be stored and lockers rented at the main railroad station, **Gare Cornavin,** place Cornavin (✆ **0900/022-021**).

Newspapers/Magazines Newspapers in Geneva are printed in French, but the latest copies of the *International Herald Tribune, USA Today,* the *New York Times,* and the *Washington Post* are available at most newsstands and in large hotel newsstand kiosks.

Police In an emergency, call ✆ **117.** For nonemergency matters, call ✆ **022/327-41-11.**

Post Office Your best bet is the city's main post office, **Bureau de Poste Montbrillant,** rue des Gares (✆ **022/739-23-58**), which offers a full range of telephone, telegraph, and mail-related services Monday to Friday from 8am to 10:45pm, Saturday 8am to 10pm, and Sunday noon to 8pm.

Restrooms You'll find public facilities at all rail and air terminals and on main squares. Otherwise, you can patronize those in cafes and other commercial establishments such as department stores.

Safety Geneva is one of the safest cities in the world, but that doesn't mean you shouldn't take the usual precautions when traveling anywhere. Protect your valuables. Car thefts have been on the rise. High-class prostitutes and confidence swindlers proliferate in Geneva to prey on the well heeled.

Shoe Repairs An outlet of **Mr. Minit** is located in the Metro-Shopping arcade, 30, rue du Mont-Blanc (✆ **022/732-42-59**). Most repairs can be performed while you wait.

Taxes There is no special city tax, other than the 7.6% value-added tax (VAT) attached to most goods and services throughout Switzerland.

Telegrams/Telex/Fax Virtually every post office in Geneva maintains a handful of *tele-cabines* where you can pay cash for a phone call to anywhere in the world, but the densest concentration of these phones lies within the main railway station, **Gare Cornavin,** place Cornavin (it's open 24 hr. a day). Within less than a block, you'll find additional phones in the **Office de Poste Montbrillant** (Cornavin Dépot), 16, rue des Gares (✆ **022/739-23-58**), which is open Monday to Friday from 8am to 8pm and Sunday from noon to 8pm. Either site can send telegrams or faxes for you.

Tipping Most restaurants and hotels, even taxis, add a service charge of between 10% and 15% to your bill, so, strictly speaking, no further tipping is necessary. Tipping rituals have evolved recently, within Geneva to reflect practices within neighboring France, so today, many diners leave a few coins—we established guidelines of around 2F ($1.65/85p) extra for each member of a dining party, merely as a sign of respect for your waitstaff, but only if the service was adequate.

Transit Information For **train information,** call ✆ **0900/300-300** from anywhere in Switzerland. Contact the **airport** at ✆ **022/717-71-11.** For **bus information** Monday to Friday from 8am to 9pm, dial ✆ **022/308-33-11;** for information on Saturday and Sunday, call ✆ 022/308-34-34. For bus information, call ✆ **0900/022-021,** which costs 1.19F ($1/50p) per minute. Call only from within Switzerland Monday to Saturday 7am to 8pm and Sunday 8:30am to noon and 12:30 to 5pm.

Useful Telephone Numbers For general telephone directory information, call ✆ **111** for the time and ✆ **161** for the weather.

WHERE TO STAY

ON THE RIGHT BANK

Very Expensive

Four Seasons Hôtel des Bergues ★★★ This elegant, four-story hotel—designated a historic monument by the Swiss—once catered to the monarchs of Europe. After a massive renovation downsized 122 rooms to 103 even more spacious rooms, it became the most ostentatiously elegant hotel in Geneva. Stratospherically expensive, with an armada of uniformed and sometimes obsequiously polite staff members, the Hotel des Bergues is a favorite with the haute international business community, diplomats, and members of European society.

Since its widely publicized refurbishment, the hotel's public rooms are among the most lavish in Switzerland. The bedrooms have Directoire and Louis Philippe furnishings. Accommodations ranked "superior" on the Bel Étage floor are the finest choices here, although all units are beautifully appointed. Lake-view rooms are more expensive. The hotel shelters one of the classiest dining venues in Geneva: *Il Lago,* whose appointments and murals of an idealized lakefront in northern Italy are simply the most beautiful of their kind anywhere.

33, quai des Bergues, CH-1211 Genève. ☎ **022/908-70-00.** Fax 022/908-74-00. www.hoteldesbergues.com. 103 units. 770F–945F ($631–$775/£328–£403) double; from 2,250F ($1,845/£959) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 40F ($33/£17). Bus: 1. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; lounge; exercise room; sauna; room service; massage; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

Hôtel Beau-Rivage ★★★ This grand old landmark 1865 hotel receives our highest recommendation for its traditional Victorian charm and impeccable service. Its most striking feature is the open, five-story lobby, site of dozens of upscale dramas (all handled with a hushed sense of discretion by the much-experienced staff). The rooms are individually furnished and frequently redecorated. All front rooms have views of the lake. Accommodations are categorized by size, "romantic" rooms being more spacious, and "classical" rooms being medium in size. Some of the romantic units contain ceiling frescoes teeming with cherubs and mythical heroes. Each also has a roomy private bathroom, clad in marble or tile, with robes and deluxe toiletries.

13, quai du Mont-Blanc, CH-1201 Genève. ☎ **022/716-66-66.** Fax 022/716-60-60. www.beau-rivage.ch. 94 units. 620F–1,200F ($508–$984/£264–£512) double; from 1,900F ($1,558/£810) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 40F ($33/£17). Bus: 1. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; room service; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, Wi-Fi.

Le Richemond ★★★ Le Richemond, which counts some of the world's most prominent people among its guests, has for years been identified as the greatest hotel in Geneva. But since its takeover by the U.K.-based Rocco Forte chain and the insertion, throughout 2007, of millions of dollars of the finest decorative design that love or money can buy, the hotel has reemerged as the Geneva hotel that everybody is talking about. Erected in 1875, the neoclassical, travertine building has wrought-iron balustrades, each emblazoned with the letter "R," and is situated across the quayside boulevard from the lake, across from a small park. Accommodations range from the most spacious in the city to medium in size; nearly half of the units here are suites, attracting all of Europe, plus international CEOs. This is true Grand Hotel living, with elegant fabrics, tasteful upholstery, and luxurious beds, plus spacious marble bathrooms with robes and a basket of expensive toiletries. ***Note:*** Prices below may have gone up by the time you read this.

Jardin Brunswick, CH-1201 Genève. ✆ **022/715-70-00.** Fax 022/715-70-01. www.lerichemond.com. 98 units. 580F–950F ($476–$779/£248–£405) double; from 1,650F ($1,353/£704) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 50F ($41/£21). Bus: 1. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; fitness center; salon; room service; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, Wi-Fi.

Expensive

Le Warwick ★ Kids This contemporary and solidly reliable hotel, located across from the train station, was built during the 1970s. The abstractly modern lobby contains sweeping staircases, loggias, balconies, marble floors, and Oriental rugs. On hand is a large but somewhat depersonalized and anonymous-looking staff in the kind of smart, upscale uniforms which evoke a hotel that's a bit grander than it really is. The refurbished, soundproof bedrooms are often sunny, boldly patterned, and comfortable, with marble bathrooms. Le Warwick allows children up to 12 years of age to stay free in their parent's room. Its brasserie is open for light meals and snacks all day long.

14, rue de Lausanne, CH-1201 Genève. ✆ **800/203-3232** in the U.S. and Canada, or 022/716-80-00. Fax 022/716-80-01. www.warwickgeneva.com. 167 units. 460F ($377/£196) double; from 600F ($492/£256) suite. Children 12 and under stay free in parents room. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 18F ($15/£7.80). **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; room service; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, Wi-Fi.

Moderate

Best Western Strasbourg & Univers ★ Set close to the railway station on a tranquil dead-end street, this building was originally constructed around 1900 by a nostalgic entrepreneur originally from Strasbourg. Over the years many different renovations, both inside and out, have kept it looking fresh and new, albeit bland and uncontroversial. Some of the bedrooms have wooden surfaces and pastel colors; others are comfortably and traditionally conservative. The bedrooms, as befits a turn-of-the-20th-century hotel, range from spacious (usually on the lower floors) to a bit cramped. Each bedroom has fine linens, plus compact bathrooms with tile and decent plumbing.

10, rue Pradier, CH-1201 Genève. ✆ **800/528-1234** in the U.S., or 022/906-58-00. Fax 022/906-58-14. www.bestwestern.com. 51 units. 250F–270F ($205–$221/£107–£115) double; 400F–500F ($328–$410/£171–£213) suite. Rates include continental breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 12, 13, or 44. **Amenities:** Lounge; room service; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV, minibar, beverage maker, hair dryer, iron/board, safe, Wi-Fi.

Hôtel Edelweiss This brown-and-white, eight-story hotel towers above its neighbors within the bustling, working-class Pâquis neighborhood, a short walk from the hyper-expensive quai du Président-Wilson. Inside, it has a rustic decor that contrasts with its modern exterior. The bedrooms are cozy and furnished with pine-wood furniture crafted in a country-Swiss style. Even though it's in the heart of Geneva, you get provincial comfort here and a sense of high-alpine Switzerland far from the monied, urban gloss of modern-day Geneva. (Fans praise it as a short-term substitute for a trip to Switzerland's mountainous interior.) Bedrooms are medium in size with sitting areas and desk space. Bathrooms, although small and plain, are neatly kept. Built in the early 1960s, the hotel is frequently spruced up.

2, place de la Navigation, CH-1201 Genève. ✆ **022/544-51-51.** Fax 022/544-51-99. www.manotel.com/edelweiss. 42 units. 210F–330F ($172–$271/£89–£141) double. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: 1. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; lounge; room service; laundry/dry cleaning service. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, Wi-Fi.

Inexpensive

Hôtel Bel'Espérance Value Appealingly located at the gateway to Old Town, close to the lake, this is a decent, completely unpretentious budget hotel managed by the Salvation Army. It's not bare-bones, though: It has well-furnished, good-size bedrooms, accompanied by private bathroom (some with a shower, others with a tub/shower). Many rooms are suitable for up to four people, and the most desirable units open onto a private balcony with a view of the Cathédrale de St. Pierre.

1, rue de la Vallée, CH-1204 Genève. ☎ **022/818-37-37.** Fax 022/818-37-73. www.hotel-bel-esperance.ch. 40 units. 150F–190F ($123–$156/£64–£81) double; 180F–200F ($148–$164/£77–£85) triple. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: 8. **Amenities:** Breakfast room; coin-operated laundry. *In room:* TV.

Hôtel International & Terminus *Kids* This hotel lies across the street from the main entrance of Geneva's railway station. Originally built in 1900, it has been radically upgraded, with pairs of smaller rooms reconfigured into larger units especially good for families. Rated three stars by the local tourist board, the hotel offers exceedingly good value. The small to spacious bedrooms are fitted with first-rate furnishings and the maintenance level is high. Bathrooms seem to have been added as an afterthought in areas not designed for them, and are a bit cramped with shower stalls.

20, rue des Alpes, CH-1201 Genève. ☎ **022/906-97-77.** Fax 022/906-97-78. www.international-terminus.ch. 60 units. 160F–280F ($131–$230/£68–£120) double. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant; lounge. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

Hôtel St-Gervais One of the simplest hotels we recommend in this guide, the St-Gervais is inside an old-fashioned, vaguely nondescript building in Geneva's medieval core, a 3-minute walk from Gare Cornavin. Although it has quirky idiosyncrasies that appeal to architects and historic renovators, some guests have expressed annoyance at having to navigate their way to the upper floors with a lot of luggage. Fortunately, there's a cramped elevator on-site. The place is minimalist but comfortable, with an emphasis on durable, functionalist furniture. You get routine rooms here, and well-worn but still comfortable beds. As for plumbing, you most often have to settle for just a sink, although the hotel maintains an adequate number of hallway bathrooms, which are kept very tidy. Rooms with private bathrooms are also well maintained and come equipped with tub/shower combos.

20, rue des Corps-Saints, CH-1201 Genève. ☎ **022/732-45-72.** Fax 022/731-42-90. www.stgervais-geneva.ch. 26 units, 3 with bathroom. 115F ($94/£49) double without bathroom; 140F ($115/£60) double with bathroom. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Bar.

ON THE LEFT BANK

Expensive

Hôtel de la Cigogne ★★★ Personalized and charming, this is our favorite Left Bank hotel, a chic, glamorous retreat for the discerning. Combined with an adjoining building, the old hotel and its mate have the renovated facades of the original 18th- and 19th-century structures. With three sheltered courtyards overlooking a flowering plaza, this is one of the most tranquil hotels in Geneva. The bedrooms contain handmade mattresses, luxurious bathrooms, and bed linens embroidered with the hotel's coat of arms. Each bedroom is furnished differently, ranging from 1930s movie-mogul style to the "baron and baroness at their country place." Some units have working fireplaces.

17, place Longemalle, CH-1204 Genève. ☎ **022/818-40-40.** Fax 022/818-40-50. www.cigogne.ch. 52 units. 480F–595F ($394–$488/£205–£254) double; 840F–940F ($689–$771/£358–£401) suite. Rates include continental breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 27F ($22/£11). **Amenities:** Restaurant; room service; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

Moderate

Hotel Tiffany ★ *Value* This charming little five-story Belle Epoque boutique hotel lies on a Left Bank street 3 blocks south of the river and about a 12-minute stroll from the center and the lake. Although it can hardly match the style and glamour of the lakeside palaces, it's attractive in its own modest way, featuring touches like stained glass, Art Nouveau bed frames, leather-clad armchairs, and a summertime sidewalk cafe. In its category, it offers some of the most reasonable prices in Geneva, especially considering its style. Bedrooms are midsize with lots of extras, including soundproofing and spacious bathrooms. We prefer the rooms in the "attic," with their beams, rooftop vistas, and sloping walls.

1, rue des Marbriers, CH-1204 Genève. ✆ **022/708-16-16.** Fax 022/708-16-17. www.hotel-tiffany.ch. 46 units. 350F–425F ($287–$349/£149–£182) double; from 510F ($418/£217) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; fitness room; room service; massage; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

Inexpensive

Hôtel Central Confusingly located on the fifth, sixth, and seventh floors of a prominent building erected in 1924, this hotel has been a haven for cost-conscious visitors to Geneva since 1928. You'll find a very modern format, with a minimalist interior, on a street lined with banks and upscale shops. You'll register in the sixth-floor reception area. Know in advance that the smallest rooms have two-tiered bunk beds, toilets in alcoves off the hallway, and very little space. The more expensive rooms are bigger and more comfortable. All rooms are equipped with a shower and sink. Be alert that the reception staff is available only from 7am to 9pm, so if you're planning on a late-night check-in, make prior arrangements.

2, rue de la Rôtisserie, CH-1204 Genéve. ✆ **022/818-81-00.** Fax 022/818-81-01. www.hotelcentral.ch. 32 units, 28 with private toilet. 100F ($82/£43) double without toilet; 110F–165F ($90–$135/£47–£70) double with toilet; 205F ($168/£87) suite. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: 12. **Amenities:** Room service. *In room:* TV, Wi-Fi.

WHERE TO DINE

ON THE RIGHT BANK

Very Expensive

Le Chat-Botté ★★★ FRENCH This grand restaurant is in one of the fanciest hotels in Geneva. Suitably decorated with tapestries, sculpture, and rich upholstery, with a polite and correct staff, it serves some of the best food in the city. There are some critics who consider it among the best restaurants of Europe. If the weather is right, you can dine on the flower-bedecked terrace, overlooking the Jet d'Eau. The meals are expensive but worth the price. The cuisine, although inspired by French classics, is definitely contemporary. Some of the most enticing items on the menu include carpaccio with black olives and Parmesan cheese, poached wing of skate in an herb-flavored sauce, and oven-roasted Sisteron lamb with stuffed vegetables. The chef's best-known dish is a delicate filet of perch from Lake Geneva, which is sautéed until it's golden. Finish with one of the day's freshly made desserts.

In the Hôtel Beau-Rivage, 13, quai du Mont-Blanc. ✆ **022/716-69-20.** Reservations highly recommended. Main courses 56F–89F ($46–$73/£24–£38); fixed-price menus 65F–180F ($53–$148/£28–£77). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily noon–2pm and 7–9:45pm. Bus: 1.

Spices ★★ INTERNATIONAL There's something yummy and mellow-looking about the tawny decor of this restaurant, positioned off the sprawling lobby of the Hotel Président Wilson. It's the best-decorated and most exciting hotel restaurant in Geneva, with big windows overlooking the lake and staff that seems to be able to handle, discreetly, virtually anything this hotel's spectacularly international clientele can throw at it. Menu items change with the season and the inspiration of the chef, but are likely to include warm marinated salmon with sage and a wasabi-flavored pistou;

a sweet-and-sour combination of freshwater crayfish with Maine lobster; Chinese-style raviolis stuffed with foie gras of duckling with a ginger-flavored cream sauce; line-caught sea bass fried with Sicilian artichokes; grilled tuna steak with miso, lime, mango salad, and Szechuan-style eggplant; and an absolutely superb version of breast of Bresse chicken where, on one platter, you'll find versions braised with teriyaki and stuffed with foie gras.

In the Hotel Président Wilson, 47, quai Wilson. ☎ **022/906-65-52.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 67F–75F ($55–$62/£29–£32); set-price menus 85F–140F ($70–$115/£36–£60). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri 12:30–2:30pm; Mon–Sat 7:30–9:30pm.

Windows ★ CONTINENTAL This is one of the least-publicized restaurants along this edge of the lake, but we have always found it utterly charming. Flooded with sunlight from large panoramic windows, and permeated with an undeniably upscale but discreet and rather clubby sense of old-fashioned exclusivity, it attracts a clientele of French-Swiss politicians, film industry personnel, writers, and the merely rich. Menu items change with the seasons, but are likely to include orange-marinated chicken cutlets with a yogurt-flavored avocado sauce and Bulgar wheat; zucchini flowers stuffed with eggplant "caviar" and Provençal herbs; asparagus and Roquefort soup; roasted *omble chevalier,* a whitefish from the nearby lake, served with a reduction of carrot juice and a passion-fruit-flavored butter sauce; and pan-fried veal cutlets served with a demi-glacé of veal drippings and green asparagus. If you happen to be walking along the quais between 3 and 5pm, consider dropping into this place for high tea (29F/$24/£13 per person), which includes finger sandwiches and pastries.

In the Hotel Angleterre, 17, quai du Mont-Blanc. ☎ **022/906-55-55.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 49F–64F ($40–$52/£21–£27). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily noon–10pm. Bus: 1.

EXPENSIVE

La Perle du Lac ★ SWISS Situated in a single-story pavilion owned by the city, this is the only restaurant in Geneva that's not separated from the waters of the lake by a stream of traffic. It's set beneath the venerable trees of Mon Repos Park, not far from the United Nations complex. Although the candlelit interior is lovely, you may want to reserve a table on the outdoor terrace in warm weather. Specialties, each delectable, include line-caught, grilled sea wolf with fresh fennel and olive oil, and braised strips of freshwater lake fish flavored with saffron. Ravioli appears in an unusual version stuffed with fresh watercress. The sorbets—ask for a mixture—are superb. The real allure here involves competent but not necessarily inspired cuisine, and a location and lakeside setting that more than compensates.

128, rue de Lausanne. ☎ **022/731-79-35.** www.laperledulac.ch. Reservations required. Main courses 35F–95F ($29–$78/£15–£41); fixed-price menu 86F–120F ($71–$98/£37–£51). AE, DC, MC, V. Tues–Sun noon–2pm and 7:30–10pm. Closed Dec 22–Jan 25. Bus: 4 or 44.

Moderate

Chez Jacky ★ Finds SWISS This provincial bistro should be better known, although it already attracts everyone from grandmothers to young skiers en route to Verbier. It's the domain of Jacky Gruber, an exceptional chef from the Valais. There's subtlety in Monsieur Gruber's cooking that suggests the influence of his mentor, Frédy Giradet, hailed as Switzerland's greatest chef before his recent retirement. The chef tirelessly seeks the most select produce for his imaginative and innovative dishes, and he continues to dazzle his regular clients year after year, winning new converts as well. You may begin with Chinese cabbage and mussels and continue with filet of turbot roasted with thyme or perhaps beautifully prepared pink duck on a bed of spinach with a confit of onions. Be prepared to wait for each course, though.

11, rue Jacques-Necker. ✆ **022/732-86-80.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 42F–46F ($34–$38/£18–£20); fixed-price menus 66F–78F ($54–$64/£28–£33). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri 11am–2pm and 6:30–11pm. Closed 1st week of Jan and July 15–Aug 20. Bus: 5, 10, or 44.

Le Boeuf Rouge LYONNAIS Few other restaurants in Geneva's center work so hard to bring you an authentic version of the brasserie-style cuisine of Lyon, and although the place isn't as famous or as much talked about as it was during its 1980s heyday, it's still a viable dining choice. You'll find such dishes as Lyonnais sausage with scalloped potatoes, chateaubriand in red-wine sauce, blood sausage, and quenelles of pikeperch—any of which might be preceded by a delectable version of onion soup or green salad with croutons and bacon. The decor is appealingly kitschy, complete with lots of Art Nouveau posters and late-19th-century ceramics. The staff here is brusque but kind.

17, rue Alfred-Vincent (corner of rue Paquis). ✆ **022/732-75-37.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 34F–55F ($28–$45/£15–£23). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri noon–2pm and 7–10:30pm; Sat 7–10pm. Bus: 1.

Inexpensive

Jeck's Place ★ THAI/SINGAPORE Near the Gare Cornavin, this place is a delight. It's like taking a culinary trip to Southeast Asia, with stopovers in such places as China, Malaysia, Thailand, and India. Escaping from the traffic outside, you enter a warm and friendly enclave, where Jeck Tan of Singapore will greet you. The cuisine of Asian specialties provides temptation with every order, and the trays of delicacies are brought out by waitresses in sarongs. The specials of the day will be seasoned with delicate blends of spices, notably lemon grass and curry, but also chili and ganlaga (from the ginger family). We often make a meal of the appetizers alone, including homemade steamed dumplings stuffed with a blend of pork and vegetables flavored with coriander. The house specialty, and our favorite dish, is Jeck's chicken in green curry.

14, rue de Neuchâtel. ✆ **022/731-33-03.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 21F–36F ($17–$30/£8.85–£16); special lunch platter 14F ($11/£5.70). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri 11:30am–2pm; daily 6:30–10pm. Bus: 4, 5, or 9.

ON THE LEFT BANK

Moderate

Brasserie de l'Hotel de Ville ★ *Finds* SWISS This is one of the most deliberately archaic-looking restaurants in Geneva, with a reputation that dates from 1764 and a clientele that prefers that absolutely nothing changes in either its old-fashioned decor or its choice of dishes. In spite of its look, it's rather hip and popular with the Genevois, as well as a growing number of arts-industry hipsters and affluent members of the bourgeoisie, who appreciate the place for its old-fashioned charm. Be aware that this place doesn't have a lot of patience with diners who aren't familiar with dining rituals as practiced in an upscale brasserie, and the staff can be brusque. Nonetheless, we continue to recommend it as we would a time capsule from another era. Within a dining room loaded with antique or semiantique kitsch, you'll be joined by antiques dealers and clients from the local antiques shops, as well as occasional celebrities. Try the filets of freshwater lake perch meunière, or an old-fashioned dish that remains on the menu, Longeole du val d'Arve (traditional Geneva-style sausages flavored with cumin). You can also order rack of lamb flavored with herbs of Provence, along with a seasonal focus on asparagus, mushrooms, and game dishes. We always like to launch ourselves with a fresh dandelion salad with medallions of sautéed duck liver.

19, Grand-Rue. ✆ **022/311-70-30.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 27F–45F ($22–$37/£11–£19); fixed-price menu 59F ($48/£25). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 11:30am–11:30pm. Bus: 36.

Brasserie Lipp SWISS Located on the ground floor of a modern shopping complex, this bustling restaurant is named after the famous Parisian brasserie, and when you enter, you'll think you've been transported to Paris. Waiters in black jackets with long white aprons are constantly rushing about with platters of food. The menu contains a sampling of French bistro dishes. Like its Parisian namesake, the Geneva Lipp specializes in several versions of charcuterie. You can also order three kinds of *pot-au-feu* and such classic dishes as a Toulousian cassoulet with *confit de canard* (duckling). The fresh oysters are among the best in the city.

In Confédération-Centre, 8, rue de la Confédération. ✆ **022/311-10-11.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 28F–47F ($23–$39/£12–£20); *plats du jour* 19F–37F ($16–$30/£8.30–£16) lunch only; fixed-price menus 60F–80F ($49–$66/£26–£34). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 11:45am–12:15am. Bus: 12.

La Coupole SWISS This is a true brasserie—far more elegant than its Parisian namesake. The place is more popular at noon than it is at night. Fanciful and fun, it's dotted with grandfather clocks, a bronze Venus, Edwardian palms, and comfortable banquettes. The menu is limited but well selected; the *cuisine du marché* (fare with local and seasonal ingredients) is a delight, although many patrons stick to the standard old red-meat bistro specials such as the inevitable entrecôte.

116, rue du Rhône. ✆ **022/787-50-10.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 32F–46F ($26–$38/£14–£29); fixed-price menu 40F–45F ($33–$37/£17–£19). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat 11:30am–2:30pm and 7–11pm. Bus: 2, 9, or 22. Tram: 12.

La Favola ★ TUSCAN/ITALIAN Don't expect anything large or standardized if you opt for a meal in this supremely ethnic Tuscan-style restaurant. It's the best Italian restaurant in Geneva, and its most devoted habitués hail it as the best restaurant in Geneva, period. Set a few steps from the Cathédrale de St. Pierre, it contains only two cramped dining rooms; the family-managed staff would be a lot more comfortable speaking Italian than the clipped versions of French you're likely to hear in most other restaurants in Geneva. The menu is small but choice, varying with the availability of ingredients and the seasons. Look for such delightful dishes as carpaccio of beef; *vitello tonnato* (paper-thin veal with a tuna sauce); lobster salad; potato salad with cèpe mushrooms; such pastas as fresh ravioli with either eggplant or bolet mushrooms; and a luscious version of tortellini stuffed with ricotta, meat juices, red wine, and herbs. Meat and fish vary daily. Don't even think of coming here on weekends, as the place is closed.

15, rue Calvin. ✆ **022/311-74-37.** Reservations required. Main courses 24F–60F ($20–$49/£10–£26). AE, MC, V. Mon–Fri noon–2pm and 7:15–10pm. Closed 2 weeks in July–Aug and 1 week at Christmas. Tram: 12.

Inexpensive

Au Pied de Cochon ★ *Finds* LYONNAIS/SWISS Named after a restaurant at Les Halles in Paris, this is the best place to go in Geneva for hearty Lyonnais fare if you don't mind the smoke and the noise. The setting is *fin de siècle,* with a staff dressed entirely in black and white. A lot of young people, artists, and local workers dine here, as well as lawyers from the Palais de Justice across the way. The cooking is as grandmother used to prepare it, provided she came from the Lyon area. Naturally, the namesake *pieds de cochon* (pigs' feet) is included on the menu, along with tender alpine lamb, grilled anguillettes, and tripe.

4, place du Bourg-de-Four. ✆ **022/310-47-97.** www.pied-de-cochon.ch. Reservations recommended. Main courses 34F–45F ($28–$37/£15–£19). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 7:30am–2:30pm and 6:30pm–midnight. Closed Sun June–Aug. Bus: 2 or 7. Tram: 12.

L'Aïoli *Finds* PROVENÇAL Named after the famous garlic sauce of Provence, this popular neighborhood restaurant stands opposite Le Corbusier's Maison de Verre. Something of a local secret, it offers personalized service and some of the finest Provençal cooking in town. Among the featured dishes are lamb gigot, frogs' legs Provençal, scampi Provençal and a delectable *pot-au-feu* of beef. Look for the daily specials, such as a savory, Provence-derived lamb stew called *gardiane camarguaise.*

6, rue Adrien-Lachenal. ✆ **022/736-79-71.** Reservations not required. Main courses 17F–35F ($14–$29/£7.30–£15). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Sat 11am–2:30pm and 7–10:30pm. Closed Aug. Bus: 1 or 6. Tram: 12.

Le Lyrique SWISS Le Lyrique contains both a formal restaurant and a brasserie. The restaurant opened in 1981 but was cleverly patterned on turn-of-the-20th-century models. It bustles with urban vitality and is very tuned to the arts and business lives of Geneva. The restaurant is only open on Saturday and Sunday when there's a special presentation at the Grand Théâtre de Genève, just a short distance away. The brasserie, which has a terrace, is open all day but serves hot meals only during the hours mentioned below. In the restaurant you can try such carefully prepared dishes as filet of sea wolf with grapefruit, a roulade of rabbit with pasta maison, and tagliatelle with scampi. In the brasserie, menu items include chicken supreme with ravioli and leeks, and an *assiette Lyrique,* a meal in itself that combines four vegetarian and fish dishes—tartare of salmon, tartare of vegetables, terrine of vegetables, and eggplant "caviar."

12, bd. du Théâtre. ✆ **022/328-00-95.** Reservations recommended. Restaurant main courses 29F–47F ($24–$39/£13–£20); fixed-price menu 63F ($52/£27). Brasserie main courses 27F–35F ($22–$29/£11–£15); fixed-price menu 42F–54F ($34–$44/£18–£23). AE, MC, V. Mon–Fri noon–2pm and 6:30–10pm. Bus: 2 or 22.

Nô Sushi *Value* JAPANESE Popular, hip, and mobbed every day at lunchtime, this is a large, high-ceilinged space devoted to a labyrinth of countertops that merge into the most bemusing and whimsical Japanese restaurant in town. It would probably remind you of an old-fashioned luncheonette, except for a winding conveyer belt that exposes everything that's listed on the menu to the view of its clients. This is the only automated sushi bar in Switzerland, and as such, adds an eccentric and trend-conscious flair to a neighborhood that's better known for its relative conservatism. You'll know how much something costs by the color of the platter that contains it. You can pluck everything except the miso soup, which is carried to your seat by a waitress, directly from the moving conveyer belt.

Confédération Centre, 8, rue de la Confédération. ✆ **022/810-39-73.** Reservations not necessary. Sushi, sashimi, rolls, and small platters 12F–18F ($9.85–$15/£5.10–£7.80). AE, MC, V. Mon–Thurs 11:30am–midnight; Fri–Sat 11:30am–1am. Bus: 12.

Sam-Lor Thai ("The Tricycle") *Value* THAI Unpretentious, and something of an insiders' secret, hip, cost-conscious Genevois have been coming here for years. It was the first Thai restaurant in the bustling Paquis district, sprawling unexpectedly within a pair of battered side-by-side buildings separated by a corridor that's illuminated with a greenhouse-style skylight. Prices here are reasonable by anyone's standards, and in high-priced Geneva, very welcome. Menu items include at least four kinds of both chicken and pork (including versions with either red or green curry, with ginger, or with white pepper and garlic); monkfish with tamarind sauce; noodles sautéed with tofu and garlic; duck meat with red curry and coconut; and vermicelli with shrimp, brought to table in an iron pot that's continually heated with a burning candle.

17, rue de Monthoux. ✆ **022/738-80-55.** Reservations recommended on Fri–Sat nights. Main courses 14F–29F ($11–$24/£5.70–£13). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Fri noon–2pm; Mon–Thurs 7–10pm (until 10:30pm Fri–Sat). Bus: 1.

Taverne de la Madeleine *Value* SWISS Robust, unpretentious, and known for its no-nonsense approach to serving well-prepared, cost-conscious food, this restaurant—one of the oldest in Geneva—is set against the old city wall beside the Eglise de la Madeleine. If you're having difficulty finding the address, just circle the church, and the old three-story house will be on the corner of rue des Barrières. Inside are bistro tables, red cafe chairs, and a brusquely efficient staff catering to the lunchtime business crowd. The establishment is operated by a philanthropic organization that forbids the consumption of alcohol. Specials include four types of pasta, vegetarian sandwiches, and such hearty fare as a big plate of osso buco with *pommes frites* (Belgian fries). Menu items also include an *émincé* of Indian-style chicken with curry sauce and rice, piccata of turkey Milanese with tomato sauce and spaghetti, and filet of lake perch prepared meunière style or Vevey style with exotic mushrooms.

20, rue Toutes-Ames. ✆ **022/310-60-70.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 18F–30F ($15–$25/£7.80–£13); *plat du jour* 17F ($14/£7.30). MC, V. Sept–June Mon–Fri 7:30am–6:30pm (last food order at 4pm), Sat 9am–4:30pm (last food order at 2:30pm); July–Aug Tues–Sat 7:30am–9pm. Bus: 2. Tram: 12.

THE TOP ATTRACTIONS

In addition to the sites listed below, Geneva's other top attractions—all premier sights—are the **Jet d'Eau,** the famous fountain that has virtually become the city's symbol; the **Flower Clock,** in the Jardin Anglais, with 6,500 flowers (it was the world's first when it was inaugurated in the 1950s; today, it's less of a show-stopper); and **Old Town,** the oldest part of the city.

Musée Ariana ★★ This Italian Renaissance building was constructed by Gustave Revilliod, the 19th-century Genevese patron who began the collection. Today it's one of the top porcelain, glass, and pottery museums in Europe. You'll see Sèvres, Delft faïence, and Meissen porcelain, as well as pieces from Japan and China. It's also the headquarters of the International Academy of Ceramics.

10, av. de la Paix. ✆ **022/418-54-50.** Free admission to the permanent collection; temporary exhibitions 5F ($4.10/£2.15) adults, 3F ($2.45/£1.25) for children 18 and under. Wed–Mon 10am–5pm. Bus: 8 or F.

Musée d'Art et Contemporain (MAMCO) ★ Some 20 years in the making, Geneva's first modern art museum opened in 1994 in a former factory building, and immediately evoked comparisons to some of the excellent collections of modern art in Paris. This prestigious showcase displays a vast collection of European and American art covering the last 4 decades. Out of some 1,000 works of art owned by the museum, only 300 are permanently on display. This space is packed with all the big names—Frankenthaler, Stela, Segal, and others. Space is set aside for changing exhibitions.

10, rue des Vieux-Grenadiers. ✆ **022/320-61-22.** Admission 8F ($6.55/£3.40) adults, 6F ($4.90/£2.55) students, free for children 17 and under. Tues–Fri noon–6pm; Sat–Sun 11am–6pm. Bus: 1 or 32.

Musée d'Art et d'Histoire ★★ At Geneva's most important museum, displays include prehistoric relics, Greek vases, medieval stained glass, 12th-century armor, Swiss timepieces, Flemish and Italian paintings, and Switzerland's largest collection of Egyptian art. The Etruscan pottery and medieval furniture are both impressive. A 1444 altarpiece by Konrad Witz depicts the "miraculous" draft of fishes. Many galleries also contain works by such artists as Rodin, Renoir, Hodler, Vallotton, Le Corbusier, Picasso, Chagall, Corot, Monet, and Pissarro.

2, rue Charles-Galland (between bd. Jacques-Dalcroze and bd. Helvétique). ✆ **022/418-26-00.** www.ville-ge.ch/mah. Free admission. 5F ($4.10/£2.15) temporary exhibitions adults, 3F ($2.45/£1.25) for children under 18. Tues–Sun 10am–5pm. Bus: 1, 3, 5, 8, or 17.

Musée International de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge (International Red Cross and Red Crescent Museum) ★ Across from the European headquarters of the United Nations you can experience the legendary past of the Red Cross in the city where it started. The dramatic story from 1863 to the present is revealed through displays of documents, photographs, films, multiscreen slide shows, and cycloramas.

17, av. de la Paix. ✆ **022/748-95-25.** www.micr.org. Free admission. Wed–Mon 10am–5pm. Bus: 8, F, V, or Z.

ORGANIZED TOURS

If you're new in Geneva and want an easy-to-digest breakdown of the way the city is divided into various neighborhoods and districts, consider a trolley-car tour. Departing from the south bank's Place du Rhône (May–Dec 24 only), red-painted, open-sided trolley cars meander through neighborhoods that include the city's medieval center, the glossy shopping districts, and the hotel and museum-studded precincts of the river's north bank. Trams depart at 45-minute intervals every day between 10am and 5:15pm, last about 45 minutes, and cost 9.90F ($8.10/£4.20) for adults and 6.90F ($5.65/£2.95) for children. For more information, contact **STT Trains Tours S.A.,** 36 bd. St-Georges (✆ **022/781-04-04**).

A 2-hour City Tour is operated daily all year by **Key Tours S.A.,** 7, rue des Alpes, square du Mont-Blanc (✆ **022/731-41-40**). The tour starts from the Gare Routière, the bus station at place Dorcière, near the Key Tours office. From November to March the tour is offered only once a day at 2pm, but from April to October two tours leave daily at 10am and 2pm. A bus will drive you through the city to see the monuments, landmarks, and lake promenades. In the Old Town you can take a walk down to the Bastions Park and the Reformation Wall. After a tour through the International Center, where you'll be shown the headquarters of the International Red Cross, the bus returns to its starting place. Adults pay 45F ($37/£19) and children 4 to 12 accompanied by an adult are charged 23F ($19/£9.90), while children 3 and under go free.

Additionally, two companies offer cruises along the lake. The smaller of the two, **Mouettes Genevoises Navigation,** 8, quai du Mont-Blanc (✆ **022/732-47-47;** www.swissboat.com), specializes in small-scale boats carrying only about 100 passengers at a time. Each features some kind of prerecorded commentary, in French and English, throughout. The company's 2¾-hour **Tour du Rhône (Rhône River Tour)** departs May to September Wednesday, Saturday, and Sunday at 10am and 2:15pm. It costs 17F ($14/£7.30) for adults and 12F ($9.85/£5.10) for children 4 to 12; it's free for children 3 and under. The same company also offers 1¼-hour tours (four times a day) and 2-hour tours (twice a day) out onto the lake. The longer tour includes a prerecorded commentary on the celebrity residences and ecology of the lake en route. These tours cost 13F ($11/£5.70) for the shorter and 30F ($25/£13) for the longer. No stops are made en route.

Mouettes Genevoises Navigation's largest competitor, **CGN (Compagnie Générale de Navigation),** quai du Mont-Blanc (✆ **0848/811-848;** www.cgn.ch), offers roughly equivalent tours that last an hour, departing six to seven times a day (depending on

A Tour to Mont Blanc ★★★

If you have time, we highly recommend a Mont Blanc excursion, which is an all-day trip to Chamonix by bus and a cable-car ride to the summit of the Aiguille du Midi (3,783m/12,408 ft.). The tour leaves Geneva at 8:30am and returns at 6pm daily. Buses leave from the bus station (Gare Routière). You must take your passport with you.

Other mechanized ascents that are part of this tour are to Vallée Blanche by télécabin, an extension of the Aiguille du Midi climb, from April to October; to Mer de Glâce via electric rack railway to the edge of the glacier, from which you may descend to the ice grotto (the climb is not available in the winter); and to Le Brevent, an ascent by cable car to a rocky belvedere at 2,370m (7,900 ft.), facing the Mont Blanc range. Lunch is included.

An English-speaking guide will accompany your bus tour. **Key Tours S.A.,** 7, rue des Alpes (place du Mont-Blanc; Case Postale 1745), CH-1211 Genève (✆ **022/731-41-40**), operator of the excursions, requires a minimum of eight people per trip. Tours start at 240F ($197/£102), including a ride up the mountain.

the season) from the company's piers along quai du Mont-Blanc. Known as "Les Belles Rives Genevoises," they charge 15F ($12/£6.25) for adults and 8F ($6.55/£3.40) for children 6 to 16; children 5 and under ride free. Tours include prerecorded commentaries and are, frankly, about as long in duration as many short-term visitors to the city really want.

SHOPPING

From boutiques to department stores, Geneva is a shopper's dream come true. The city, of course, is known for its watches and jewelry, but it's also a good place to buy embroidered blouses, music boxes from the Jura region, cuckoo clocks from German Switzerland, cigars from Havana (not allowed into the United States), chocolate, Swiss Army knives, and many other items. Salespeople you'll encounter usually speak English and are very helpful. Most stores are open Monday to Friday 8am to 6:30pm and Saturday from 8am to 5pm.

SELECT SHOPS

The **Antiquorum,** 2, rue du Mont-Blanc. (✆ **022/909-28-50**), is the largest repository of antique timepieces in the world, with a reputation that's known to connoisseurs throughout the world. Most of its inventory consists of antique jewelry and antique watches. Almost everything is sold at auction, rather than over the counter.

The aroma from **Confiserie Rohr,** 3, place du Molard. (✆ **022/311-63-03;** www.chocolats-rohr.ch) practically pulls you in off the street. Among other specialties, you'll find chocolate-covered truffles, "gold" bars with hazelnuts, and *poubelles au chocolat* (chocolate "garbage pails").

Located opposite the Mont Blanc Bridge, **Bucherer,** 45, rue du Rhône (✆ **022/319-62-66;** www.bucherer.com), sells deluxe watches and diamonds. The store offers such name brands as Rolex, Piaget, Ebel, Baume & Mercier, Omega, Tissot, Rado, and Swatch. The third floor is filled with relatively inexpensive watches. You'll also find a large selection of cuckoo clocks, music boxes, embroideries, and souvenirs, as well as porcelain pill boxes and other gift items.

GENEVA AFTER DARK

For a listing of nightlife and cultural activities, free copies of the bilingual monthly *Genève Le Guide* (www.le-guide.ch) are distributed at hotel desks and tourist information centers.

THE PERFORMING ARTS

Ernst Ansermet founded Geneva's great **Orchestre de la Suisse Romande,** whose frequent concerts entertain music lovers at **Victoria Hall** (✆ **022/418-35-00;** www.osr.ch; tickets 10F–114F/$8.20–$93/£4.25–£48). For opera and ballet, there's the 1,500-seat **Grand Théâtre** (✆ **022/418-31-30;** www.geneveopera.ch; tickets 31F–181F/$25–$148/£13–£77 for opera, 24F–130F/$20–$107/£10–£56 for ballet), which welcomes Béjart, the Bolshoi, and other ballet companies, in addition to having a company of its own. The most startling and most centrally located theater and concert hall in Geneva, **Bâtiment des Forces Motrices (Le BFM),** stages an ongoing series of theater and musical concerts which are among the most controversial and iconoclastic in town; for tickets, which run 12F to 95F ($9.85–$78/£5.10–£41), contact Resaplus (✆ **0900/552-333;** www.resaplus.ch).

For a preview of events at the time of your visit, pick up a copy of the monthly "List of Events" issued by the tourist office.

THE BAR SCENE

The fashionable **Le Francis Bar,** 8, bd. Helvétique (✆ **022/346-32-52**), which, during headier days, attracted *le tout Genève* or "cream of the crop" of Geneva, still manages to transform itself into an attractive piano bar in the evening. Live piano music begins at 10pm.

At the other end of the spectrum, 20- and 30-something hipsters from all over Europe and the Middle East congregate at **Scandale,** 24 rue de Lausanne (✆ **022/731-84-38**), a site vaguely akin to a warehouse, that includes dining, drinking, and dancing facilities that seem to rock virtually every night it's open with a blend of house and electro-jazz music. Don't even ask about the gender preferences of the clientele here—everyone seems way beyond even attempting an easy and pat self-definition.

2 Bern & the Bernese Oberland

As the Swiss capital, Bern, with a relatively small population of only 130,000, is an important city of diplomats and the site of many international organizations and meetings. It's one of the oldest and loveliest cities in Europe, with origins going back to the 12th century. Since much of its medieval architecture remains today, Bern evokes the feeling of a large provincial town rather than a city. In 1983 the United Nations declared it a World Cultural Heritage.

The best center for exploring the Bernese Oberland is **Interlaken** (p. 1028), a popular summer resort. Summer and winter playgrounds are Gstaad, Grindelwald, Kandersteg, and Mürren. You can ski in the mountains in winter, and surf, sail, and water-ski on Lake Thun in summer.

ORIENTATION

GETTING THERE

BY PLANE The **Bern-Belp Airport** (✆ **031/960-21-11**) is 9.6km (6 miles) south of the city in the area of Belpmoos. International flights arrive from Munich, Rome, and London, but transatlantic jets are not able to land here. Fortunately, it's a short hop to Bern from the international airports in Zurich and Geneva. A taxi from the airport to the city center costs about 35F to 50F ($29–$41/£15–£21), so it's better to take the shuttle bus that runs between the airport and the Bahnhof (train station)—it costs 14F ($11/£5.70) one-way.

BY TRAIN Bern has direct connections to the Continental rail network that includes France, Italy, Germany, the Benelux countries, and even Scandinavia and Spain. The TGV high-speed train connects Paris with Bern in just 4½ hours. Bern also lies on major Swiss rail links, particularly those connecting Geneva (90 min.) and Zurich (58 min.). For **rail information** and schedules, call ✆ **0900/300-300.**

The **Bahnhof** rail station, on Bahnhofplatz, is right in the center of town near all the major hotels. If your luggage is light, you can walk to your hotel; otherwise, take one of the taxis waiting outside the station.

BY CAR Bern lies at a major expressway junction, with A1 coming in east from Zurich, A2 heading south from Basel, and A12 running north from Lake Geneva.

VISITOR INFORMATION

Bern Tourist Center, in the Bern Bahnhof, on Bahnhofplatz (✆ **031/328-12-12;** www.berninfo.com), is open June to September daily 9am to 8:30pm; October to May Monday to Saturday 9am to 6:30pm and on Sunday from 10am to 5pm.

CITY LAYOUT

MAIN ARTERIES & STREETS The geography of the city is neatly pressed into a relatively small area, so getting about is quite easy. You can walk to most of the major sights. **Altstadt,** or Old Town, lies on a high rocky plateau that juts out into a "loop" of the Aare River. A majority of the major hotels and attractions lie in this loop.

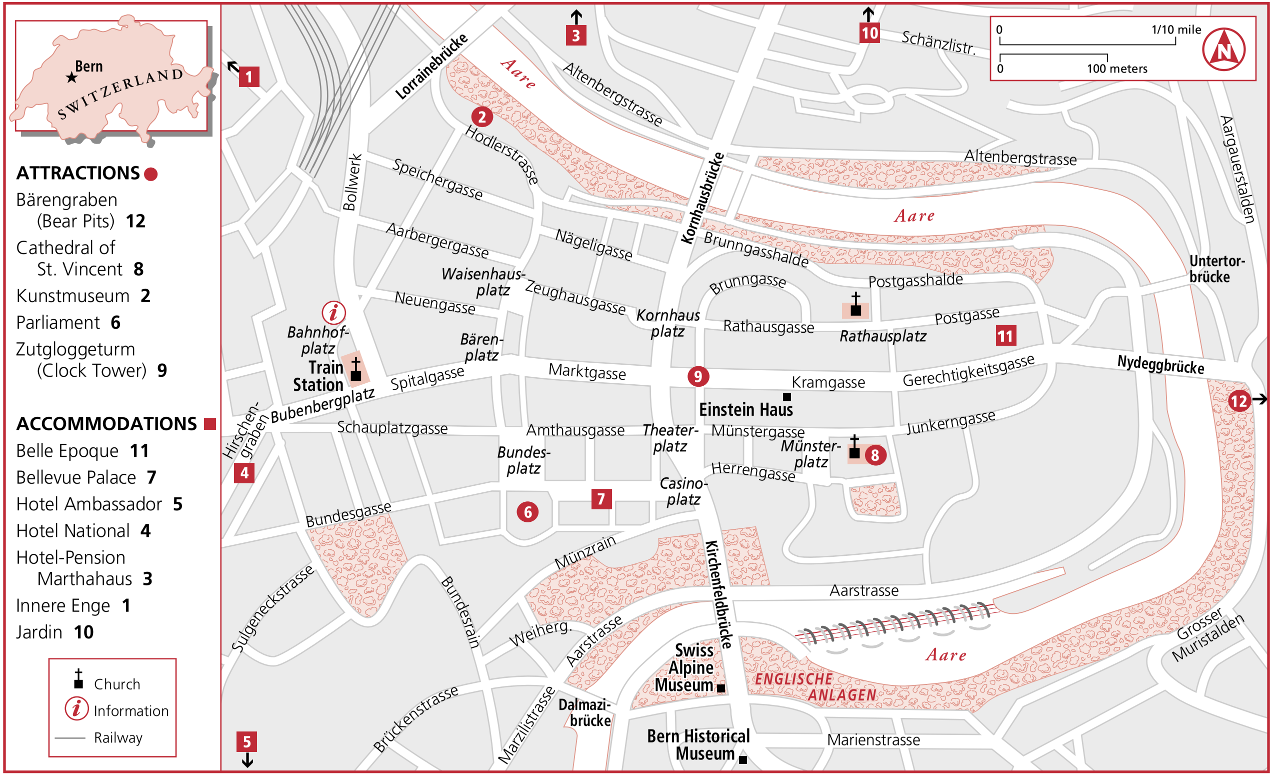
Most arrivals are at the Bahnhof on Bahnhofplatz, in the center of town. From here you can walk along the major arteries of Bern: **Spitalgasse, Marktgasse, Kramgasse,** and **Gerechtigkeitsgasse.** The town's major squares include **Theaterplatz,** with its famed Zytgloggeturm (Clock Tower), **Kornhausplatz** and its much-photographed Ogre Fountain, and **Rathausplatz,** on which stands the old Rathaus (town hall), seat of the cantonal government. The three major bridges crossing the Aare into this historic loop are **Kirchenfeldbrücke, Kornhausbrücke,** and **Lorrainebrücke.**

Neighborhoods in Brief

Only two of Bern's many neighborhoods are of particular interest to tourists:

Altstadt This is the heart of Bern, lying inside a bend of the Aare River. Filled with flower-decked fountains, it encompasses some 6km (3½ miles) of arcades and medieval streets, many reserved for pedestrians only. Its main street is Kramgasse, filled with luxury shops and 17th- and 18th-century houses.

South of the Aare You can reach this sprawling district by crossing the Kirchenfeldbrücke. The neighborhood has four major museums: Swiss Alpine Museum, Bern Historical Museum, Natural History Museum, and Museum of Communication.


Bern
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Untertor-brücke
Kirchenfeldbrücke
Dalmazi-brücke
Altenbergstrasse
Altenbergstrasse
Schänzlistr.
Aargauerstalden
Grosser Muristalden
Hodlerstrasse
Speichergasse
Bollwerk
Aarbergergasse
Nägeligasse
Brunngasshalde
Brunngasse
Postgasshalde
Postgasse
Rathausgasse
Rathausplatz
Waisenhaus-platz
Zeughausgasse
Kornhaus platz
Neuengasse
Bären-platz
Marktgasse
Kramgasse
Gerechtigkeitsgasse
Bahnhof-platz
Train Station
Spitalgasse
Bubenbergplatz
Hirschen-graben
Schauplatzgasse
Amthausgasse
Theater-platz
Münstergasse
Einstein Haus
Münster-platz
Junkerngasse
Herrengasse
Casino-platz
Bundes-platz
Bundesgasse
Münzrain
Aarstrasse
Aarstrasse
Weiherg.
Sulgeneckstrasse
Bundesrain
Brückenstrasse
Marzilistrasse
Swiss Alpine Museum
Bern Historical Museum
Marienstrasse
ENGLISCHE ANLAGEN
1
2
3
4
5
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7
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9
10
11
12

ATTRACTIONS ●

- Bärengraben (Bear Pits) **12**
- Cathedral of St. Vincent **8**
- Kunstmuseum **2**
- Parliament **6**
- Zutgloggeturm (Clock Tower) **9**

ACCOMMODATIONS 🟥

- Belle Epoque **11**
- Bellevue Palace **7**
- Hotel Ambassador **5**
- Hotel National **4**
- Hotel-Pension Marthahaus **3**
- Innere Enge **1**
- Jardin **10**

✝	Church
ⓘ	Information
—	Railway

GETTING AROUND

ON FOOT This is the only practical means of exploring Altstadt and its many attractions. You can see what there is to see here in about 2½ hours. Don't overlook the possibility of walks in Greater Bern, including Bern's own mountain, **Gurten,** a popular day-trip destination reached in 25 minutes by tram no. 9 and rack railway. Once here, you'll find walks in many directions and can enjoy a panorama over the Alps. There's also a children's playground. Walks in and around Bern include 250km (155 miles) of **marked rambling paths.**

For **jogging and running,** the best spots are the Aare River Run (Dalmaziquai), stretching 4km (2¼ miles), or the Aare River Run—Bear Pits, which is 5km (3 miles) long.

BY BUS & TRAM The public transportation system, the **Bernmobil,** is a reliable, 77km (48-mile) network of buses and trams. Before you board, purchase a ticket from one of the automatic machines (you'll find one at each stop) because conductors don't sell tickets. If you're caught traveling without one, you'll be fined 80F ($66/£34) in addition to the fare for the ride. A short-range ride (within six stations) costs 1.90F ($1.55/80p); a normal ticket, valid for 60 minutes one-way, goes for 3.60F ($2.95/£1.55). To save time and money, you might purchase a Bern Card (see description in "Fast Facts," below) which, among other benefits, entitles you to unlimited travel on the city's bus and tram lines.

BY TAXI You can catch a taxi at the public cab ranks, or call a dispatcher. **Nova Taxi** is at ✆ **031/331-33-13, Bären Taxi** at ✆ **031/371-11-11.** The basic rate is 6.80F ($5.60/£2.90), plus 3.40F ($2.80/£1.45) per kilometer.

BY CAR Seeing Bern by car is very impractical due to traffic congestion in Old Town, its confusing layout of one-way streets, and a lack of on-street parking. If you have a car, it's best to park in a public garage and explore the city on foot; its miles of arcades were designed to protect pedestrians from rain, snow, and traffic.

If you want to rent a car to explore the environs, arrangements can be made at **Europecar,** Laupenstrasse 22 (✆ **031/381-75-55**), **Hertz,** Kasinoplatz at Kochergasse 1 (✆ **031/318-21-60**), or **Avis,** Wabernstrasse 41 (✆ **031/378-15-15**).

BY BICYCLE Altstadt is compressed into such a small area that it's better to cover the historic district on foot rather than on a bike (bicycles aren't allowed on many pedestrian-only streets, anyway). However, in greater Bern and its environs, there are 399km (248 miles) of cycling paths. These are marked on a special cycling map available at the tourist center (see above). The narrow yellow lanes throughout the road network are reserved for bikers. The point of departure for most official routes is Bundesplatz in Parliament Square. Special red signs will guide you through a wide variety of landscapes. Bikes can be checked out free at the **Zeughausgasse** (✆ **079/277-28-57**).

FAST FACTS: Bern

Babysitters Babysitting can be arranged through most hotels. Try to make arrangements as far in advance as possible.

Bern Card Sold at any branch of the Bern Tourist Office, it entitles its holder to free admission to the permanent exhibitions within each of the city's museums;

unlimited free use of the city's bus and tram lines; and a 25% discount on guided walking tours of the old town, the Clock Tower tour, and rental of any audio-guide. Cards come in validation periods of 24, 48, and 72 hours and are priced as follows: cards valid for 24 hours cost 20F ($16/£8.30) for adults and 16F ($13/£6.75) for children 6 to 16 years old; cards valid for 48 hours cost 31F ($25/£13) for adults and 26F ($21/£11) for children; cards valid 72 hours cost 38F ($31/£16) for adults and 31F ($25/£13) for children. For info and sales, contact any branch of the Bern Tourist Office or call ✆ **031/328-12-12.**

Bookstores The best for English-language books is **Buchanlung Stauffacher,** Neuengasse 25-37 (✆ **031/313-63-63**).

Business Hours Banks are open Monday to Friday 8am to 4:30pm (on Thurs until 6pm). Most offices are open Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm, and on Saturday 9am to noon.

Car Rentals See "Getting Around," above.

Currency Exchange This is available on the lower level of the Bahnhof, on Bahnhofplatz, open Monday to Friday 7am to 8pm, Saturday 7am to 7pm, and Sunday 9am to 7pm.

Dentists Call ✆ **0900/576-747** for a referral to an English-speaking dentist.

Doctors Call ✆ **0900/576-747** for a referral to an English-speaking doctor.

Drugstores Try **Central-Apotheke Volz & Co.,** Zytgloggelaube 2 (✆ **031/311-10-94**). It's near the Clock Tower in Old Town. The staff speaks English and can suggest over-the-counter substitutes for foreign drugs that can't be found in Europe. It's open on Monday 9am to 6:30pm, Tuesday to Friday 7:45am to 6:30pm, and on Saturday 7:45am to 4pm. **Bahnhof Apotheke,** at the Bahnhofplatz (✆ **031/311-41-15**), is open daily 6am to 10pm.

Embassies & Consulates The **U.S. Embassy** is at Jubiläumsstrasse 93 (✆ **031/357-70-11**). Other embassy addresses are: **Canada,** Kirchenfeldstrasse 88 (✆ **031/357-32-00**); and **United Kingdom,** Thunstrasse 50 (✆ **031/359-77-00**). **New Zealand** citizens should call their consulate-general in Geneva (✆ **022/929-03-50**).

Emergencies Call ✆ **117** for the police, ✆ **144** for an ambulance, ✆ **118** to report a fire, or ✆ **140** for the road patrol, but only for an emergency.

Eyeglasses **Augenwerk,** Marktgasse 52 (✆ **031/311-02-02**), can replace both eyeglasses and contact lenses.

Hospital The city's largest is **Insel Hospital,** Freiburgstrasse (✆ **031/632-21-11**), the clinic affiliated with the University of Bern.

Information See "Visitor Information," above.

Internet Access Internet access is available at **Internetcafé,** Aarbergergasse 46 (✆ **031/311-98-50**).

Laundry/Dry Cleaning **Jet Wash** is a coin-operated, conveniently located laundry at Dammweg 43 (✆ **031/330-26-38**). For dry cleaning, try **Textilreinigung** (✆ **031/312-00-77**), which is located in the main railway station.

Lost Property The lost-property office at Predigergasse 5 (✆ **031/321-50-50**) is open Monday to Friday from 10am to 4pm (till 6pm Thurs).

Luggage Storage/Lockers Storage facilities are available on the lower level of the Bahnhof, on Bahnhofplatz.

Photographic Needs Go to **Coop Ryfflihof,** Aarbergergasse 53 (✆ **031/329-71-11**), which has a big film and photography department.

Police The police station is at Waisenhausplatz 32 (✆ **031/321-21-21**). Call ✆ **117** in an emergency.

Post Office The main post office (Schanzenpost), at Schanzenstrasse 4 (✆ **031/386-61-11**), is open Monday to Friday from 7:30am to 9pm, on Saturday from 8am to 4pm, and Sunday 4 to 9pm.

Restrooms You'll find public facilities in the Bahnhof and in some squares in Old Town.

Safety Bern is Europe's safest capital. Nevertheless, you should take the usual precautions; protect your valuables. It's generally safe to walk the streets at night, and crimes against women are rare.

Taxes A 7.6% value-added tax (VAT) is included in the price of all goods and services rendered, including hotel and restaurant bills. There are no other special taxes.

Taxis See "Getting Around," above.

Telegrams/Telex/Fax Most hotels will arrange the expedition of faxes and telegrams. If not, head for the main post office (see above).

Transit Information Call ✆ **0900/300-300** for **rail information** or ✆ **031/370-88-88** for **postal-bus information.**

WHERE TO STAY

VERY EXPENSIVE

Bellevue Palace ★★★ Built in 1913 and located next to the Bundeshaus (the seat of the Swiss government), it's the most lavish and opulent choice in town, with carved Corinthian columns and ornate details, and one of its grand salons is covered with a stained-glass ceiling. The setting is definitely old-world, and the service is impeccable. The spacious and beautifully furnished bedrooms open onto views of the Jungfrau and the Bernese Alps. The trappings of the Belle Epoque era have been combined with a state-of-the-art infrastructure that still pays homage to its architectural heritage. Dining on the renowned Bellevue Terrace is one of the reasons to come to Bern.

Kochergasse 3-5, 3001 Bern. ✆ **031/320-45-45.** Fax 031/311-47-43. www.bellevue-palace.ch. 130 units. 470F–560F ($385–$459/£200–£239) double; from 680F ($558/£290) suite. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 28F ($23/£12). Tram: 3, 9, or 12. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; bar; room service; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

EXPENSIVE

Belle Epoque ★★ *Finds* In 1989 an interconnected pair of historic Bern medieval houses were gutted, renovated, and turned into this small-scale boutique-style gem of a hotel. Throughout, its decor celebrates and promotes the Teutonic interpretation of Art Nouveau *(Jugendstil).* Each of the bedrooms is outfitted with jewel-toned colors, big windows, turn-of-the-20th-century furniture and lighting fixtures, and unusual antique paintings and engravings. Minibars and closets are artfully concealed within *trompe l'oeil* replicas of steamer trunks, in a style that's in pleasing contrast to bathrooms that are immaculately tiled (some have Jacuzzis) and very modern, with free condoms on offer.

Gerechtigkeitsgasse 18, CH-3011 Bern. ✆ **031/311-43-36.** Fax 031/311-39-36. www.belle-epoque.ch. 17 units. 280F–340F ($230–$279/£120–£145) double; 245F–590F ($201–$484/£105–£252) suite. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: 12. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; room service; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer, Wi-Fi.

Innere Enge ★★★ *Finds* When you tire of Bern's impersonal bandbox hotels, head for this inn that occupies a building from the 1700s. This small but choice hotel, a 20-minute walk from the center of town, has windows that open onto views of the Bernese Oberland; a tranquil setting within a verdant park; and a pervasive, and sometimes just a bit cloying, jazz theme—both its melodies and its history. The well-kept and individually designed bedrooms are often spacious and filled with sunshine. Furnishings are traditional, and maintenance meets the high standards set by the manager. The most romantic units are on the top floor, resting under the eaves with sloped ceilings. The Louis Armstrong Bar, also called Marians Jazzroom, is linked to the hotel.

Engestrasse 54, CH-3012 Bern. ✆ **031/309-61-11.** Fax 301/309-61-12. www.zghotels.ch. 26 units. 230F–290F ($189–$238/£98–£124) double; 280F–750F ($230–$615/£120–£320) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. Bus: 21. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; room service; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* A/C (in some), TV, minibar, coffeemaker, hair dryer, Wi-Fi.

MODERATE

Hotel Ambassador ★ This restored nine-story hotel is the tallest building in a neighborhood of old houses with red-tile roofs, approximately 3km (1¾ miles) west of the center of Bern's Old Town. The guest rooms come with refrigerators, and many have a view of the Bundeshaus. They tend to be smallish and furnished in a minimalist style, but they are well maintained with firm beds and neat bathrooms. Since the hotel caters to business travelers, its rooms offer fax and computer hookups. It's located about a mile from the train station and easily reached by tram. It's also the only hotel in Bern with an on-site spa.

Seftigenstrasse 99, CH-3007 Bern. ✆ **031/370-99-99.** Fax 031/371-41-17. www.fhotels.ch. 99 units. 220F–350F ($180–$287/£94–£149) double. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. Tram: 9. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; lounge; indoor heated pool; spa facilities, sauna; room service; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service. *In room:* A/C, TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

Hotel National *Value* Originally built in 1908 as a brewery, and later transformed into a textile factory, this simple but dignified government-rated two-star hotel enjoys a consistently high occupancy and many compliments based on its good value and well-scrubbed interior. It's run by two sisters who maintain its very high ceilings and its confusing layout with verve and a kind of charm. The reception area lies one floor above street level, and to reach it, you'll take either the stairs or a "historically significant" elevator that might remind you of a quaint birdcage. Accommodations are sober but reliable, utterly devoid of any contemporary fashion statements or accessories, and occupied by a value-conscious clientele from throughout Europe and the world. Of particular note are the bedrooms on the uppermost floor, where a recent renovation exposed some of the massive timber trusses that form the exterior's mansard roof. There are lots of multipurpose public rooms that sometimes double as concert or theater venues.

Hirschengraben 24, CH-3011 Bern. ✆ **031/381-19-88.** Fax 031/381-68-78. www.nationalbern.ch. 46 units, 32 with private bathroom. Double with shared bathroom 120F ($98/£51); double with private bathroom 140F–160F

($115–$131/£60–£68). AE, MC, V. Tram 3, 5, or 9. **Amenities:** Restaurant. *In room:* TV, phone (only in rooms w/private bath), Wi-Fi.

INEXPENSIVE

Hotel-Pension Marthahaus *Value* Set within a verdant suburb about a 12-minute walk to the city center, this five-story hotel was originally built around 1900 and has comfortably battered, semiantique bedrooms, each with a different floor layout. There's a tiny elevator to carry guests upstairs, and a simple but respectable and clean format that symbolizes good value in an otherwise expensive town. Present management—an organization that directs a pension and retirement fund for women—has been in place here since the 1970s. The better rooms contain small private bathrooms, most of which contain tub/shower combinations.

Wyttenbachstrasse 22A, CH-3013 Bern. ✆ **031/332-41-35.** Fax 031/333-33-86. www.marthahaus.ch. 40 units, 6 with bathroom. 98F ($80/£42) double without bathroom; 130F ($107/£56) double with bathroom. Rates include breakfast. MC, V. Parking 10F ($8.20/£4.25). Bus: 20. **Amenities:** Lounge; bikes; laundry service; nonsmoking rooms; communal kitchen; TV room. *In room:* TV.

Jardin *Value* Set less than a kilometer (½ mile) north of Bern's center, Jardin lies within a leafy residential suburb with lots of parking. This establishment functioned as a restaurant and apartment building between the year it was built (ca. 1900) and 1985. Then its apartments were transformed into modern, warmly appealing hotel rooms that are larger than virtually anything else within their price category. All rooms are equipped with private bathrooms. Joggers and nature enthusiasts appreciate the large verdant spaces (part of a military academy) across the street.

Militärstrasse 38, CH-3014 Bern. ✆ **031/333-01-17.** Fax 031/333-09-43. www.hotel-jardin.ch. 18 units. 155F ($127/£66) double; 215F ($176/£92) triple. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. Tram: 9 to Breitenrainplatz. **Amenities:** Restaurant; lounge; laundry/dry cleaning service. *In room:* TV, hair dryer.

WHERE TO DINE

VERY EXPENSIVE

Wein & Sein ★★★ INTERNATIONAL Set within the cellar of a historic building in the city's medieval core, it's accessible via a steep staircase that leads you past an open kitchen where a view of the staff comprises part of the allure. Within a severely spartan-looking dining room, you can order a la carte, but many locals prefer the market-fresh fixed price menu, which is written on a blackboard. On the night of our latest visit, it consisted of such heavenly concoctions as braised tuna and free-range chicken served with braised pepperoni in a sweet-and-sour sauce; terrine of melon; beef filet with a vegetable purée; and a quark (white cheese) mousse served with pineapple and homemade ice cream.

Münstergasse 50. ✆ **031/311-98-44.** Reservations required. Main courses 37F–45F ($30–$37/£16–£19); fixed-price menu 92F ($75/£39). MC, V. Tues–Sat 6pm–midnight. Closed 3 weeks in July–Aug. Tram: 3, 5, or 9. Bus: 10 or 12.

EXPENSIVE

Jack's Brasserie (Stadt Restaurant) ★★ FRENCH/CONTINENTAL Although the once-imperial-looking white elephant of a hotel (the Schweitzerhof) which contained this restaurant has closed, Jack's continues to flourish, and it's a congenial spot for a fine meal or even a celebratory dinner. Decorated in a style that might remind you of a Lyonnais bistro, replete with paneling, banquettes, and etched glass, it bustles in a way that's chic, friendly, and matter-of-fact, all at the same time. Menu items include fish soup; the kind of Wiener schnitzels that hang over the sides of the plate;

succulent versions of sole meunière and sea bass; veal head vinaigrette for real regional flavor; and smaller platters piled high with salads, risottos, and succulent pastas.

Bahnhofplatz 11. ✆ **031/326-80-80.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 27F–60F ($22–$49/£11–£26); fixed-price menu 88F ($72/£37). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 11:45am–10:45pm. Limited menu daily 1:45–6:15pm. Tram: 3, 9, or 12.

Zum Zähringer ★ *Finds* CONTINENTAL Zum Zähringer occupies a weathered chalet that sits across a quiet street from the surging waters of the Aare, at the bottom of the steep cliff whose top contains the cathedral and the rest of medieval Bern. Many aspects evoke a country inn that's far removed from the politics of the Swiss capital, but with a creative menu that's much more modern than you might have expected. They include asparagus mousse served with a tartare of salmon; veal shank in wine sauce; house-made terrine with green peppercorn and chutney; braised chicken livers with arugula; pikeperch with chive-flavored cream sauce; an artfully composed "hamburger" of goose meat with Asian vegetables and basmati rice; and scallops with spring vegetables served with olive-studded mashed potatoes.

Badgasse 1 (corner of Aaregasse). ✆ **031/311-32-70.** Reservations recommended. Lunch main courses 15F–56F ($12–$46/£6.25–£24); dinner main courses 32F–56F ($26–$46/£14–£24); fixed-price menus 74F–84F ($61–$69/£32–£36). MC, V. Tues–Fri 11am–2:30pm; Mon–Sat 6–11:30pm.

MODERATE

Gaumentranz ★ *Finds* SWISS/PACIFIC RIM This is a good example of the new and hip restaurants sweeping through the Swiss capital. Small and artsy, it has a decor that leans toward industrial and high-tech design, and a kitchen that's open for viewing. The Continental menu is fused with international and Asian overtones, and changes every 6 weeks. Stellar examples include shrimp with lemon grass, strips of asparagus, and raspberry vinaigrette; chicken breast served with salsa verde, galettes of black rice, and spring vegetables; and exotic peppered filets of kangaroo steak with caramelized onions and asparagus in a mustard-flavored cream sauce.

Postgasse 14. ✆ **031/311-64-84.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 27F–35F ($22–$29/£11–£15); fixed-price lunch 18F–21F ($15–$17/£7.80–£8.85). AE, MC, V. Tues–Fri 11am–2pm; Tues–Sat 6pm–12:30am.

Mille Sens ★ EUROPEAN FUSION This old factory building converted into a restaurant is an intimate choice and one of the leading restaurants of Bern. The open kitchen and accessible wine cellar add to the warm ambience of this sophisticated eatery. Light menu items include a chicken club sandwich with curried mayonnaise, tomatoes, and pickles, and a vegetable-stuffed crepe with a sweet-and-sour sauce topping. If you want a more substantial meal, we recommend you start with the seasonal green salad with melon and summer herbs, or cured Parma ham slices in a roulade with walnut oil vinaigrette. For your main course, try the sautéed breast of corn-fed chicken with strips of cured ham and saffron-flavored risotto, or filet of Angus beef in a red-wine sauce along with strips of Mediterranean polenta.

Markethalle, Bubenbergplatz 9. ✆ **031/329-29-29.** www.millesens.ch. Reservations recommended. Main courses 28F–37F ($23–$30/£12–£16); business lunch 64F ($52/£27); 3-course dinner 70F ($57/£30). AE, DC, MC, V. Mon–Thurs 11am–11:30pm (till 1:30am on Fri); Sat 4pm–12:30am.

Restaurant National CONTINENTAL Few other restaurants in Bern convey as effectively a sense of difficult-to-influence, unhurried, old-fashioned Switzerland of the 1930s. It occupies a sprawling, high-ceilinged dining room on the street level of the Hotel National. Today, the focus is on "slow-cooked food," a low-key rebellion against anything edible that carries even a whiff of America-inspired modernity. Stews and ragouts here each tend to have been slow-simmered for hours, and vegetables and salads are very fresh and prepared simply, with a maximum of the original nutrients still intact. Examples include a daily variation of vegetable soup; a ragout of beef with summer vegetables and polenta; stewed vegetables within a "ring" of couscous; braised filets of salmon with herbs and onions; ricotta-stuffed tortellini with spinach and a tomato-enriched cream sauce; and calves' liver with Madeira sauce.

Hotel National, Hirschengraben 24. ☎ **031/381-19-88.** Reservations not needed. Main courses 17F–32F ($14–$26/£7.30–£14). AE, MC, V. Mon-Fri 11am–2pm; Mon–Sat 5:30–10pm. Tram 3, 5, or 9.

INEXPENSIVE

Altes Tramdepot Brauereï & Restaurant Kids INTERNATIONAL One of the most visible and popular restaurants on Bern's tourist circuit lies immediately adjacent to the Bear Pits, within a former tramway depot that was built around 1900. In 1999 the space beneath its soaring, heavily trussed ceiling was transformed into a brewery and brasserie. You'll have to descend into the cellar to see the complicated vats and pipes of the brewery, where any of three kinds of beer—blonde, dark, and white (wheat) beer—are likely to be percolating and fermenting. Many clients gravitate toward the sprawling terrace looking out over the city. Menu items focus on a hearty, wholesome cuisine that goes beautifully with beer. Examples include pork sausages with onion sauce and rösti; sliced veal Zurich-style with mushroom sauce and rösti; Wiener schnitzels; beef filet Stroganoff with noodles or rice; grilled spareribs, steak, or shrimp; salads and sandwiches; and at least four different wok-prepared dishes inspired by the cuisine of Thailand. There's even a special bear-themed children's menu.

Am Bärengraben, Gr. Muristalden 6. ☎ **031/368-14-15.** Reservations necessary. Main courses 16F–36F ($13–$30/£6.75–£16); children's platters 7.50F–15F ($6.15–$12/£3.20–£6.25). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily 11am–12:30am. Bus: 12.

ATTRACTIONS

Before you rush off to sample the sightseeing attractions of the capital of Switzerland, stop in at the **Brasserie zum Bärengraben,** Muristalden 1 (☎ **031/331-42-18**), immediately across the street from the Bear Pits, the town's major attraction (see below). At a table here you can enjoy a slice of local life better than anywhere else. Many habitués settle down to read the morning news, ordering their favorite coffee, a beer, or a glass of wine.

THE TOP ATTRACTIONS

Bärengraben (Bear Pits) ★ is a deep, half-moon-shaped den where the bears, Bern's mascots, have been kept since 1480. According to legend, when the duke of Zähringen established the town in 1191, he sent his hunters out into the surrounding woods, which were full of wild game. The duke promised to name the city after the first animal slain, which was a *Bär* (bear). Since then, the town has been known as Bärn (Bern). Today the bears are beloved, pampered, and fed by both residents and visitors (carrots are most appreciated). The Bear Pits lie on the opposite side of the **Nydegg Bridge (Nydeggbrücke)** from the rest of Old Town. The bridge was built over one of the gorges of the Aare River; its central stone arch has a span of 54m (177 ft.) and affords a sweeping view of the city. Below the Bear Pits, you can visit the **Rosengarten (Rose Gardens),** with its much-photographed view of the medieval sector of the city.

Zytgloggeturm (Clock Tower) ★ (*Zeitglocketurm* in standard German), on Kramgasse, was built in the 12th century and restored in the 16th century. Four minutes before every hour, crowds gather for the world's oldest and biggest horological puppet show. Mechanical bears, jesters, and emperors put on an animated performance. Staged since 1530, it's one of the longest-running acts in show business.

Cathedral of St. Vincent ★★ The Münster is one of the "newer" Gothic churches in Switzerland, dating from 1421. The belfry, however, was completed in 1893. The most exceptional feature of this three-aisle, pillared basilica is the tympanum over the main portal, which depicts the Last Judgment and contains more than 200 figures. You'll see mammoth 15th-century stained-glass windows in the chancel, but the most remarkable window, the *Dance of Death,* can be found in the Matter Chapel. The cathedral's 90m (295-ft.) belfry dominates Bern and offers a panoramic sweep of the Bernese Alps, the old town, its bridges, and the Aare River; to reach the viewing platform, you must climb 270 steps. Outside the basilica on Münsterplatz is the Moses Fountain, built in 1545.

Münsterplatz. ✆ **031/312-04-62.** Free admission to cathedral; viewing platform 4F ($3.30/£1.70) adults, 2F ($1.65/85p) children. Cathedral Easter to Oct Tues–Sat 10am–5pm, Sun 11:30am–5pm; rest of year Tues–Fri 10am–noon and 2–4pm, Sat 10am–noon and 2–5pm, Sun 11:30am–2pm. Viewing platform closes half an hour before cathedral. Bus: 12.

Kunstmuseum (Fine Arts Museum) ★ The focus of this museum is on a worthy collection of paintings, sculptures, and art objects crafted and created up until the end of the 19th century. There's a collection of Italian 14th-century primitives, including Fra Angelico's *Virgin and Child.* Swiss primitives include some from the "Masters of the Carnation." Hodler, the romantic artist, is represented by allegorical paintings depicting day and night. Impressionists include Monet, Manet, Sisley, and Cézanne, along with Delacroix and Bonnard. Surrealistic painters represented here include Dalí, Seligman, Oppenheim, and Tschumi. You'll also see works by Kandinsky, Modigliani, Matisse, Kirchner, Soutine, and Picasso, as well as contemporary Swiss artists.

Hodlerstrasse 12. ✆ **031/328-09-44.** Permanent collection 7F ($5.75/£3) adults, 5F ($4.10/£2.15) seniors; special exhibitions 14F–18F ($11–$15/£5.70–£7.80) extra. Tues 10am–9pm; Wed–Sun 10am–5pm. Bus: 20.

The Paul Klee Collection (Zentrum Paul Klee) ★★★ Until around 2004, most of the artworks within this museum were contained within an overcrowded series of rooms within the also-recommended Kunstmuseum. That was before they were moved into a museum created expressly for them by Renzo Piano, one of the most celebrated architects of Italy. Today, in a location about 5km (3 miles) east of Bern's Altstadt, more than 4,000 works by the Swiss artist Paul Klee are proudly displayed as a kind of homage to Bern's "local son who made good." Klee had a style characterized by fantasy forms in line and light colors. There's also a gift shop and a restaurant.

Monument in Fruchtland 3. ✆ **031/359-01-01.** Entrance 16F ($13/£6.75) adults, 14F ($11/£5.70) children 6–16, free for children 5 and under. Tues–Sun 10am–5pm; Thurs till 9pm. Tram: 5. Bus: 12.

ORGANIZED TOURS

The tourist office conducts **walking tours** of Bern May to October. The daily meeting point is either at the tourist office at 11am or at Zytgloggeturm at 11am. The cost is 12F ($9.85/£5.10) for adults, 6F ($4.90/£2.55) for children 6 to 16, free for children 5 and under. This guided walking tour may or may not be offered by the time of your visit, since the focus of the Tourist Office's walking tours is shifting to iPod-style audio guides that play a pre-recorded two-hour walking tour of Bern which can be started and stopped at any point. Interspersed with descriptions of the Bernese monuments en route are anecdotes, folk songs, cheerful music, and far more than you might have initially thought of. These audio guides rent for 18F ($15/£7.80) per day

(14F/$11/£5.70 per day for anyone with a Bern Card), with a 50F ($41/£21) deposit. For more information contact the Bern city tourist office.

SHOPPING

With a few exceptions, stores in the city center are open on Monday 9am to 7pm; on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday 8:15am to 6:30pm; on Thursday 8:15am to 9pm; and on Saturday 9am to 5pm; closed Sunday.

With 6km (4 miles) of arcades, stores of all types are sheltered in Bern. The main shopping streets are **Spitalgasse, Kramgasse, Postgasse, Marktgasse,** and **Gerechtigkeitsgasse.**

BERN AFTER DARK

Bern Guide, distributed free by the tourist office, has a current list of cultural events.

THE PERFORMING ARTS

The **Bern Symphony Orchestra** is one of the finest orchestras in Switzerland. Concerts by the orchestra are usually performed at the concert facilities in the **Bern Kursaal,** Herrengasse 25 (✆ **031/328-02-28;** tickets 20F–55F/$16–$45/£8.30–£23). Concerts with fewer musicians, especially chamber music, are often performed in any of four or five churches; in the auditorium at the **Konservatorium für Musik,** Kramgasse 36 (✆ **031/326-53-53**); or in the concert and recording facilities of **Radio Studio Bern,** Schwarztorstrasse 21 (✆ **031/388-91-11**).

Major opera and ballet performances are usually staged in what is generally acknowledged as Bern's most beautiful theater, the century-old **Stadttheater,** Kornhausplatz 20 (✆ **031/329-51-11**). Performances are often in German, and to a lesser degree in French, but even if you don't understand those languages, you might want to attend a performance. Other plays and dance programs, including ballet and cabaret, are presented in the **Theater am Käfigturm,** Spitalgasse 4 (✆ **031/311-61-00**).

THE CLUB & BAR SCENE

Some people in Bern consider the **Cesary Bar,** Kornhausplatz 11 (✆ **031/318-93-83**), the most stylish and intriguing bar in the Swiss capital, with an ongoing stream of some of its most beautiful people. Set on one of the showcase squares of the Old Town (behind a terrace which opens during clement weather for an additional 30 seats), it evokes the kind of stylish Milanese modernity you might have expected far to the south, beyond the mountains.

Klötzlikeller, 62 Gerechtigkeitsgasse (✆ **031/311-74-56**), the oldest wine tavern in Bern, is near the Gerechtigkeitsbrunnen (Fountain of Justice), the first fountain you see on your walk from the Bärengraben (Bear Pits) to the Zytgloggeturm (Clock Tower). The well-known tavern dates from 1635. Some 20 different wines are sold by the glass, with prices starting at 8.50F ($6.95/£3.60).

Unique in Bern, **Marians Jazzroom,** Innere Enge Hotel, Engerstrasse 54 (✆ **031/309-61-11**), serves not only food and drink, but the finest traditional jazz performed live by top artists from around the world. On Saturday there is a Concert Apéro from 4 to 6:30pm, and on some Sundays there is a Jazz Brunch from 10am to 1:30pm.

The best gay bar in Bern, **Bar aux Petits Fours,** Kramgasse 67 (✆ **031/312-73-74**), attracts a multilingual, attractive, and international group of gay people, mostly men. There's no dance floor and no restaurant on the premises, but what you get is a low-key bar, filled with regular clients, where a newcomer can usually break the glacial freeze of Swiss reserve with a bit of effort.

The Come Back Bar, Rathausgasse 42 (✆ **031/311-77-13**), is a tavern that's cosmopolitan and tolerant, and likely to attract lots of genuinely cool artists and hipsters. It occupies the cellar vaults below the medieval buildings of the Rathausgasse. Inside, blinking lights frame a discreet dance floor and a long bar functions as a local hangout for many of the gay and gay-friendly residents of the Old Town. It's especially crowded on weekends, with a calmer, more low-key approach to things during weeknights.

GAMBLING

Grand Casino Kursaal Bern, on the fifth floor of the Allegro Hotel Bern, Kornhausstrasse 3 (✆ **031/339-55-55**), is the only place in town to gamble. Indeed, it's a great spot for novices to learn because the size of bets is limited, and consequently, serious money rarely changes hands here. It's open daily noon to 2am, and admission is 10F ($8.20/£4.25).

THE BERNESE OBERLAND

The Bernese Oberland is one of the greatest tourist attractions in the world, mainly because it's one of the best areas for winter sports. The region sprawls between the Reuss River and Lake Geneva, with the Rhône forming its southern border. The area contains two lakes, the Thun and the Brienz, and takes in a portion of the Alps (culminating in the Finsteraarhorn at 4,207m/13,799 ft.). The canton of Bern, which encompasses most of the area, is the second largest in Switzerland and contains about 160 sq. km (100 sq. miles) of glaciers.

EXPLORING THE BERNESE OBERLAND

To compensate for the region's almost impossible geography, Swiss engineers have crisscrossed the Oberland with cogwheel railways, aerial cableways, and sinuous mountain roads. Though often a confusing experience, getting to a particular resort can be part of the fun. The region's busiest railroad junction, and the point where most travelers change trains for local railways, is **Interlaken.**

You can buy a **transportation pass** for the Bernese Oberland from the Swiss Rail System. The train ticket is valid for 7 days and costs 224F ($184/£92) in second class and 267F ($219/£114) in first class. You'll travel free for 3 days and pay a reduced fare for the final 4 days (a 15-day pass is also available). Children travel at half price. The pass is valid on most railroads; all mountain trains, cable cars, chairlifts, and steamers on Lakes Thun and Brienz; and most postal-bus lines in the area. The ticket also qualifies you for a 25% reduction on the Kleine Scheidegg-Eigergletscher-Jungfraujoch railway, the Mürren-Schilthorn aerial cable line, and the bus to Grosse Scheidegg and Bussalp. You must purchase the pass at least 1 week before you arrive. For information about the pass, call ✆ **031/327-32-71.**

Since Interlaken is the focal point of one of the most complicated networks of ski lifts in the world, most visitors opt to buy a comprehensive pass that allows unlimited access to the cog railways, buses, cable cars, chairlifts, and gondolas (incorporating every mechanical lift in and around Interlaken, Wengen, Grindelwald, and Mürren). Sold at the Interlaken tourist office and tourist offices at the other leading resorts, it's called the **Jungfrau Top Ski Region Pass.** Passes range from 2 day to 7 days and cost 123F to 326F ($101–$267/£52–£134). Discounts of 10% are offered to seniors 62 and older, discounts of 20% to youths ages 16 to 20, and discounts of 50% to children 6 to 15. Kids 5 and under travel for only 10% of the above rates.

BY MOUNTAIN BIKE Hundreds of miles of cycling paths riddle the Bernese Oberland, and most of them begin in Interlaken. Separate from the network of hiking paths, the bike routes are signposted and marked on rental maps distributed at bike-rental agencies; it's the law to use only specially signposted routes and not destroy plant and animal life or ride across private fields. Hikers, incidentally, are given the right of way over bikers. To make arrangements to rent a bike, call ✆ **033/823-15-34.** Rates usually begin at 45F ($37/£19) per day, going up.

ON FOOT The Bernese Oberland is ideal for walkers and hikers. The natural terrain here will satisfy everyone from the most ambitious mountain hiker to the casual stroller. Trails designed for walkers branch out from almost every junction. Most are paved and signposted, showing distances and estimated walking times. Tourist offices can suggest itineraries for walkers. For the more athletic, itineraries include long hikes far afield in the mountains, with suggestions for overnight accommodations en route.

INTERLAKEN ★★★

Interlaken is the tourist capital of the Bernese Oberland. Cableways and cog railways designed for steeply inclined mountains connect it with most of the region's villages and dazzling sights, including the snowy heights of the Jungfrau. Excursion possibilities from Interlaken are both numerous and dazzling.

This "town between the lakes" (Thun and Brienz) has been a vacation resort for over 300 years. Although it began as a summer resort, it developed into a year-round playground, altering its allure as the seasons change. During the winter skiers take advantage of the town's low prices. Interlaken charges low-season prices in January and February, when smaller resorts at higher altitudes are charging their highest rates of the year. The most expensive time to visit Interlaken is during midsummer, when high-altitude and snowless ski resorts often charge their lowest rates.

Essentials

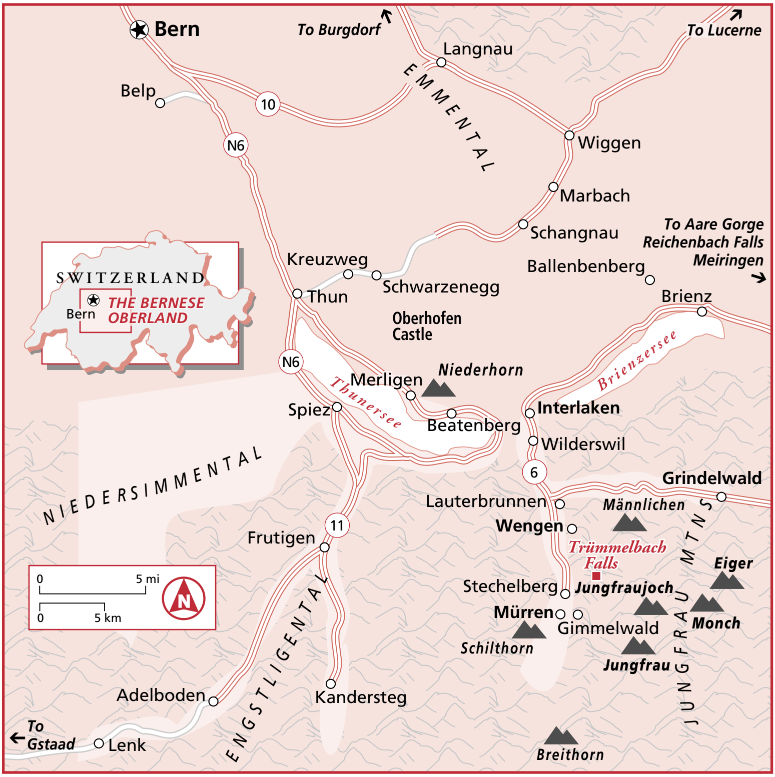
GETTING THERE There are several trains daily between Zurich and Interlaken (2 hr.) and between Bern and Interlaken (40 min.). Frequent train service also connects Geneva with Interlaken (2½ hr.). For additional **rail information,** call ✆ **0900/300-300.** ***Note:*** Although the town has two different railway stations, Interlaken East and Interlaken West, West is more convenient to the city's center.

If you're driving from Bern, head south on N6 to Spiez, then continue east on N8 to Interlaken.

VISITOR INFORMATION The **Tourism Organization Interlaken** is in the Hotel Metropole at Höheweg 37 (✆ **033/826-53-00**). Open July to mid-September Monday to Friday 8am to 7pm; Saturday 8am to 5pm; and Sunday 10am to noon and 5 to 7pm. From mid-September to October, Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm and Saturday 9am to 1pm. Hours November to April are Monday to Friday 8am to noon and 1:30 to 6pm, Saturday 9am to noon; May to June Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm and Saturday 8am to 4pm. A **Visitor's Card** is granted to persons registered at local hotels and confers certain discounts to some of the local attractions.

GETTING AROUND Train arrivals are at either Interlaken East or Interlaken West. If you're loaded with luggage, you'll want to grab a taxi. However, after you've been deposited at one of the local hotels (nearly all of which are in the city center), you'll rarely need a taxi—the town is closely knit and best explored on foot. Buses are convenient for connections to the satellite towns and villages or heading to the outskirts. The **bus station** is at Areckstrasse 6 (✆ **033/828-88-28**).

The Bernese Oberland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Where to Stay

Hotel Interlaken ★ This is the resort's oldest hotel, receiving overnight guests since 1323. It's been gutted and rebuilt since, with a salmon-colored facade sporting baroque touches. The most expensive rooms have a few 19th-century antiques; the rest have conservative, modern furnishings with excellent beds and well-maintained bathrooms.

Höheweg 74, CH-3800 Interlaken. ☎ **033/826-68-68.** Fax 033/826-68-69. www.interlakenhotel.ch. 60 units. 210F–345F ($172–$283/£89–£147) double. Rates include buffet breakfast. Half board 45F ($37/£19) per person extra. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; sauna; room service; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

Lindner Grand Hotel Beau-Rivage ★★★ This government-rated five-star reconstructed Belle Epoque–style hotel is one of Interlaken's grand hotels. Only Victoria-Jungfrau is better. The Beau-Rivage sells luxury on a smaller, more intimate scale than its competitors, and is located in a very tranquil spot. The rooms are conservatively modern with excellent beds and nicely kept bathrooms. The front rooms open onto the Jungfrau, and the rooms in the rear are quieter and face the river.

Höheweg 211, CH-3800 Interlaken. ☎ **033/826-70-07.** Fax 033/823-28-47. www.lindner.de. 101 units. 290F–410F ($238–$336/£124–£175) double; 700F–1,500F ($574–$1,230/£299–£640) suite. Rates include buffet breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking outdoors. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; indoor heated pool; health club; sauna; room service; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer, Wi-Fi.

Park-Hotel Mattenhof ★ This large, old-fashioned, government-rated four-star hotel is in a secluded area at the edge of a forest 2km (1¼ miles) south of the center; you can reach it by heading away from the center toward Wilderswil. The exterior looks like a private castle, with its high, pointed roof, tower, loggias, and balconies. It was originally built as a simple and sedate pension in 1897, but adopted most of its mock-medieval form after a massive enlargement in 1906. The salons are warmly decorated and sunny, and some of the small, well-furnished bedrooms have a view of the Jungfrau and the Niederhorn. All have well-kept bathrooms, and several also are equipped with a balcony.

Hauptstrasse, Matten, CH-3800 Interlaken. ✆ **033/821-61-21.** Fax 033/822-28-88. www.park-mattenhof.ch. 76 units. May–Sept 200F–260F ($164–$213/£82–£107) double; off season 140F–170F ($115–$139/£57–£70) double. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; 2 bars; outdoor pool; tennis court; laundry/dry cleaning service. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer.

The Swiss Inn *Value* This small Edwardian inn with balconies and gables offers good value. The tasteful, simply decorated one- to three-room apartments are equipped with good beds and well-kept bathrooms with tub/shower combinations in one half, only showers in the others. They accommodate two to six guests, and children's beds or cots are available. The inn has a lounge and a sitting area with a fireplace.

Général Guisanstrasse 23, CH-3800 Interlaken. ✆ **033/822-36-26.** Fax 033/823-23-03. www.swiss-inn.com. 9 units. 100F–160F ($82–$131/£41–£65) double; 140F–200F ($115–$164/£57–£82) apt for 2; 230F–250F ($189–$205/£94–£103) apt for 4. AE, MC, V. Free parking. **Amenities:** Lounge; laundry (self-service, coin-operated); dry cleaning. *In room:* TV, kitchenette (in some).

Victoria-Jungfrau Grand Hotel & Spa ★★★ *Kids* Since 1865, this grand hotel has reigned as one of the most important resort properties in Switzerland. The owner of the Victoria Hotel united it with the Jungfrau Hotel in 1895, and the landmark property has stood ever since. Designed in a richly ornate Victorian style, it sits right in the town center at the foot of rigidly symmetrical gardens. The hotel boasts one of the best-trained staffs in Interlaken. The midsize to spacious accommodations are luxurious, and the most expensive open onto views of the Jungfrau.

Höheweg 41, CH-3800 Interlaken. ✆ **800/223-6800** in the U.S., or 033/828-28-28. Fax 033/828-28-80. www.victoria-jungfrau.ch. 212 units. 680F–760F ($558–$623/£279–£311) double; 810F–900F ($664–$738/£332–£369) junior suite; from 1,550F ($1,271/£635) suite. Half board 150F ($123/£61) per person extra. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking outside, 30F ($25/£13) in garage. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; 2 bars; indoor heated pool; tennis courts; gym; spa; Jacuzzi; sauna; steam room; kids' club; room service; massage; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

Where to Dine

Il Bellini ★★ INTERNATIONAL This is one of the finest restaurants in the Bernese Oberland. Established in 1994, it sits one floor above the lobby in the tallest hotel in Interlaken, the Metropole, and is outfitted in a graceful 19th-century rendition of pale pinks and greens. The fresh, good-tasting food is served with a discreet panache you might have expected in Italy, and includes an assortment of antipasti. The main courses include such delectable specialties as tender beefsteak Florentine, saltimbocca, and chicken breast grilled with tomatoes and mozzarella. The fish selections are limited but well chosen.

In the Hotel Metropole, Höheweg 37. ✆ **033/828-66-66.** www.metropole-interlaken.ch. Reservations recommended Fri–Sun. Main courses 22F–45F ($18–$37/£9.35–£19). AE, DC, MC, V. Tues–Sat 11:30am–2pm and 6:30pm–midnight.

Moments

Glaciers in the Sky: A Trip to Jungfraujoch

By making the mountains of the Bernese Oberland accessible by train and cable car, Swiss engineers paved the way for visitors to this popular region to explore some of the most scenic and enjoyable spots in the country. There are many organized excursions, as adventurous as they are varied, but a train trip from Interlaken to **Jungfraujoch** ★★★, at 3,400m (11,152 ft.), is often considered a trip highlight by visitors. For more than a century, it's been the highest railway station in Europe. It's also one of the most expensive: A round-trip tour costs 189F ($155/£77) in first class, 177F ($145/£72) in second class. To check times, contact the sales office of **Jungfrau Railways,** Höheweg 37 (☎ **033/828-71-11** or 033/828-72-33; www.jungfraubahn.ch).

Once at the Jungfraujoch terminus, you may feel a little giddy until you get used to the air. There's much to do in this eerie world high up Jungfrau, but take it slow—your body's metabolism will be affected and you may tire quickly.

Behind the post office is an elevator that will take you to a corridor leading to the famed **Eispalast (Ice Palace)** ★. Here you'll be walking inside "eternal ice" in caverns hewn out of the slowest-moving section of the glacier. Cut 19m (62 ft.) below the glacier's surface, these caverns were begun in 1934 by a Swiss guide and subsequently enlarged and embellished with additional sculptures by others. Everything in here is made of ice, including full-size replicas of vintage automobiles and local chaplains.

After returning to the station, you can take the Sphinx Tunnel to another elevator. This one takes you up 107m (351 ft.) to an observation deck called the **Sphinx Terraces,** overlooking the saddle between the Mönch and Jungfrau peaks. You can also see the Aletsch Glacier, a 23km (14-mile) river of ice—the longest in Europe. The snow melts into Lake Geneva and eventually flows into the Mediterranean.

Schuh SWISS/CHINESE/THAI This attractive restaurant and tearoom in the center of town has been known for its pastries since 1885, and they are still the town's finest. The alpine building has a sunny terrace in back with a view of the Jungfrau and a well-kept lawn. The dining room has large windows and a Viennese ambience. A pianist provides music. The menu is seasonal, but Swiss regional dishes are a feature, along with several Asian dishes, notably from Thailand and China.

Höheweg 56. ☎ **033/822-94-41.** Main courses 15F–46F ($12–$38/£6.25–£20). AE, DC, MC, V. Apr–Sept Sun–Thurs 9am–11:30pm, Fri–Sat 9am–12:30am; off-season Sun–Thurs 9am–10pm, Fri–Sat 9am–11pm. Closed Oct 25–Dec 9.

Spice India ★ INDIAN Ideally located in between the Hotel Metropole and the Chalet Hotel Oberland, this is a place where anyone who likes Indian food can enjoy a good meal served by people who are passionate about their restaurant. Among the top menu options are the Barrah kabobs—oven-grilled lamb marinated in yogurt with garlic and ginger paste—fish curry, filets of chicken, and basmati rice. There is also a vegetarian section from the menu and from that we recommend the *baingan ka bharta* (chargrilled eggplant with yogurt and cheese) and the *aloo ghobi,* a potato-and-cauliflower dish. The decor is a little bland, but the food makes up for it.

Postgasse 6. ✆ **033/821-00-91.** www.spice-india.net. Reservations required for large groups only. Main courses 22F–38F ($18–$31/£9.35–£16). AE, DC, MC, V. Tues–Sun noon–2:30pm; daily 6–10:30pm.

Exploring the Area

It's very simple: The best way to see everything in Interlaken is to walk. You can either randomly stroll around, enjoying the panoramic views in all directions, or follow a more structured walking tour. If you'd like some guidance, go to the tourist office (see above) and ask for a copy of ***What to Do in Interlaken.*** It maps out walks for both young and more mature visitors. To see the sights of Interlaken, Matten, and Unterseen by ***fiacre,*** line up at the Interlaken West train station. The half-hour round-trip tour costs 40F ($33/£17) for one or two, plus 12F ($9.85/£5.10) for each additional person; children 7 to 16 are charged half fare, and those 6 and under ride free.

MÜRREN ★★

This village has a stunning location, high above the Lauterbrunnen Valley. At 1,624m (5,327 ft.), Mürren is the highest year-round inhabited village in the Bernese Oberland. It's an exciting excursion from Interlaken in the summer and a major ski resort in the winter.

Essentials

GETTING THERE Take the mountain railway from the Interlaken East rail station to Lauterbrunnen (trip time: 1 hr.). Once at Lauterbrunnen, you can take a cogwheel train the rest of the way to Mürren. Departures from Lauterbrunnen are every half-hour from 6:30am to 8:30pm daily, costing 10F ($8.20/£4.30) one-way.

A regular postal-bus service goes once an hour from Lauterbrunnen to Stechelberg; the rest of the way you must travel by cable car, costing 7.60F ($6.25/£3.25) round-trip. Departures are every half-hour, and the trip takes about 10 minutes.

Mürren is not accessible to traffic. You can drive as far as Stechelberg, the last town on the Lauterbrunnen Valley road, and switch to the cable car discussed above.

VISITOR INFORMATION The **Mürren Tourist Information Bureau** is at the Sportzentrum (✆ **033/856-86-86**). There is no street plan—follow the clearly indicated signs to the various hotels and commercial establishments. The office is open Monday to Friday 9am to noon and 2 to 7pm, Saturday and Sunday 2 to 6:30pm.

Where to Stay

Anfi Palace Hotel ★ Built early in the 20th century, this hotel lies under a black mansard roof and indented loggias with wrought-iron balconies. There's a modern extension jutting off to one side. The bedrooms are the most spacious, best furnished, and also the most comfortable in Mürren. The beds are excellent, and the bathrooms are nicely maintained.

CH-3825 Mürren. ✆ **033/856-99-99.** Fax 033/856-99-98. www.muerren.ch/palace. 44 units. Summer 270F–330F ($221–$271/£110–£135) double, 350F ($287/£143) suite, 400F–610F ($328–$500/£164–£250) apt; winter 300F–360F ($246–$295/£123–£147) double, 380F ($312/£156) suite, 520F–660F ($426–$541/£213–£270) apt. Rates include half board. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** 3 restaurants; 2 bars (1 a club); indoor heated pool; gym; Jacuzzi; sauna; steam bath; room service; babysitting; coin-operated and laundry/dry cleaning service. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer, Wi-Fi.

Hotel Alpenruh Set in the most congested yet charming section of the village, the Alpenruh possesses an interior that's plusher than its chalet-style facade implies. The small rooms have pine paneling and a mix of antique and contemporary furniture, and most of them open onto a view of the Jungfrau. The hotel is owned by the company that operates the aerial cable cars to the Schilthorn's Piz Gloria, and you can get a voucher to have breakfast there.

CH-3825 Mürren. ✆ **033/856-88-00.** Fax 033/856-88-88. www.alpenruh-muerren.ch. 26 units. 160F–270F ($131–$221/£65–£110) double. 50% reduction for children 12 and under sharing parent's room. Rates include buffet breakfast. Half board 40F ($33/£17) per person extra. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; lounge; sauna. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer.

Hotel Eiger ★ Founded in the 1920s, this chalet is the longest-established hotel in Mürren. The public rooms are warmly decorated, and many of the windows have panoramic views. The bedrooms are small, cozy, and comfortable and decorated in a typical alpine style. All units have tidy bathrooms. The hotel, managed by the Stähli family, lies across the street from the terminus of the cable car from Lauterbrunnen.

CH-3825 Mürren. ✆ **033/856-54-54.** Fax 033/856-54-56. www.hoteleiger.com. 44 units. 270F–330F ($221–$271/£110–£135) double; 390F–500F ($320–$410/£160–£205) suite. Rates include breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Closed Easter to early June and mid-Sept to Dec 13. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; indoor heated pool; Jacuzzi; sauna; room service; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service. *In room:* TV, hair dryer.

Where to Dine

Restaurant Piz Gloria ★ *Finds* SWISS Piz Gloria is the most dramatically located restaurant in Europe, with a setting so inhospitable and an architecture so futuristic that it was used as the setting for the James Bond film *On Her Majesty's Secret Service.* Designed like a big-windowed flying saucer and anchored solidly to the alpine bedrock, it was built at staggering expense in one of Switzerland's highest locations, the Schilthorn. Closed during blizzards, the restaurant has a terrace where newcomers should beware of becoming seriously sunburned by the rays of the high-altitude, unfiltered sunlight. You'll dine inside at long wooden tables, each with a wraparound view. The menu includes hearty dishes suited to the climate. There are both weekly and daily specials, ranging from chicken *cordon bleu* to filet of codfish with rice and vegetables. One spaghetti dish is named for James Bond; it's made with peppers, mushrooms, bacon, and Italian veal sausages. The 007 dessert is a bowl of five different scoops of ice cream topped with fruits.

Schilthorn. ✆ **033/856-21-40.** Main courses 12F–43F ($9.85–$35/£5.10–£18); daily special 22F ($18/£9.35). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily from the 1st cable car's arrival until the last cable car's afternoon departure. The first departure from Stechelberg is at 7:25am in summer (7:55am in winter). The cable car's last departure from Schilthorn is at 6pm in summer (5pm in winter). Closed Nov 15–Dec 4 and 1 week after Easter. Access is via the Schilthorn cable car, which departs from Stechelberg and stops at 3 way stations, the most prominent of which is Mürren. Round-trip fare from Stechelberg 89F ($73/£36); round-trip fare from Mürren 60F ($49/£24).

Outdoor Fun

There are miles of downhill runs in the area. Mürren, one of the finest ski resorts of Switzerland, provides access to the Schilthorn at 2,923m (9,587 ft.), the start of a 15km (9-mile) run that drops all the way to Lauterbrunnen. It also has one funicular railway, seven lifts, and two cable cars. A 1-day ski pass that includes the area around Schilthorn costs 57F ($47/£23), a 7-day pass goes for 272F ($223/£111). For cross-country skiers, there's a 12km (7½-mile) track in the Lauterbrunnen Valley, 10 minutes by railway from Mürren.

The **Mürren-Allmendhubel Cableway** leaves from the northwestern edge of Mürren. From the destination, there's a panoramic view of the Lauterbrunnen Valley as far as Wengen and Kleine Scheidegg. Between mid-June and late August, the alpine meadows are covered with wildflowers. A walk in this hilly region could easily be a highlight of your trip to Switzerland. The cable car operates daily throughout the year from 9am to 5pm (with annual closings for maintenance in May and Nov). It costs 12F ($9.85/£5.10) per person round-trip. For information, call ✆ **033/855-20-42.**

The most popular excursion from Mürren is a cable-car ride to the **Schilthorn** ★★★, famous for its 360-degree view. The panorama extends from the Jura to the Black Forest, including the Eiger, Mönch, and Jungfrau. The summit is the start of the world's longest downhill ski race. The cable car to Schilthorn leaves every 30 minutes, and the round-trip costs 89F ($73/£36). The journey to the top takes 20 minutes. For details, call ✆ **033/856-21-41.**

WENGEN ★★★

The Mönch, Jungfrau, and Eiger loom above this sunny resort town built on a sheltered terrace high above the Lauterbrunnen Valley, at about 1,248m (4,093 ft.). Wengen (*Ven*-ghen) is one of the more chic and better-equipped ski resorts in the Bernese Oberland. It has 30 hotels in all price categories, as well as 500 apartments and chalets for rent. Parts of the area retain their rural charm, but the main street is filled with cafes, shops, and restaurants welcoming tourists. No cars are allowed in Wengen, but the streets are still bustling with service vehicles and electric luggage carts.

Essentials

GETTING THERE Take the train from Interlaken West to Wengen with a change of train at Lauterbrunne. Departures are every 45 minutes from 6:30am to 11pm, costing 16F ($13/£6.75) one-way. After a stopover at Wengen, the train goes on to Kleine Scheidegg and Jungfraujoch. For **rail information,** call ✆ **0900/300-300.** If you're driving, head south from Interlaken toward Wilderswil, following the minor signposted road to Lauterbrunnen, where you'll find garages and open-air spaces for parking. You cannot drive to Wengen but must take the train (see above). You can park in one of the garages at Lauterbrunnen for 12F to 18F ($9.85–$15/£5.10–£7.80) a day. Trains from Lauterbrunnen to Wengen leave at the rate of one every 15 minutes from 6am to midnight, costing 8F ($6.55/£3.40) one-way.

VISITOR INFORMATION There are no street names; hotels, restaurants, and other major establishments are signposted with directional signs, which make them relatively easy to find. The **Wengen Tourist Information Office** (✆ **033/855-14-14**) is in the center of the resort. It's open mid-June to mid-September and mid-December to Easter only, Monday to Saturday 9am to noon and 2 to 5pm.

Exploring the Area

The **ski area** around Wengen is highly developed, with ski trails carved into the sides of Männlichen, Kleine Scheidegg, Lauberhorn, and Eigergletscher. A triumph of alpine engineering, the town and its region contain three mountain railways, two aerial cableways, one gondola, 31 lifts, and 250km (155 miles) of downhill runs. You'll also find a branch of the Swiss Ski School, more than 11km (7 miles) of trails for cross-country skiing, an indoor and outdoor skating rink, a curling hall, an indoor swimming pool, and a day nursery.

During the summer the district attracts hill climbers from all over Europe. The **hiking trails** are well maintained and carefully marked, with dozens of unusual detours to hidden lakes and panoramas.

NEARBY ATTRACTIONS From Wengen and Grindelwald, there are a number of excursions up and down the Lauterbrunnen Valley. You can visit **Trümmelbach**

Falls ★★★, which plunges in five powerful cascades through a gorge. You can take an elevator built through the rock to a series of galleries (bring a raincoat). The last stop is at a wall where the upper fall descends. The falls can be visited from the end of May through June and in September and October daily from 9am to 5pm; in July and August daily from 8:30am to 6pm. They're closed during other months. Admission is 11F ($9/£4.70) for adults, 4F ($3.30/£1.70) for children 6 to 16, and free for children 5 and under. It takes about 45 minutes to reach the falls on foot. For information, call ☎ **033/855-32-32.**

You might also want to visit the base of the **Staubbach Waterfall** ★★, which plunges nearly 300m (984 ft.) in a sheer drop over a rock wall in the valley above Lauterbrunnen. Staubbach can be reached from the resort village of Lauterbrunnen, which lies only 15 minutes from Wengen by train (see "Essentials," above). From the center of Lauterbrunnen, follow the signposts along a walkway running along a creek and then be prepared for some steep stairs to reach the viewing point for the falls.

Where to Stay

Hotel Alpenrose ★★ A longtime favorite of ours, this hotel is invitingly traditional, with a family atmosphere. Most of the cozy, well-furnished bedrooms have views over the Lauterbrunnen Valley, lots of light, and plenty of pine paneling. Accommodations facing south are more desirable because they get more sunlight and so they're slightly higher in price. The hotel is efficiently run and filled with cozy public rooms and a large formal dining area.

CH-3823 Wengen. ☎ **033/855-32-16.** Fax 033/855-15-18. www.alpenrose.ch. 50 units. Summer 224F–340F ($184–$279/£92–£139) double; winter 305F–412F ($250–$338/£125–£169) double. AE, DC, MC, V. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; breakfast-only room service; nonsmoking rooms; rooms for those w/limited mobility. *In room:* TV, safe.

Hotel Eiger ★ Rustic timbers cover the walls and ceilings of this attractive hotel behind the railway station. Karl Fuchs and his family offer spacious, attractive rooms with balconies. The suites, which are rented on a weekly basis only, are often sold out a year in advance. All rooms come equipped with well-maintained bathrooms. In the hotel lobby you'll find an inviting sitting area with a fireplace.

CH-3823 Wengen. ☎ **033/856-05-05.** Fax 033/856-05-06. www.eiger-wengen.ch. 33 units. Summer 210F–256F ($172–$210/£86–£105) double; winter 244F–336F ($200–$276/£100–£138) double. Rates include buffet breakfast. Half board 28F ($23/£11) per person extra. AE, DC, MC, V. Closed mid-Apr to June 1 and Nov. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; laundry service. *In room:* TV.

Where to Dine

Hotel Hirschen Restaurant *Finds* SWISS This quiet retreat at the foot of the slopes has true alpine flavor. The rear dining room is decorated with hunting trophies, pewter, and wine racks. A special called Galgenspiess—filet of beef, veal, and pork flambéed at your table—is available for dinner. Other dishes include filet of breaded pork, rump steak Café de Paris, and fondue Bacchus (in white-wine sauce), *bourguignon* (hot oil), or *chinoise* (hot bouillon). A hearty lunch is *Winzerrösti,* consisting of country ham, cheese, and a fried egg with homemade rösti.

CH-3823 Wengen. ☎ **033/855-15-44.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 12F–47F ($9.85–$39/£5.10–£20); 3-course menu 32F ($26/£13). MC, V. Fri–Mon 6–11pm. Closed mid-Apr to May and late Sept to Dec 15.

GRINDELWALD ★★★

The "glacier village" of Grindelwald, at 1,033m (3,388 ft.), is set against a backdrop of the Wetterhorn and the towering north face of the Eiger, and is surrounded by folkloric hamlets, swift streams, and as much alpine beauty as you're likely to find anywhere in Switzerland. It's both a winter and a summer resort, and, unlike many resorts, can be reached by car. Because of its accessibility, Grindelwald is often crowded with visitors, many of whom come just for the day. Although at first the hiking options and cable-car networks might seem baffling, the tourist office will provide maps of the local peaks and valleys and help clear up any confusion.

Essentials

GETTING THERE The **Bernese Oberland Railway (BOB)** leaves from the Interlaken East station. The trip takes 35 minutes. Call ✆ **0900/300-300** for information. If you're driving, take the Wilderswil road south from Interlaken and follow the signs all the way to Grindelwald.

VISITOR INFORMATION The resort doesn't use street names or numbers; instead of street names, hotel direction signs are used to locate places. If you're booked into a hotel or tourist home in Grindelwald, request a pass at your hotel that will entitle you to many discounts, especially on mountain rides.

The tourist office is at the **Sportszentrum,** on Hauptstrasse (✆ **033/854-12-12**). It's open Monday to Friday 8am to noon and 1:30 to 6pm, and Saturday and Sunday 8am to noon and 1:30 to 5pm.

Where to Stay

Grand Hotel Regina ★★★ Across from the Grindelwald train station, this hotel is part rustic and part urban slick and dates from the turn of the 20th century. The facade of the oldest part has an imposing set of turrets with red-tile roofs. The large bedrooms, done in various styles, are comfortable and contain well-maintained bathrooms. These elegantly furnished rooms are your finest choice for a vacation here in either summer or winter. Most bedrooms enjoy panoramic views.

CH-3818 Grindelwald. ✆ **800/223-6800** in the U.S., or 033/854-86-00. Fax 033/854-86-88. www.grandregina.ch. 90 units. 450F–560F ($369–$459/£184–£229) double; 660F–2,160F ($541–$1,771/£270–£885) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking outside, 20F ($16/£8.30) in garage. Closed mid-Oct to Dec 18. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; 2 bars; 2 pools (1 heated indoor); 2 tennis courts; health club; sauna; steam bath; salon; breakfast-only room service; massage; babysitting; laundry service; all nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV, minibar, Wi-Fi.

Hotel Eiger This hotel looks like a collection of interconnected balconies from the outside, each on a different plane and built of contrasting shades of white stucco and natural wood. The interior is attractive, simple, and unpretentious. The small to midsize bedrooms are comfortable, well furnished, and alpine cozy. All are equipped with tidily kept bathrooms. Maintenance is high, and the hotel staff is extremely hospitable.

CH-3818 Grindelwald. ✆ **033/844-31-31.** Fax 033/654-31-30. www.eiger-grindelwald.ch. 50 units. Summer 230F–350F ($189–$287/£95–£143) double, 290F–510F ($238–$418/£119–£209) suite; winter 320F–380F ($262–$312/£131–£156) double, 370F–530F ($303–$435/£151–£217) suite. Rates include buffet breakfast. Half board 35F ($95/£143) per person extra. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking outdoors, 6F–12F ($4.90–$9.85/£2.55–£5.10) in garage. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; 2 bars; massage studio; spa; gym; sauna; Jacuzzi; salon; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service; nonsmoking rooms. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

Hotel Hirschen *Value* The government-rated three-star Hirschen offers one of the best values in town. It's both comfortable and affordable, with rooms in a variety of styles. Each is well furnished with good beds and equipped with neatly kept bathrooms.

CH-3818 Grindelwald. ✆ **033/854-84-84.** Fax 033/854-84-80. www.hirschen-grindelwald.ch. 28 units. 150F–280F ($123–$230/£61–£115) double. Rates include continental breakfast. Half board 30F ($25/£12) extra. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking outside, 8F ($6.55/£3.40) in garage. Closed Nov–Dec 19. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; breakfast-only room service; laundry service; bowling alley. *In room:* TV, safe.

Where to Dine

Il Mercato ITALIAN/SWISS The decor is elegant and alpine, with Italian touches you might expect in the Ticino. The dining room's visual centerpiece is a large window with a sweeping view over the mountains. During warm weather, tables are set out on a flower-dotted terrace. Menu items include virtually everything from the Italian repertoire, with an emphasis on cold-weather dishes from the Val d'Aosta (northern Italy's milk and cheese district). There's a tempting array of salads, pizzas, pastas, risottos, and grilled veal, beef, and chicken dishes, always with fresh ingredients.

In the Hotel Spinne. ✆ **033/854-88-88.** www.spinne.ch. Reservations recommended. Main courses 15F–47F ($12–$39/£6.25–£20). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily noon–2pm and 6–9:30pm. Closed Oct to mid-Dec.

Restaurant Français ★★ INTERNATIONAL This is the best restaurant in Grindelwald. Special buffets are a feature of the restaurant. As you listen to the soothing sounds of a live pianist, you can study the menu, which changes frequently. Just to give you an idea, you may be served an appetizer of game terrine, Grindelwald air-dried meat, or thinly sliced lamb carpaccio. Fish dishes may include poached filet of turbot served on zucchini and potato rounds with a yellow-red pepper sauce or fried filet of salmon with a truffle butter sauce. Main dishes are likely to include lamb entrecôte in a coating of peppercorns or breast of guinea fowl with red wine and prunes. The cuisine intelligently blends flavors with imagination and zest.

In the Hotel Belvedere. ✆ **033/854-54-54.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 36F–41F ($30–$34/£16–£18); 6-course gourmet menu 60F ($49/£26). AE, DC, MC, V. Daily noon–1pm and 6:45–9pm.

The Great Outdoors

For details about the tours below, including seasonal changes, consult the tourist office (see above).

If you've come to Switzerland to see the Alps, Grindelwald and its surroundings offer dozens of challenging paths and mountain trails that are well marked and carefully maintained. A map showing the region's paths and trails is available at the town's tourist office. If you're adventurous enough to be tempted by peaks 3,900m (12,792 ft.) high or higher, or if you'd like to learn the proper way to climb rocks and ice, contact the **Bergsteigerzentrum** (✆ **033/854-12-90**). The Bergsteigerzentrum can also provide information on a modest 1-day hiking tour suitable for anyone capable of hiking in boots for 2 or 3 hours.

In winter Grindelwald is one of the major ski resorts of Europe, perfect as a base for skiing in the Jungfrau ski region. It has 22 lifts, eight funiculars, a trio of cable cars, and more than 160km (100 miles) of downhill runs. Snowboarders and novice skiers are also welcome. It's a ski circus for all ages and various skills.

In the winter skiers take the cableway to **Männlichen,** at 2,200m (7,216 ft.), which opens onto a panoramic vista of the treacherous Eiger. From here there is no direct run back to Wengen; however, skiers can enjoy an uninterrupted ski trail stretching 7.2km (4½ miles) to Grindelwald. The cost of the Männlichen cable car (Grindelwald-Grund to Männlichen) is 35F ($29/£15) each way, or 58F ($48/£24) round-trip. For information, call the departure point for the **Männlichen Bahn** in Grindelwald (✆ **033/854-80-80**).

The town maintains a sheltered observation gallery, adjacent to the base of the **Lower Grindelwald Glacier (Untere Gletscher),** that offers a close look at the glacier's ravine. The gallery is easy to reach on foot or by car. Round-trip bus service is available from Grindelwald for 15F ($12/£6.25), and there are a parking lot and restaurant nearby.

GSTAAD ★★

Against a backdrop of glaciers and mountain lakes, Gstaad is a haven for the rich and famous. Built at the junction of four quiet valleys near the southern tip of the Bernese Oberland, Gstaad was once only a place to change horses during the grueling voyage through the Oberland. But as the railroad lines developed, it grew into a resort. Many of the bistros and cafes close from late April to mid-June and from October to mid-December.

Essentials

GETTING THERE Gstaad is on the local train line connecting Interlaken with Montreux and several smaller towns in central-southwest Switzerland. About a dozen trains come into Gstaad every day from both of those cities, each of which is a railway junction with good connections to the rest of Switzerland. Travel time from Montreux can be as little as an hour and 20 minutes; from Interlaken, about 30 minutes, sometimes with a change of train at the hamlet of Zweisimmen. Call ✆ **0900/300-300** for **rail schedules** and information. If you're driving from Spiez, head southwest on Route 11; from Bulle, head south and then east on Route 11.

VISITOR INFORMATION Some streets have names; others are placed outside street plans, but there are directional signs to lead you to hotels and restaurants. The **Gstaad-Saanenland Tourist Association,** CH-3780 Gstaad (✆ **033/748-81-81**), is a useful source of information (open July–Aug Mon–Fri 8:30am–6:30pm, Sat 9am–6pm, and Sun 10am–5pm; Sept–June Mon–Fri 8:30am–noon and 1:30–6pm, Sat 10am–noon and 1:30–5pm).

Where to Stay

Hostellerie Alpenrose ★★★ *Finds* For those who seek the charm of a small inn, this is the preferred choice in the area—it's the only Relais & Châteaux listing within 48km (30 miles). The pine-paneled rooms are exquisitely decorated with rustic furnishings, and the small bedrooms are comfortable and tastefully appointed. All are equipped with well-maintained bathrooms.

Saanenmoserstrasse, CH-3778 Schönried-Gstaad. ✆ **033/748-91-91.** Fax 033/748-91-92. www.hotelalpenrose.ch. 19 units. 220F–490F ($180–$402/£90–£201) double; 450F–750F ($369–$615/£184–£307) suite. Rates include buffet breakfast. Half board 50F ($41/£20) per person extra. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking. Closed mid-Nov to mid-Dec. **Amenities:** 2 restaurants; 2 bars; lounge; sauna; whirlpool; room service (7am–10pm). *In room:* TV, minibar.

Hotel Olden ★★ This is one of the most low-key and gracefully unpretentious hotels in Gstaad, a sort of Victorian country inn set amid a sometimes chillingly glamorous (and expensive) landscape. The small to midsize rooms are generally furnished in an alpine style, although the bathrooms have been modernized. Some guests are housed in the adjacent, and equivalent, chalet wing.

Hauptstrasse, CH-3780 Gstaad. ✆ **033/748-49-50.** Fax 033/744-61-64. www.hotelolden.ch. 16 units. Summer 300F–520F ($246–$426/£123–£213) double, 500F–690F ($410–$566/£210–£283) junior suite, 670F–1,500F ($549–$1,230/£274–£615) suite; winter 650F–900F ($533–$738/£266–£369) double, 830F–1,100F ($681–$902/£340–£451) junior suite, 990F–1,680F ($812–$1,378/£406–£689) suite. Rates include continental breakfast. AE, DC, MC, V. Parking 20F ($16/£8.30). Closed late Apr to late May. **Amenities:** Restaurant; bar; breakfast-only room service; laundry/dry cleaning service. *In room:* TV, minibar.

Palace Hotel Gstaad ★★★ This landmark hotel on a wooded hill overlooks the center of Gstaad. Opened in 1912, the Palace has mock-fortified corner towers and a neomedieval facade. It's one of the most sought-after luxury hideaways in the world, attracting corporation heads, movie stars, and fashionable aristocrats, many of whom return every winter and stay a long time, earning the Palace the reputation as "Switzerland's largest family boardinghouse."

The nerve center of this chic citadel is an elegantly paneled main salon, with an "eternal flame" burning in the baronial stone fireplace (though this flame isn't so eternal—it burns only in winter). Radiating hallways lead to superb restaurants, bars, discos, and sports facilities. The plush, spacious rooms are tastefully furnished and very distinguished; all come equipped with beautifully maintained bathrooms. However, be duly warned: Those facing north open onto a parking lot. Nonetheless, accommodations here are among the most sumptuous in Europe.

CH-3780 Gstaad. ☎ **800/223-6800** in the U.S., or 033/748-50-00. Fax 033/748-50-01. www.palace.ch. 104 units. Summer 660F–1,080F ($541–$886/£270–£443) double, 1,010F–1,330F ($828–$1,091/£414–£545) junior suite, 1,890F–4,250F ($1,550–$3,485/£774–£1742) suite; winter 1,000F–1,840F ($820–$1,509/£410–£754) double, 1,750F–2,350F ($1,435–$1,927/£717–£501) junior suite, 2,250F–5,900F ($1,845–$4,838/£924–£2,419) suite. AE, DC, MC, V. Free parking outside, 20F ($16/£8.30) in garage. Closed end of Mar to mid-June and late Sept to shortly before Christmas (dates vary). **Amenities:** 5 restaurants; 2 bars; nightclub; 2 pools (1 heated indoor); 4 tennis courts; squash court; health club; sauna; salon; room service; massage; babysitting; laundry/dry cleaning service. *In room:* TV, minibar, hair dryer, safe, Wi-Fi.

Where to Dine

Olden Restaurant ★★ MEDITERRANEAN/FRENCH This is the most formal of the several dining choices available in the Hotel Olden. Meals are served in the pine-paneled dining room, and the always-tempting menu might include smoked salmon, fresh gooseliver terrine, shrimp bisque with green peppercorns, house-style tagliatelle, raclette, veal cutlet Milanese, Scottish lamb, or sea bass with olives, potatoes, tomatoes, and onions. Although there are grander restaurants in Gstaad, as well as dining rooms serving a more haute cuisine, the Olden remains our most satisfying choice year after year.

In the Hotel Olden, Hauptstrasse. ☎ **033/744-34-44.** Reservations recommended. Main courses 25F–73F ($21–$60/£10–£30). AE, DC, MC, V. Tues–Sun noon–2:30pm and 6:30–10:30pm. Closed mid-Apr to mid-May and 2 weeks in Nov.

Restaurant Chesery ★★★ FRENCH/SWISS At an elevation of 1,097m (3,598 ft.), this is one of the 10 best restaurants in Switzerland. The menu changes daily, based on the freshest ingredients available. The chef is a perfectionist and shops far and wide for only the finest of produce with which to dazzle his clients. You may sample his salt-crusted sea bass with wild rice, chicken Houban, Scottish lamb with a crust of fresh herbs, or rack of venison with whortleberries.

Lauenenstrasse. ☎ **033/744-24-51.** Reservations required. Main courses 37F–68F ($30–$56/£15–£28); fixed-price lunch 78F–82F ($64–$67/£32–£34); fixed-price dinner 159F ($130/£68). AE, DC, MC, V. Tues–Sun 11:30am–2:30pm and 7pm–midnight. Closed mid-Oct to mid-Dec; Easter–June 10; and in winter (Tues–Fri) for lunch.

Fun in the Outdoors

Gstaad is a resort rich in entertainment and sports facilities. Many skiers stay in Gstaad by night and venture to one of the nearby ski resorts during the day. Cable cars take passengers to altitudes of 1,500m and 3,000m (4,920 ft. and 9,840 ft.)—at the higher altitudes there's skiing even in the summer. Other facilities include tennis courts, heated indoor and outdoor swimming pools, and about 320km (200 miles) of hiking trails. Many of these scenic trails are possible to walk or hike year-round (the tourist office will advise). The **Gstaad International Tennis Tournament,** beginning the first Saturday in July, is the most important tennis event in Switzerland.

Skiers setting off from Gstaad have access to 70 lifts, mountain railroads, and gondolas. The altitude of Gstaad's highest skiable mountain is 1,965m (6,445 ft.), with a vertical drop of 1,066m (3,496 ft.). Most beginner and intermediate runs are east of the village in Eggli, a ski area reached by cable car. Eggli has a sunny, southern exposure. Wispellan-Sanetch is favored for afternoon skiing, with lots of runs down to the village. At its summit is the Glacier des Diablerets, at a height of 2,970m (9,741 ft.). Wasserngrat, reached from the south side of the resort, is yet another skiing area. Advanced skiers prize Wasserngrat for its powder skiing on steep slopes.

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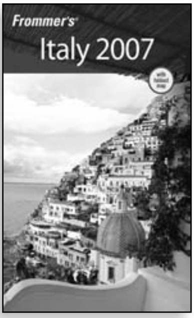
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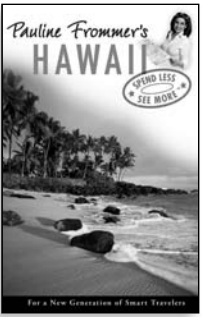
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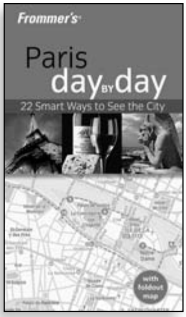
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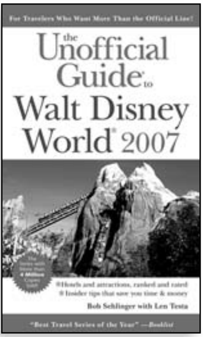
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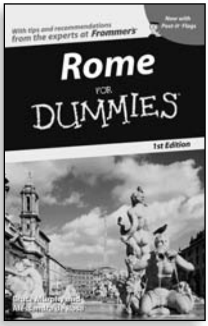
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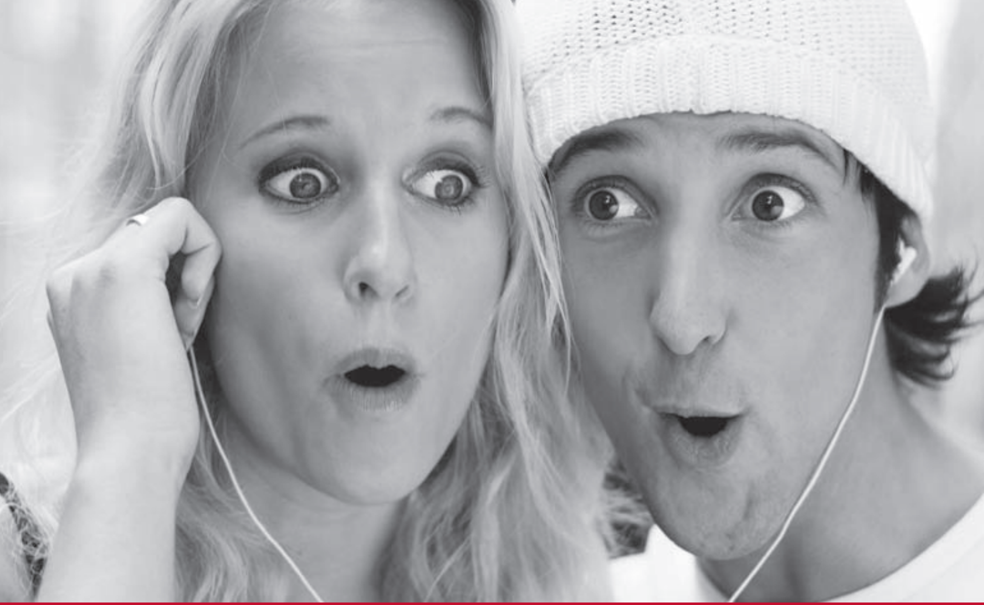

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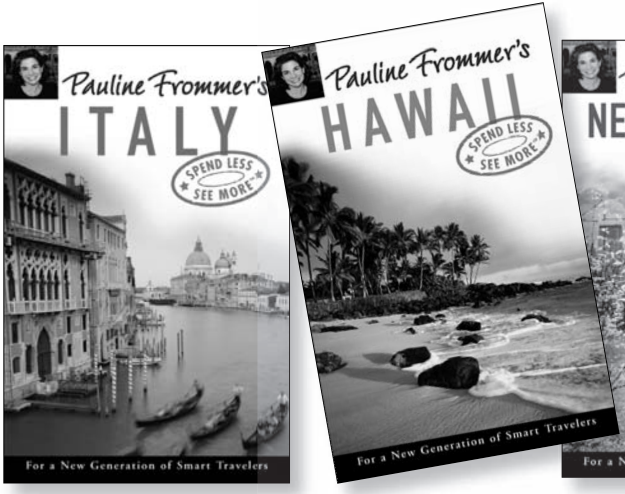
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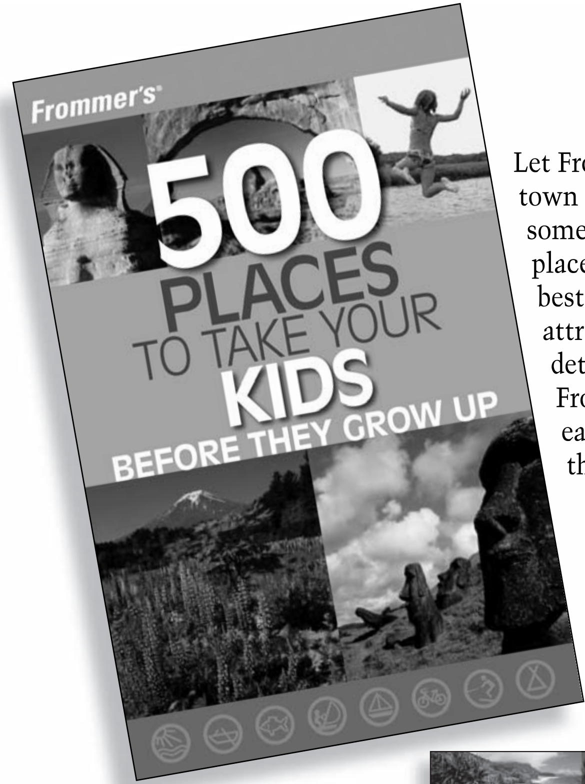
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